

Public Document Pack



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26 August 2021

Dear Councillor

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **CABINET** will be held at these offices (Council Chamber) on Monday 6 September 2021 at 11.00 am when the following business will be transacted.

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Kate Batty-Smith, Democratic Services Officer on (01304) 872303 or by e-mail at democraticservices@dover.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

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

Chief Executive

Cabinet Membership:

T J Bartlett	Leader of the Council
M Bates	Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services
N S Kenton	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment
D P Murphy	Portfolio Holder for Social Housing and Port Health
O C de R Richardson	Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property
C A Vinson	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change

AGENDA

1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

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

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

3 **RECORDS OF DECISIONS** (Pages 6-20)

The decisions of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 5 July and 19 July 2021, numbered CAB 9 to CAB 17 and CAB 18 to CAB 25 (inclusive) respectively, are attached.

4 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR OTHER COMMITTEES**

To consider any issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny or other Committees not specifically detailed elsewhere on the agenda.

- a Referral from Council - Food Poverty Review (Page 21)

To consider the attached recommendations from Council.

- b Photovoltaic and Electric Heating Installations in Affordable Housing Developments at Kimberley Close, Dover and Stockdale Gardens, Deal (Page 22)

To consider the attached recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK - KEY DECISIONS

5 **MAKING THE ASH PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021** (Pages 23-122)

To consider the attached report of the Senior Policy Planning Officer.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment

EXECUTIVE - NON-KEY DECISIONS

6 **FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2019/20** (Pages 123-135)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Finance and Investment.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change

7 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2020/21** (Pages 136-156)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Governance.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change

8 **YOUR LEISURE COVID SUPPORT FUNDING** (Pages 157-167)

To consider the attached report of the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial).

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

9 **PERFORMANCE REPORT - FIRST QUARTER 2021/22** (Pages 168-188)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Leadership Support.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change

10 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC** (Page 189)

The recommendation is attached.

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

EXECUTIVE - KEY DECISIONS

11 **PURCHASE OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT ST RICHARD'S ROAD, DEAL** (Pages 190-197)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Finance and Investment.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Social Housing and Port Health

12 **SANDWICH GUILDHALL FORECOURT - HIGHWAY WORKS** (Pages 198-201)

To consider the attached report of the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial).

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

13 **AWARD OF SIX-YEAR CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL DECORATION AND ASSOCIATED REPAIRS TO COUNCIL DWELLINGS** (Pages 202-209)

To consider the attached report of the Head of Assets and Building Control.

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Social Housing and Port Health

Access to Meetings and Information

- Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees. You may remain present throughout them except during the consideration of exempt or confidential information.
- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber

entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.

- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting. Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.dover.gov.uk. Minutes will be published on our website as soon as practicably possible after each meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting.
- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your right to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Kate Batty-Smith, Democratic Services Officer, democraticservices@dover.gov.uk, telephone: (01304) 872303 or email: democraticservices@dover.gov.uk for details.

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

Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

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

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

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

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

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

Note to the Code:

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

Record of the decisions of the meeting of the **CABINET** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 5 July 2021 at 11.00 am

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: M Bates
N S Kenton
D P Murphy
O C de R Richardson
C A Vinson

Also Present: Councillor S H Beer
Councillor E A Biggs
Councillor H M Williams
Councillor C D Zosseder

Officers: Chief Executive
Head of Commercial Services
Head of Finance and Investment
Head of Governance
Head of Housing
Asset Manager
Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Democratic Services Officer

The formal decisions of the executive are detailed in the following schedule.

Record of Decisions: Executive Functions

Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 9 5.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 13 July 2021	<u>APOLOGIES</u> There were no apologies for absence.	None.	To note any apologies for absence.	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 10 5.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 13 July 2021	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> There were no declarations of interest.	None.	To note any declarations of interest.	

Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 11 5.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 13 July 2021	<u>RECORD OF DECISIONS</u> It was agreed that the decisions of the meeting held on 7 June 2021, as detailed in decision numbers CAB 1 to CAB 8, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.	None.	Cabinet is required to approve the Record of Decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 June 2021.	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 12 5.7.21 Open Key Decisions Yes Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 13 July 2021	<u>REVISION OF HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY</u> It was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's endorsement of Cabinet decision CAB 5, made at its meeting held on 14 June 2021 (Minute No 24), be acknowledged.	None.	At its meeting held on 14 June 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed Cabinet decision CAB 5 of 7 June 2021.	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or

<p>CAB 13 5.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions Yes</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 13 July 2021</p>	<p><u>DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY AND POLICY 2021-2026</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(a) That the duty placed on the Council by the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Management Policy be noted.</p> <p>(b) That the content of the draft Tenancy Strategy be noted and approved.</p> <p>(c) That the content of the draft Tenancy Management Policy be noted and approved.</p> <p>(d) That the draft consultation plan for the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Management Policy be noted and approved.</p> <p>(e) That the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health, to make minor amendments to the strategy and the policy arising from the consultation, and thereafter to adopt both documents on behalf of the Council with effect from 1 September 2021.</p> <p>(f) That the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health, to make future minor amendments to the strategy and policy as required.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to develop, publish and update a Tenancy Strategy that provides guidance to registered providers of social housing on the use of different tenancy types and affordable rents. The Act also requires the Council, as a social housing landlord, to produce a Tenancy Management Strategy that sets out how tenancies will be granted and managed.</p>	<p>consultees (if any)</p>
<p>Decision Status</p>	<p>Record of Decision</p>	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)</p>	<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<p>Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)</p>

<p>CAB 14 5.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions No</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 13 July 2021</p>	<p><u>ELECTRIC HEATING AND PHOTO-VOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS AT AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT KIMBERLEY CLOSE, DOVER AND STOCKDALE GARDENS, DEAL</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the decision be deferred until the next meeting of Cabinet pending further information about the cost implications of the proposals for tenants.</p>	<p>To approve the report recommendations.</p>	<p>In October 2017 Cabinet approved the construction of 24 flats as interim housing for homeless people at two sites at Kimberley Close, Dover and Stockdale Gardens, Deal.</p> <p>It is proposed that electric heating be installed in the two developments to avoid the use of gas, thus supporting the Council's target of net zero carbon emissions. The increased costs of electric heating will be offset by the installation of photo-voltaic panels.</p>	
<p>Decision Status</p>	<p>Record of Decision</p>	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)</p>	<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<p>Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)</p>
<p>CAB 15 5.7.21 Open</p>	<p><u>RELEASE OF SECTION 106 MONIES FROM AYLESHAM VILLAGE GARDEN PUBLIC REALM CONTRIBUTIONS</u></p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>There has been a significant growth in open space and</p>	

<p>Key Decisions No</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 13 July 2021</p>	<p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(a) That the use of Section 106 receipts in respect of the Aylesham redevelopment for the addition of grounds maintenance resources to undertake all maintenance and landscaping requirements for open spaces and play areas within the District be approved.</p> <p>(b) That the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, to take all necessary steps to set up the service.</p>		<p>sports and play provisions since the Council resumed responsibility for grounds maintenance. A number of developments, including the Aylesham Garden Village development, have added to pressure on the team which will only increase as further phases come forward at Aylesham.</p> <p>It is proposed to use Section 106 monies accrued as developer contributions for the Aylesham redevelopment to recruit and equip a team that will focus on Aylesham.</p>	
<p>Decision Status</p>	<p>Record of Decision</p>	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)</p>	<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<p>Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)</p>
<p>CAB 16</p>	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p>	<p>None.</p>		

5.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date Immediate	That, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the press and the public be excluded during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.			
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 17 5.7.21 Exempt Key Decisions Yes Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 13 July 2021	<u>AWARD OF 5-YEAR CONSULTANCY CONTRACT FOR HEATING, WATER AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORKS</u> It was agreed that a 5-year contract be awarded to Gas Contract Services, for the sum set out in the report, to oversee the works completed by contractors carrying out heating servicing, heating installations, water hygiene works and electrical works in Council dwellings.	None.	The current contract to oversee works completed by contractors carrying out heating, water hygiene and electrical works in Council dwellings is due to expire. A competitive tender exercise was undertaken and two bids were received.	

The meeting ended at 11.35 am.

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Record of the decisions of the special meeting of the **CABINET** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Monday, 19 July 2021 at 11.00 am

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: D P Murphy
O C de R Richardson
C A Vinson

Also Present: Councillor E A Biggs
Councillor P M Brivio
Councillor K Mills
Councillor H M Williams

Officers: Chief Executive
Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Head of Commercial Services
Head of Finance and Investment
Head of Governance
Kearsney Parks Project Manager
Strategic Project Manager (Infrastructure)
Planning Solicitor
Strategic Development Lead (Leisure)
Housing Development Officer
Democratic Services Officer

The formal decisions of the executive are detailed in the following schedule.

Record of Decisions: Executive Functions

Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 18 19.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 27 July 2021	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bates and N S Kenton.	None.	To note any apologies for absence.	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 19 19.7.21 Open Key Decisions No Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 27 July 2021	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> Councillor O C De R Richardson declared an Other Significant Interest in Agenda Item 7 (Market Square Project) by reason that his son owned the Elephant and Hind public house in the Market Square. Councillor T J Bartlett declared an Other Significant Interest in Agenda Item 8 (Indemnification of Leader of the Council in Respect of Application for Judicial Review – Land North-West of Pegasus, London Road, Sholden) by reason that the decision could potentially affect his personal financial position.	None.	To note any declarations of interest.	

Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
<p>CAB 20 19.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions No</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 27 July 2021</p>	<p><u>RELEASE OF SECTION 106 MONIES FROM AYLESHAM DEVELOPMENT FOR RECRUITMENT OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE STAFF AND PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(a) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation, made at its meeting held on 12 July 2021 (Minute No 36), be accepted, as follows:</p> <p>That the decision of Cabinet taken on 5 July 2021 under CAB 15 should not be implemented until Cabinet has received a further report which clearly identifies both the geographic areas within the district in which the new resources are to be deployed and the appropriate means of financing the new resources, having regard to the principle that Section 106 monies received for the maintenance of the public realm in Aylesham cannot be used to defray expenditure incurred on grounds maintenance elsewhere in the district.</p> <p>(b) That Cabinet decision CAB 15 be amended in line with (a) above.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 12 July 2021, considered Cabinet decision CAB 15 of 5 July 2021 and made a recommendation.</p> <p>(In accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B)(4)(b), the Chairman agreed that this item, which was not detailed on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in order to resolve the confusion surrounding Cabinet's decision.</p>	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)

<p>CAB 21 19.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions Yes</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 27 July 2021</p>	<p><u>FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(a) That the project be approved in principle, and the Council be permitted to receive the grant of £3,196,497 and to act as accountable body to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.</p> <p>(b) That the expenditure of £1,700,000 that has been allocated within the current Capital Programme as match funding for the project be approved.</p> <p>(c) That £250,000 from the Capital Programme be set aside to support the next stage of the project, to be approved by the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property as required.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Cabinet is requested to approve the acceptance of a 'Future High Streets' Fund grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for a project that will deliver a creative centre at Bench Street and improvements to the underpass beneath the A20 in Dover. This project is one of a number of initiatives being pursued by the Council to transform Dover's high street and town centre.</p>	
<p>Decision Status</p>	<p>Record of Decision</p>	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)</p>	<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<p>Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)</p>
<p>CAB 22 19.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions No</p>	<p><u>ELECTRIC HEATING AND PHOTO-VOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS AT AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT KIMBERLEY CLOSE, DOVER AND STOCKDALE GARDENS, DEAL</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>At its meeting held on 5 July 2021, Cabinet deferred a decision on this matter pending further information</p>	

<p>Call-in to apply Yes</p> <p>Implementation Date 27 July 2021</p>	<p>(a) That the upgrade to the incoming electricity main to Kimberley Close, allowing electric heating to be installed in lieu of gas, and the associated additional budget required, be approved.</p> <p>(b) That the installation of enhanced photo-voltaic systems to both Kimberley Close and Stockdale Gardens developments, and the associated budget required, be approved.</p>		<p>about the cost implications of the proposals for tenants (CAB 14).</p> <p>It is proposed that electric heating be installed in these affordable housing developments to avoid the use of gas, thus supporting the Council's target of net zero carbon emissions. The increased costs of electric heating will be offset by the installation of photo-voltaic panels.</p>	
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
<p>CAB 23 19.7.21 Open</p> <p>Key Decisions No</p> <p>Call-in to apply Yes</p>	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p>That, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the press and the public be excluded during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>	<p>None.</p>		

Implementation Date Immediate				
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
CAB 24 19.7.21 Exempt Key Decisions Yes Call-in to apply Yes Implementation Date 27 July 2021	<u>MARKET SQUARE PROJECT</u> It was agreed: (a) That work on the delivery of the full scheme should continue as planned but, given that the cost estimate exceeds the allocated budget, that the Council should make a formal approach seeking financial contributions from each of the project partners (Dover Town Team, Dover Town Council and Kent County Council); and that an approach should also be made to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to see whether additional grant can be secured. (b) That a report be brought back to Cabinet in October 2021.	To approve the report recommendation and not seek additional funding from alternative sources.	Working with the Dover Town Team, the Council agreed to act as the responsible body for a £2.45 million award from the Coastal Communities Fund towards a project to regenerate the Market Square. The Council has already committed £500,000 to the project. However, due to the increased costs of delivering the project as originally envisaged, it has become necessary to seek additional funding from alternative sources.	Councillor O C de R Richardson declared an Other Significant Interest by reason that his son owned the Elephant and Hind public house in the Market Square, and withdrew from the Chamber during consideration of this item.
Decision Status	Record of Decision	Alternative options considered and	Reasons for Decision	Conflicts of interest (if any) declared by

		rejected (if any)		decision maker(s) or consultees (if any)
<p>CAB 25 19.7.21 Exempt</p> <p>Key Decisions No</p> <p>Call-in to apply No</p> <p>Implementation Date Immediate</p>	<p><u>INDEMNIFICATION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW - LAND NORTH-WEST OF PEGASUS, LONDON ROAD, SHOLDEN</u></p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(a) That the Leader of the Council be requested to initiate Judicial Review proceedings.</p> <p>(b) That the Leader of the Council be indemnified against personal costs arising from any application for Judicial Review pursuant to the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004, Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and all other enabling powers.</p> <p>(c) That the Head of Governance be requested to act on behalf of the Leader of the Council, and that the Leader be offered alternative legal representation should he so wish.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p>Cabinet is requested to agree that the Leader of the Council initiates Judicial Review proceedings in relation to a decision to grant planning permission which was made in error. Permission is also sought to indemnify the Leader in respect of any costs arising from the proceedings.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Council has agreed to suspend call-in on this item for the reasons given below.</p> <p>(In accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B)(4)(b), the Chairman agreed that this item, which was not detailed on the</p>	<p>Councillor T J Bartlett declared an Other Significant Interest by reason that the decision could potentially affect his personal financial position, and withdrew from the Chamber during consideration of the item.</p> <p>(In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor O C de R Richardson assumed chairmanship of the meeting)</p>

			agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency due to the need for the Council to file a claim in respect of the planning decision without further delay. The matter cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting of Cabinet in September)	
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The meeting ended at 11.50 am.

ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR OTHER COMMITTEES

FOOD POVERTY REVIEW

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

Report of: Democratic and Corporate Services Manager

Decision Route

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 July 2021	
Council	21 July 2021	
Cabinet	6 September 2021	

Council Recommendations

Following recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from its meeting held on 12 July 2021, Council, at its meeting held on 21 July 2021, made the following recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the Food Poverty Review:

- (a) That Cabinet be requested to form a Food Poverty Working Group on the following basis:
- (i) That the objective of the Food Poverty Working Group be to investigate ways in which the Council can assist in tackling the issue of food poverty and its underlying causes in the district and, as part of this, how the Council can support the vital role undertaken by the voluntary and community sector.
 - (ii) That the working group membership be politically balanced.
 - (iii) That a representative from the Cabinet be appointed to the working group.
 - (iv) That the working group be administratively supported by the Head of Community and Digital Services.
 - (v) That the working group be time limited to two years of operation and be required to report to Cabinet on its conclusions at the end of that period.
 - (vi) That the final Terms of Reference be determined by the Cabinet taking into account points (i) to (v).

ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR OTHER COMMITTEES

ELECTRIC HEATING AND PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATIONS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT KIMBERLEY CLOSE, DOVER AND STOCKDALE GARDENS, DEAL

Responsibility: Portfolio Holder for Social Housing and Port Health

Report of: Head of Finance and Investment

Decision Route

Cabinet	19 July 2021	CAB 22
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	26 July 2021	Minute No
Cabinet	6 September 2021	

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 July 2021, endorsed Cabinet decision CAB 22 as follows:

- (a) That the upgrade to the incoming electricity main to Kimberley Close, allowing electric heating to be installed in lieu of gas, and the associated additional budget required, be approved.
- (b) That the installation of enhanced photo-voltaic systems to both Kimberley Close and Stockdale Gardens developments, and the associated budget required, be approved.

Subject:	MAKING THE ASH PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021
Meetings and Dates:	Cabinet – 6 September 2021 Council – 15 September 2021
Report of:	Stuart Watson, Senior Policy Planner - Planning, Regeneration and Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Nicholas Kenton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment
Decision Type:	Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To set out the requirements for the Ash Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan (Ash NDP 2021) to become part of the Council’s Development Plan and the process undertaken.

Recommendation Cabinet: to That Cabinet resolves to agree the recommendation to ‘make’ the Ash NDP 2021 to Full Council.

Recommendation Council: to That Council resolves to ‘make’ the Ash NDP 2021.

1. Summary

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 provides communities with powerful tools to produce policies to enable development within their community area. Ash Parish Council have produced a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) that meets both legislative requirements and support from their local community. On 22 July 2021 a referendum was held on the Ash NDP 2021 within the Ash neighbourhood area and asked the question of residents “Do you want Dover District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ash to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?” 86% of those who voted in the referendum voted in favour of the Ash NDP 2021.

1.2 Dover District Council has eight weeks from the day after the referendum in which to decide whether to ‘make’ the Ash NDP 2021 or not. If the Plan were to be made, it would then form part of the Development Plan for the District.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new type of community led development plan. The Act enables communities to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan that can set out policies on the development and use of land within a parish or neighbourhood area. Neighbourhood planning provides powerful tools to communities to help facilitate their needs where they align both with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 at paragraph 30 makes clear that once a Neighbourhood Development Plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering

the neighbourhood area. This is until the neighbourhood policies themselves are then superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies.

- 2.3 In effect, once a Neighbourhood Development Plan has been 'made' by a Local Authority, the policies within the Plan are used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area. This is until they are either replaced by reviews to the Neighbourhood Plan or through a subsequent Local Plan.

Background

- 2.4 Ash Parish was designated a Neighbourhood Area by the Cabinet of Dover District Council on the 4 February 2013. Since 2017, preparation of the Ash NDP has been led by its Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee. The committee is made up of volunteers from the local community.

- 2.5 The Ash NDP 2021 contains a series of policies to help determine planning applications. Policies include:

- Environmental (including green and open spaces, biodiversity and climate change);
- Housing (provision for 437 new dwellings between 2018 and 2037);
- Leisure & Well being, Health Care, Education;
- Local Economy (including support for the villages' shops/public houses and home working); and,
- Local infrastructure (enabling provision for off street parking, telecommunications and transport).

- 2.6 Ash Parish Council ran a Regulation 14 pre-submission draft Plan consultation between 11 November 2019 to 23 December 2019. On subsequently completing the Neighbourhood Development Plans evidence base, Ash Parish Council resolved to formally submit the Plan to Dover District Council and a Regulation 16 submission Plan consultation was held from 1 December 2020 to 15 January 2021. Planning officers from Dover District Council's Local Plans team provided advice and assistance throughout the drafting of the Plan, the consultation processes and examination.

- 2.7 Mr Derek Stebbing B.A. (Hons), Dip E.P., MRTPI, an independent examiner, was appointed by Dover District Council in agreement with Ash Parish Council to examine the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The examination was dealt with by written representations and the examiner's report was published on the 5 May 2021. The examiner concluded that, subject to the modifications set out in his report, the Plan met the basic conditions and other legal requirements, and that the Plan should proceed to referendum.

- 2.8 The basic conditions a neighbourhood development plan has to meet are:

- regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest;
- special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and,

- prescribed conditions (conservation of species/habitats and regard to all material considerations) are met in relation to the neighbourhood development plan and that prescribed matters have been complied.
- 2.9 On the 1 June 2021, Ash Parish Council formally submitted the referendum version of the Plan incorporating the examiners modifications to Dover District Council. On 8 June 2021, Dover District Council determined that subject to the examiner's modifications, the Ash NDP 2021 met the basic conditions and should proceed to referendum. On 22 July 2021, a referendum was held on the Ash NDP 2021, and the referendum asked residents of the neighbourhood area the question "Do you want Dover District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Ash to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"
- 2.10 Section 38A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Act, as inserted by the Localism Act 2011 states, that a local planning authority must 'make' a neighbourhood development plan if more than half (50.1% or above) of those voting in the neighbourhood plan Referendum vote in favour of the Plan. Further, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) stipulates under Regulation 18a that the Plan must be 'made' by the local planning authority within 8 weeks beginning the day after the referendum.
- 2.11 Failure to 'make' the Ash NDP 2021 within the 8 weeks period could open the Plan up to challenge by way of Judicial Review and could result in the Plan being quashed. Section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (3) states, a person aggrieved may make an application to the High Court on the ground that a procedural requirement has not been complied with. A procedural requirement is a requirement made by Regulations or an order which relates to the adoption, publication or approval of a plan/document. The application must be made within 6 weeks, for example when a decision has been made or the expiry of a prescribed time period.
- 2.12 After a successful referendum, there are only narrow circumstances where the local authority would not be required to 'make' the neighbourhood development plan. These include, where making of the Plan would breach EU or human rights obligations. For example, where the Plan could inhibit or prevent: right to life, respect for private and family life, freedom of: thought, conscience, religion, expression and assembly or association, amongst other matters.
- 2.13 The Ash NDP 2021 referendum returned an 86% majority in favour of using the Plan in planning application decision making for the neighbourhood area. Further, it is considered that the Ash NDP 2021 does not breach or inhibit EU or human rights obligations. This means the Council must choose to 'make' the Plan, and the eight weeks period in which to make the decision would end on 17 September 2021.
- 2.14 The Ash NDP 2021 has been positively prepared through hard work and dedication by the local community. It is supported by an evidence base that considers issues like sustainable development and habitats impacts. Further, the Plan has undergone rigorous public consultation and been found (subject to modifications) by an independent examiner to meet the basic conditions. And finally, the referendum on the 22 July 2021 demonstrated that the majority of residents who voted, support the Plan.
- 3. Identification of Options**
- 3.1 That Cabinet resolve to agree the recommendation to 'make' the Ash NDP 2021 to Full Council.
- 3.2 That Cabinet do not resolve to agree the recommendation to 'make' the Ash NDP 2021 to Full Council and subsequently the Council do not 'make' the Plan.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 It is a legal requirement to make a neighbourhood development plan within 8 weeks after the day of a referendum where the majority vote in favour of the Plan. There are very narrow grounds where the Council could refuse to make the Plan and it is considered that the Plan does not breach or is not incompatible with any EU or Human rights obligations
- 4.2 The attached Ash NDP 2021 (Appendix 1) has been prepared within planning legislative requirements. The Plan has been found by an independent examiner to meet the basic conditions and the majority who voted in the referendum voted for the Dover District Council to use the Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.
- 4.3 Failure to 'make' the Ash NDP 2021 within the 8 week period could open the Plan up to challenge by way of Judicial Review, which could result in the Plan being quashed.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no resource implications in taking the Ash NDP 2021 to Council.
- 5.2 Making of the Ash NDP 2021 will require the neighbourhood plan to be published on the Council's website and this can be carried out within the existing Local Plan teams resourcing.

6. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 As this report is seeking agreement to take the Ash NDP 2021 to Council and that Council 'make' the Plan, there are no specific Climate Change and Environmental Implications.
- 6.2 In making the neighbourhood plan, The Ash NDP 2021 proposes a series of environmental policies in the determination of planning applications within the neighbourhood area for Ash. When planning applications are submitted within the Ash neighbourhood area the precise climate change and environmental issues and implications will be known and considered at that time.

7. Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from Finance (linked to the MTFP): Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment to make.
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 The Examiner's Report and other background documents are available on the Council's Ash Neighbourhood Plan webpage:
<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Regeneration/Neighbourhood-Planning/Ash-Neighbourhood-Plan-Consultation.aspx>

Contact Officer: Stuart Watson, Senior Policy Planner - 42058



ASH PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2037:

Prepared in accordance with the Localism Act 2011
and the Neighbourhood Planning (General)
Regulations 2012 (as amended 2018)

September 2021

Contents

- Foreword ----- 4**
- 1 Introduction----- 4**
- 2 Planning Context----- 9**
- 3 Vision for Ash ----- 11**
 - 3.1 Locality and history----- 11
 - 3.2 Vision statement for Ash----- 11
 - 3.3 Community led themes----- 11
 - 3.4 Objectives----- 12
- 4 Plan Strategy----- 13**
 - 4.1 Strategy ----- 13
 - 4.2 Testing the plan with public engagement ----- 14
 - 4.3 Objectives----- 14
 - 4.4 Planning policies ----- 14
 - 4.5 Community action projects----- 14
- 5 Plan Policies ----- 15**
 - 5.1 Environmental ----- 15
 - P1 Policy ANP1 – Development in the countryside----- 24
 - Areas of Green and Open Space in and around the village----- 25
 - P2 Policy ANP2 – Designated local green spaces----- 32
 - P3 Policy ANP3 Green and open spaces in new developments ----- 32
 - Biodiversity----- 33
 - P4 Policy ANP4 – Biodiversity----- 35
 - Climate Change----- 36
 - P5 Policy ANP5 Climate Change ----- 37
 - Design of new developments and conservation ----- 38
 - P6 Policy ANP6 – Developments and Conservation ----- 40
 - 5.2 Housing----- 41
 - Background Ash Now ----- 41
 - Current Housing Needs----- 44
 - Allocation of development sites ----- 48
 - Existing sites from DDC Local Plan 2015 (not reassessed) ----- 49
 - New site allocation 2018 - 2037----- 50
 - Selected Sites ----- 51
 - Description of sites selected ----- 52

	Agri / Cowans site-----	52
P7	ANP7a) Agri / Cowans land brought forward from DDC 2015 Land Allocation -----	54
	Former Council Yard – Molland Lea -----	55
P8	ANP7b) Old Council Yard, land allocated from DDC 2015 Land Allocation -----	55
	Chequer Lane Site -----	56
	White Post Farm -----	56
	HELAA 152 Land adjacent to Saunders Lane -----	56
P9	Policy ANP7c) - HELAA 45 Land South of Mill Field -----	58
P10	Policy ANP7d) - HELAA 95 Land north of Molland Lane -----	61
P11	Policy ANP7e) HELAA 163 Land South of Guilton -----	63
5.3	Leisure & Well-being, Health Care, Education -----	65
P12	Policy ANP8 – Retention of Community Facilities-----	68
P13	Policy ANP9 – Health and social care -----	70
5.4	Local Economy-----	71
P14	Policy ANP10 – Village Shops and Public Houses -----	73
P15	Policy ANP11 - Conversion of rural buildings to business use, tourist accommodation and tourist attractions -----	75
P16	Policy ANP 12 - Working from home -----	76
5.5	Local Infrastructure-----	77
P17	Policy ANP13 - Off-Street Parking -----	79
P18	Policy ANP14 - Telecommunications -----	81
P19	Policy ANP15 - Transport-----	83
P20	Policy ANP16 - Infrastructure -----	84
6	Monitoring Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan-----	85
7	Appendices -----	86
	Appendix I - Mitigation required re nutrient neutrality calculation -----	86
	Appendix II - Community Projects -----	87
	Appendix III – Climate Change Matrix -----	88
	Glossary -----	90
	Acknowledgements -----	93

Maps

Map 1	Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area	5
Map 2	Ash Settlement Boundary 2015	13
Map 3	Ash Six Rural Character Areas NI, N2, R1, R2, H1, H2	17
Map 4	Government Flood map for planning.....	18
Map 5	Areas of green spaces.in the village of Ash.....	19
Map 6	Key views in and around the village of Ash.....	21
Map 7	Designated European Sites (from HRA Fig 1).....	22
Map 8	Local Green Spaces ANP2.....	31

Map 10 Three conservation areas in Ash 38

Map 11 Ash Village Character Areas 39

Map 12 Sites identified in the Dover District Call for Sites for Ash..... 50

Map 13 Agri / Cowan site ANP7a) 52

Map 14 Former council Yard - Molland Lea ANP7b) 55

Map 15 Land South of Millfield ANP7c) 57

Map 16 Land North of Molland Lane ANP7d) 59

Map 17 Land south of Gilton ANP7e)..... 62

Map 18 Facilities in Ash ANP8 67

Map 19 Broadband speeds. Source: KCC Broadband Team Nov 2018 80

Foreword

This Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out how our community wishes to see the village, hamlets and wider parish develop in the future.

The Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council of Ash with the support of the community.

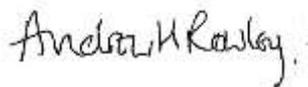
It will represent your views and aspirations for the planning period 2018 to 2037. While this may seem a long time, in the history of a parish that was established in 1282 and redefined as a civil parish in 1894, it is only a short window.



It is vital that in these times of rapid change, that we meet the needs of those who work and live in our parish and provide as much certainty as we can over their futures. Throughout its development, it has been very clear from the response we have received that you care deeply about the future of our community. The Plan gives us a vision for that future, and how this can be achieved through robust forward planning.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have given so much of their time and energy over the course of the last five years supporting its creation. Whilst it has been a monumental effort, without the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan we would, I am sure, be a much less prosperous community.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Harris-Rowley".

Andrew Harris-Rowley
1 June 2021

1 Introduction

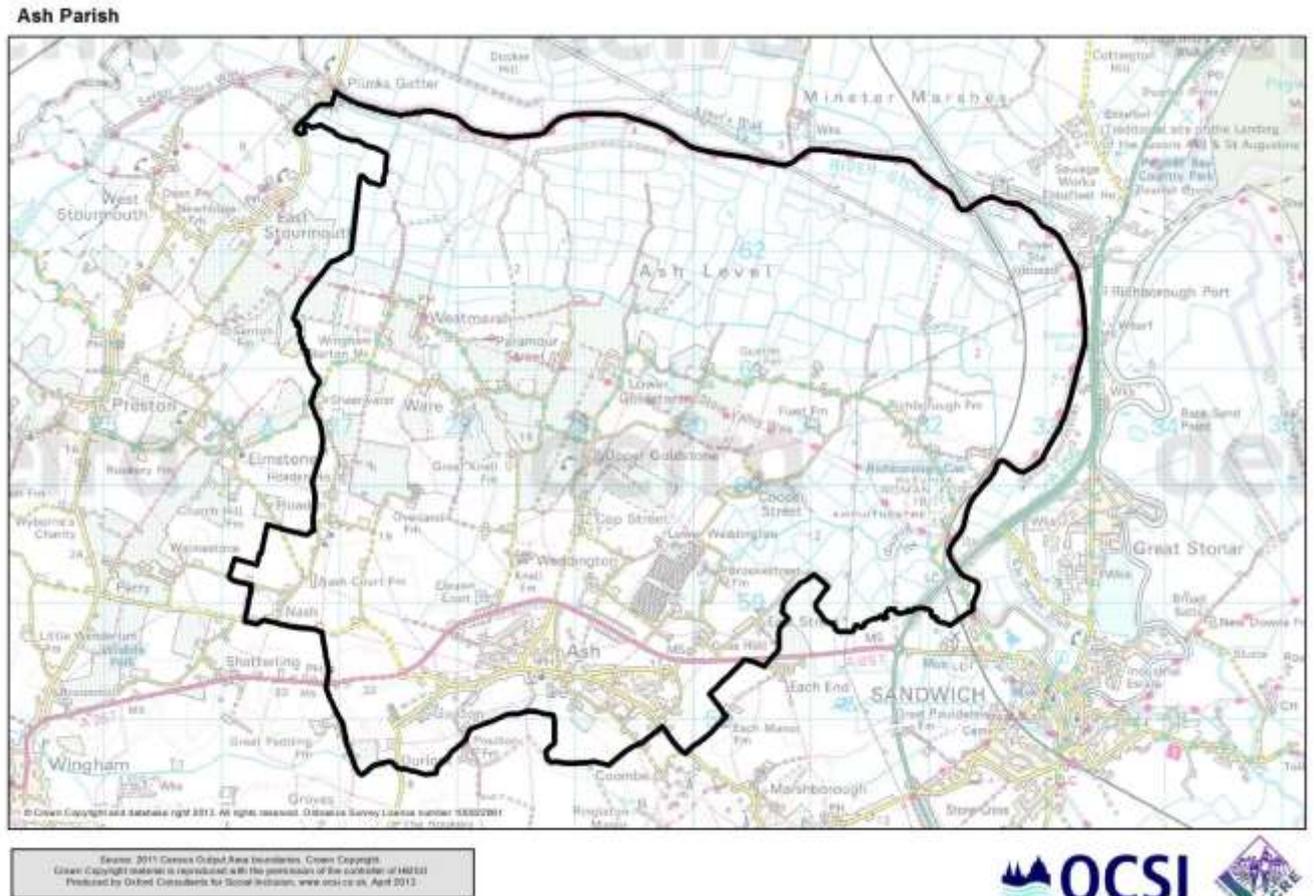
1. Neighbourhood Development Plans were introduced as part of the Government's approach in the Localism Act 2011 to give local people more say in what happens in their locality.
2. The adopted Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan, alongside district and national policies, will be used when determining planning applications in the Parish of Ash.
3. The Ash plan provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long-term future of Ash village and its surrounding countryside. It contains a vision for the future of Ash and sets out clear objectives and planning policies to realise and deliver this vision.
4. Ash Parish Council established a steering committee and standing committee to co-ordinate the delivery of the plan and oversee the processes in line with national guidance.
5. This plan is a community led process and there has been continuous public engagement, as well as a number of public events, to encourage people to give their views at all stages of the development of the plan
6. Public engagement included scoping events; engagement with the local primary school, housing needs event; number of open days to inform the public about the NDP process; site assessment and indicative housing requirements; public meeting with Q/A session to explain housing sites and indicative numbers and take the views of public; public meeting to take views before issuing to DDC; Reg 14 and 16 consultations; referendum.
7. Some of the policies are general and apply across the parish, whilst others are site or area specific and only apply to the relevant areas illustrated on the associated maps. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Ash Parish Council and Dover District Council will apply all the relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the plan will be read as a whole and cross-referencing between the Plan's policies has been minimised.
8. The reference points for this plan are the:
 - National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (revised Feb 2019) and its accompanying National Planning Practical Guidance (2014 onwards)
 - Saved policies of the Dover District Local Plan (2002) or those superseding them up to 2040
 - Dover District Core Strategy (2010) or the strategies superseding it up to 2040
 - Dover District Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) or the plans superseding it up to 2040
 - The District Council is preparing a new local plan, looking forward to 2040 which is due for publication 2021. A range of documents have already been published by DDC, as it builds up evidence and technical work for their new local plan and these have been used as guidance.

The Area Covered by the Plan

9. The area covered by the plan is the Civil Parish of Ash that includes the main settlement of Ash Village and the hamlets of Westmarsh, Ware, Cop Street, Upper and Lower Goldstone, Richborough, Paramour Street, Hoaden.
10. The Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan area designation was approved by Dover District Council Cabinet on 4th February 2013 (CAB Min 76 4.2.13).

Section 1

Map 1 Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Designated Area



Involvement in the Plan Process

Who has been involved in writing the plan and the consultation process?

11. From the start of the process our guiding principles in engaging local people with the preparation of Ash NDP have been:
 - to commence community consultation early on and to seek a clear understanding of the issues and concerns that are of most importance to the local community
 - to offer further opportunities for comment as our vision, objectives and planning policies evolved
 - to offer a range of different ways for people to engage with the NDP process. We have tried to make our arrangements appropriate and proportionate for a rural community. This has included residents' surveys, workshops, school participation and debates, discussions, information on the parish council web site, parish newsletters, public notice boards, and direct contact with key groups in the local community
 - to tap into the knowledge and experience available in the local community wherever possible, by making the process as open and inclusive as possible. The competition for the children of the two local primary schools asking them to describe what their village should look like in 2037 was particularly rewarding. This was followed by a debate for the older children in the church hall with prizes being awarded to the best entrant in each year group.
12. Due to a number of issues outside the parish council's control, there was a significant time delay from the start of the process in 2013 to 2016. It was important to have a public event (5th March 2016) to ask the residents again whether to undertake a revised Parish Plan, a Neighbourhood

Section 1

Development Plan or do nothing. The workshop was well attended by a diverse range of residents, from parents and children, young adults and retired people.

13. The recommendation from those attending the event was overwhelmingly to develop an Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan.
14. Following the above recommendation, a number of public events were held to scope the NDP and to start to collect evidence to support the plan.
15. Since the workshops, there have been a number of other issues that have delayed the progress of the plan. These included:
 - the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2018 (amended Feb 2019)
 - the Office for National Statistics Household Projections, Sept 2018
 - the modified Standard Method of calculating housing needs, Dec 2018
 - the Planning Appeal decisions for Sandwich Road, Jan 2018, and White Post Farm, Oct 2018. The decisions on both appeals could have substantially changed the direction of travel for the plan
 - the Dover District Council requirement in January 2020 to have a Strategic Environment Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Assessment. In June 2020, the initial work on the HRA established that a district wide air quality assessment would be required.
16. These delays made the completion date of the NDP closer to the emerging DDC local plan (2022). The parish council considered the implications of completing the NDP before DDC, and the parish council received guidance on two key matters:
 - the overall amount of development to be accommodated in the new local plan
 - the overall planning strategy to accommodate planned growth in Dover District and the role that Ash Parish will play in delivering its allocation.





How does the Plan fit into the planning system?

17. The government’s intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their area. However, all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policies; that is, within the constraints imposed by national guidance (NPPF) and local policy (DDC). Neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development, social objectives and plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area.
18. The plan has been developed with input from Dover District Council to ensure that while our plan is likely to be published before the new DDC Local Plan, it is in line with their emerging polices and general strategic direction of travel. The original timeframe for the development plan was 2017 to 2037, however after the Regulation 14 consultation and during 2020, the emerging Dover Local Plan timeframe was amended to cover the years 2020 to 2040.

Section 1

19. The Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan policies must be used by Dover District Council to determine planning applications in the Parish of Ash.

What period does the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan cover?

20. The Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the period from 2018-2037 and would overlap the period for the emerging Dover District Local Plan likely to be issued in 2022.
21. After a successful referendum, Dover District Council, the local authority, will reach a decision 'to make' the plan that would allow for a plan covering the remaining years of the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan to 2037.

Strategic Environmental Assessments and Habitats' Regulations Assessments

22. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all neighbourhood development plans that may have significant effects on the environment and where a plan identifies sites for development.
23. It was necessary to screen the proposals to assess if they would result in significant environmental effects and therefore require a SEA. Dover District Council is legally required to do this assessment. As part of the process, it was necessary to consult the statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) to get their opinions on whether or not a plan is likely to result in significant environmental effects.
24. DDC reviewed the NDP and the screening report concluded that a SEA and HRA was required. This report is in the evidence documents.
25. The Habitats' Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the appropriate assessment required for any plan to assess the potential implications for European sites. This was carried out alongside the SEA process by AECOM. These two reports are in the Plan submission documents.

How the Plan is organised

26. The Plan is divided into six sections.

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Planning Context

Section 3: The Vision for Ash - a long-term vision for the parish up to 2037.

Section 4: Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Strategy - the broad planning approach for Ash Parish and how it conforms to higher level planning policy.

Section 5: Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies - the background that sets out the scene for the objectives, evidence and policies that supports the overall vision, including site specific allocations for new developments.

Section 6: Monitoring Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan - it is important that there are robust processes to monitor the implementation and outcomes of the plan during its life. A number of reporting / monitoring processes have been put in place by the parish council.

2 Planning Context

27. The Neighbourhood Development Plan is a one of a number of planning documents that should be read in conjunction with each other.
28. The role of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in the planning system is to provide a local view. The planning system is complex and there is a hierarchy that developments must adhere to in Ash. This is: National, Kent County Council, Dover District Council, then the Ash NDP. The key documents that the Ash NDP must be in line with are set out below.
29. The starting point for the Ash NDP was to take the views of the community and develop these into strategies, objectives and planning policies to be delivered over the life of the plan. The policies within the plan are in line with the hierarchy set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

30. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
31. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plans (local authority neighbourhood plans) that are in force. The NPPF must be considered in preparing the development plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
32. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level the objective of sustainability can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (4 Resolution 42/187 of United Nations General Assembly).
33. All references in this plan to Dover District policies were considered at the time the plan was written. It is accepted that these policies may be superseded when the local plan reviews are completed.

Dover District Local Plan (2002) "Saved Policies" (or those superseding them)

34. The DDC local plan saved policies provided detailed policies for given topics and / or sites and these set out the conditions that should be met to enable development to take place.

Dover District Core Strategy (2010) (or that superseding it)

35. This is an overarching document and is about shaping the future of the district as a place to live and work. It sets out the local framework for the settlement hierarchy and how each will be developed; how the transport network will be developed and how employment opportunities will be harnessed and how the natural environment will be managed. It also sets out the key policies for each of the topics. It should be read in conjunction with the more detailed documents and policies within the Local Development Framework.

Dover District Land Allocation Local Plan (2015) (or that superseding it)

36. This document identifies the land allocated for development across the district. The land identified in Ash has been through a rigorous assessment process. The new DDC land allocation and the NDP will identify sites for development for the period 2018-2037.

The emerging Dover District Local Plan (2020-2040)

37. Local Plans have to be reviewed to ensure they are relevant and consider changes to the NPPF and local trends. This usually takes place every 7 years. Dover started reviewing its Plan in 2017 in line with the regular review process, commencing with a call for sites. The revised plan will identify a new core strategy for the district, identify development sites and will have updated policies for these and other key elements of the plan. The Ash NDP has taken these identified development sites and policies into account and in some cases enhanced the policies to reflect the local community's views.

Kent Minerals and Waste Plan (2016) (or that superseding it)

38. This document sets out the Kent vision for the access to minerals and waste management. Ash lies within the Petroleum Exploration and Development License 252. While no applications had been made up to 2019, the plan sets out policies for the mitigation and impact during exploration and recovery, then restoration phases. It also sets out policies for the Sandwich / Richborough, Non-Hazardous Transfer/Treatment and Organic Treatment site and the management of HGVs to and from the site.

Section 2

39. Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan - key points raised by the community are:

- Right type of houses in the right place
- Improved community facilities
- Transport
- Employment
- Environment

40. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the NDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise. When the NDP is adopted, the Parish Council (as a statutory consultee) and District Council (as the determining authority) will apply the relevant policies of the NPPF, the Local Plan and the NDP in considering proposals for development within the parish.



1 St Nicholas Church and The Street, Ash



2 View of St Nicholas Church Spire, Ash

3 Vision for Ash

This section sets out the vision for Ash from 2018 to 2037 the plan period.

3.1 Locality and history

41. Ash is a large rural parish which sits in the corner of East Kent between the city of Canterbury and the old Cinque Port of Sandwich, to the north is the port of Ramsgate and to the south is the port of Dover. The parish is in an area known as the “Garden of England” and is one of the largest in Kent with over 7,000 acres of mainly Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land which produces some of the best crops in the country. The Ash Levels to the north are mainly drained marsh land used for summer grazing for sheep and cattle.
42. The parish consists of the Ash village and hamlets (Westmarsh, Ware, Cop Street, Upper and Lower Goldstone, Richborough, Paramour Street and Hoaden). The village sits on a long, low sandy ridge that runs north-west to south-east. The village is situated in the south-west corner of the parish and is divided from the main agricultural area and hamlets by the A257 trunk road, (Ash bypass) which is the main link road between Canterbury and Sandwich and surrounding towns. The north boundary of the parish is the River Stour.

3.2 Vision statement for Ash

By 2037, we envision a rural community with green spaces, safe spaces, adequate medical services, and the right kind of houses in the right place, with good biodiversity (also a community pub, a thriving church and schools).

43. The vision was developed in the workshops by the residents and reflects their wishes for the village. From this vision, the community developed five themes and a number of key objectives that have been used as the basis of this plan. The parish council used these themes to provide a framework from which the NDP could be developed to achieve the vision.

3.3 Community led themes

44. Theme 1: Enhancing the range of housing to allow all types and ages of residents to remain within the parish for life, by compassionate and sustainable planning, enhancing and protecting the built heritage by design / build quality to retain the visual impacts and retain the rural feel to the village, adaption to climate change minimising pollution.
45. The NPPF states a social objective as – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.
46. Theme 2: Safe spaces, access to the Public Rights of Way network, traffic management, community facilities, social support and net-works.
47. The NPPF states to promote safe communities with appropriate facilities objective as - to achieve healthy inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction, safe and accessible areas, enable and support healthy lifestyles, to provide social recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.
48. Theme 3: Maintain and enhance the open green spaces and improve the landscape, environment, biodiversity, heritage and reduce the impacts of climate change within the village and wider parish.
49. The NPPF states an environmental objective as – to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
50. Theme 4: Retain and enhance medical services, ensuring good care is delivered locally for the elderly within the community and increasing accessibility to external (health care) services.

Section 3

51. The NPPF does not directly include healthcare policies as these are outside the planning framework but does state a healthy, inclusive and safe place as – one that promotes social interaction, accessible high-quality public spaces that support healthy lifestyles.
52. Theme 5: Retain existing and create opportunities for existing / new employers and businesses within the parish along with improved infrastructure (broadband) to support these, including homeworkers.
53. The NPPF states an economic objective as – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure and telecommunications.
54. It can be seen from the above themes and quotes from the NPPF that the vision for Ash, albeit developed before the publication of the NPPF 2019, is in line with national planning policy aims.

3.4 Objectives

55. From the above themes, the Ash NDP Steering Group re-organised the headings into clearly defined deliverable objectives, with outcomes that could be delivered through the planning policies and / or objectives. The background, evidence and objectives for the key areas are contained in each of the planning policy sections, to ensure there is a clear understanding of how the policy has been derived. The following are the high-level objectives from the community led themes.

Objective 1: Environmental (landscape, open spaces, biodiversity and climate change)

56. The objective is to protect the parish's historic landscape and heritage, promote a healthy and safe environment, secure existing and promote new green and open spaces, improve and reduce the loss of biodiversity and wild-life habitats, address climate change through sensitive site developments, good design, building techniques and sustainable transport. This will be achieved through a mixture of planning policies and community actions over the lifetime of the plan.

Objective 2: Housing, requirements, design, built environment, site allocations, sustainability and climate change resilience

57. The objective will ensure that the housing requirements of the parish are sustainable i.e. number, type, design quality and built quality, built environment, sensitive site allocations and how they will respond to climate change resilience. These will be achieved through the planning policies over the life-time of the plan.

Objective 3: Leisure, Well-being, Education and Healthcare

58. The objective will ensure that leisure, well-being, education and healthcare provision will be protected and enhanced through new developments. This will be achieved by Section 106 agreements support improved education, healthcare and community facilities over the life-time of this plan. This will be managed by ensuring the service providers are engaged and pro-active in delivering the improvements.

Objective 4: Employment in the local economy

59. The objective is to enhance the local economy by encouraging local business to expand and / or new businesses to become established. This will increase the diversity of services provided and used in Ash and will employ more local people and sustain the economic viability of the parish and surrounding area.

Objective 5 - Traffic and Infrastructure

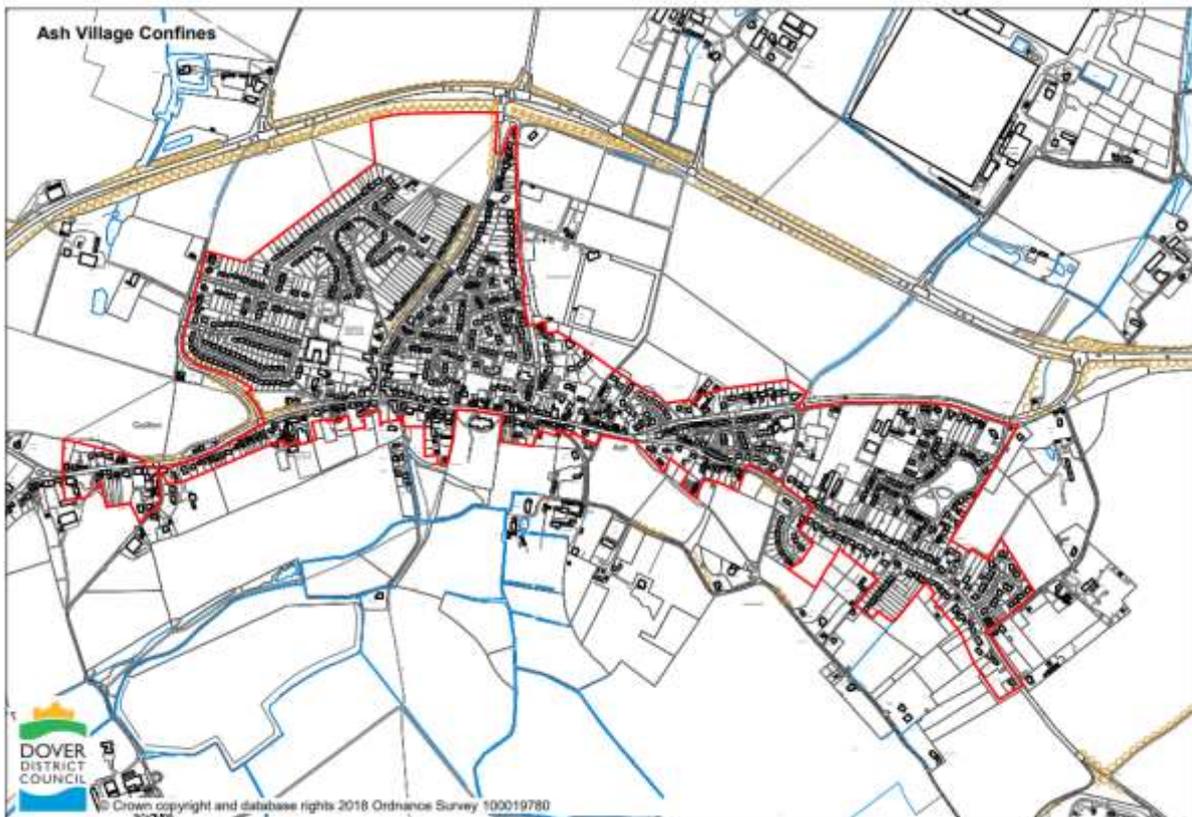
60. The objective is to improve traffic flows and reduce climate impact within the parish so as to reduce the reliance on private cars and to improve the infrastructure and traffic management by ensuring developments are located within easy reach of local amenities to encourage walking and cycling. To encourage the use of electric vehicles by ensuring the necessary charging points are installed in each development and the village centre, if and when developments take place. This will be achieved through a mixture of planning policies and local initiatives:
 - to improve access to the village and rural areas (car parking)
 - improved traffic management
 - improved IT technologies and associated infrastructure to reduce travel
 - increase the number of people working from home by ensuring new dwellings support these activities.

4 Plan Strategy

4.1 Strategy

61. The Parish of Ash has continued to thrive by adapting and evolving since Saxon times. Necessary development to provide new homes, businesses and community facilities for Ash have and will continue to come forward. The Neighbourhood Plan is looking to ensure that any development needed to sustain the parish, is of an appropriate scale, well located and designed/built, is sustainable and responds to climate change and the distinctive local character.
62. All plans should be based on and reflect the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) presumption in favour of sustainable development with clear deliverable objectives and policies. The NPPF background to each of the Neighbourhood Plan topics is set out in the relevant sections of this Plan.
63. The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to the national planning policies, contribute to achievement of sustainable development, be in general conformity with DDC's strategic policies and be compatible with any relevant EU regulations (such as the Habitat Regulations).
64. As the Neighbourhood Plan is being undertaken at the time of an emerging Local Plan, collaboration between the community and the local authority is critical. In developing the Ash Neighbourhood Plan, Dover District Council has taken an active role in advising and supporting the neighbourhood plan group, sharing evidence, information and giving guidance and ensuring the Ash Neighbourhood Plan fits with relevant up-to-date evidence of the strategic needs of the emerging local plan.
65. The Ash Local Housing Needs Survey 2017 and the Housing Needs Assessment (April 2019) has identified a need for a range of housing including, affordable and social housing, and smaller housing to enable downsizing and specialist housing to meet the needs of the elderly within the community. The Neighbourhood Plan policies have been developed to support these needs.
66. The 2015 settlement boundary will be the subject of a review when Dover District Council carries out its consultations on the emerging Local Plan.

Map 2 Ash Settlement Boundary 2015



Section 4

67. The plan seeks to allow limited development within the countryside by allowing suitable conversion for housing (under permitted development), business or tourist use to enable the expansion of existing business premises.
68. The plan recognises the importance of the community networks in the parish and seeks to protect the social and economic hubs, 'The Street' village centre, and other community facilities and open spaces that are important to the social fabric of the community.
69. This Plan has been discussed with infrastructure providers to test whether proposed development can be supported by sufficient infrastructure to ensure the quality of life of existing and future residents can be maintained.
70. Any development permitted will be expected to ensure provision of the necessary infrastructure. (NPPF para 98) This includes improving or increasing the access to the Public Rights of Way network, taking into account the Kent County Council (KCC) policies in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 1 (ROWIP). This plan aims to improve and upgrade the PRoW network with links to amenities, public transport nodes, work and education to increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling as an alternative to driving. It also includes the provision of the social, physical and green spaces needed to support the community and to ensure that they will be sustainable. KCC has a statutory duty to ensure the network is recorded, protected and maintained.

4.2 Testing the plan with public engagement

71. To enable the plan to reflect the views of the community the plan was taken to five key public events.
72. Event 1 - July 2018. A public exhibition attended by 198 residents, where the evidence documents and the wildlife photographs were displayed.
73. Event 2 - September 2019. A display of the sites chosen by the parish council based upon the AECOM Site Assessment, the number of housing units identified by the AECOM housing assessment adjusted to meet the independent review by DDC and the display of the draft NDP and DDC planning policies for each site and the wider parish. A flyer was delivered to every household. The event was attended by 216 residents and 138 questionnaires were completed by attendees
74. Event 3 - October 2019. This public meeting was attended by 52 residents. It was based upon a high-level explanation of the planning process and how this impacted Ash; and how the number of housing units and site selection were arrived at. This was hosted by an independent town planner. This was followed by a question and answer session that was analysed after the event and added to the first event's outcomes to provide an indication as to the direction of travel for the NDP.
75. Event 4/5 - November 2019 every household in Ash again received a flyer with the details about the two exhibitions held on the 7th and 14th December 2019 (180 and 32 residents attended) and also were asked to comment on the Regulation 14 Draft Plan. These comments along with the Regulation 14 consultation have been incorporated into the Plan in preparation for the Regulation 16 consultation in preparation for the examination.

4.3 Objectives

76. These set out how we intend to deliver our vision for Ash over the period up to 2037. Delivery of the objectives will be through both planning policies and community action projects that are detailed in the Appendix II Community Projects.

4.4 Planning policies

77. These are measures will be achieved through the planning system. When formally adopted, the plan policies alongside national policies in the NPPF and KCC and DDC's planning policies will be used as a basis for considering planning applications submitted for development in the parish.
78. The text above each planning policy provides the explanation and justification for the policy.

4.5 Community action projects

79. These are actions outside the planning system and are listed in Appendix II. They may be actions undertaken by the parish council or local community, or where it is necessary to lobby other organisations to act using powers outside the planning system. (For example, KCC's powers as the highways authority and the local education authority, or DDC's powers as a housing authority, or the NHS Coastal Clinical & Care Commissioning Group Strategy on primary health care).

5 Plan Policies

- 80. In this section, are the planning policies that will seek to deliver the Neighbourhood Development Plan’s objectives. Although the objectives and planning policies should be seen as a package, it is important to distinguish the different role each plays.
- 81. For consistency, this section is set out in the order of the high-level objectives in Section 3. This is:-
 - 5.1 Environmental (Landscape, Heritage, Biodiversity and Climate Change)
 - 5.2 Housing
 - 5.3 Leisure, Well-being, Health Care and Education
 - 5.4 Employment and Local Economy
 - 5.5 Traffic management and Infrastructure

5.1 Environmental

Landscape, Heritage, Biodiversity and Climate Change

- 82. Due to the location of the parish, the environment is very important to the local residents and the character of the village and wider parish. The term “environmental” covers a wide spectrum of topics. The key areas addressed in this section of the plan are landscape (and key views), parish characteristics, heritage (and design), wildlife and biodiversity, access to green and open spaces and the wider countryside and climate change resilience.

Historical Context

- 83. The ecclesiastical parish was established in 1282 having previously been part of the Archbishops of Canterbury great manor of Wingham. However due to its location, its history goes much further back with evidence of early human habitation. There is the well-documented history of the Roman period and the Roman Fort of Richborough dates back to 43 AD. The presence of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery in the village continues the historical time-line. The parish continued growing during the Medieval period with 12th century historic manor houses being built, sites of some are occupied today. St Nicholas Church dates from the 12th century and contains one of the best collections of medieval stone effigies and brasses of any parish church in Kent. These show a number of knights and ladies from the 14th and 15th centuries and is evidence of the wealth of the parish during these times.



3 View from the spire of St Nicholas Church of The Street at the centre of the village and surrounding countryside

National and Local Planning Policies

- 84. The NPPF (Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment para 170-177) states that planning policies should contribute to enhancing the natural and local environment, to protect and enhance valued landscapes, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from the natural capital and ecosystem services including economic benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land and biodiversity and aim to achieve healthy and inclusive places.
- 85. Dover District Planning Policies
 - DD Local Plan Polices (2002) saved polices - C08 Protection of Hedgerows,
 - DD Core Strategy Policies (2010)
 - DM1 Settlement boundaries
 - DM15 Protection of the countryside
 - DM16 Landscape character
 - DM25 Open spaces
 - DD Land Allocation Local Plan Section 3.5.1 Ash and polices LA20-LA 23

Evidence

Landscape

- 86. The historic character of the landscape is a key element of Ash (particularly the green fringes of existing development or on green field sites). The landscape visible today is the result of many centuries of evolution, and the patterns of roads, tracks, field boundaries and hedgerows that gives the modern landscape its character. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent and this study is an essential resource for consideration of the landscape impact of new developments.

5 Local orchard in the Ash Horticultural Belt

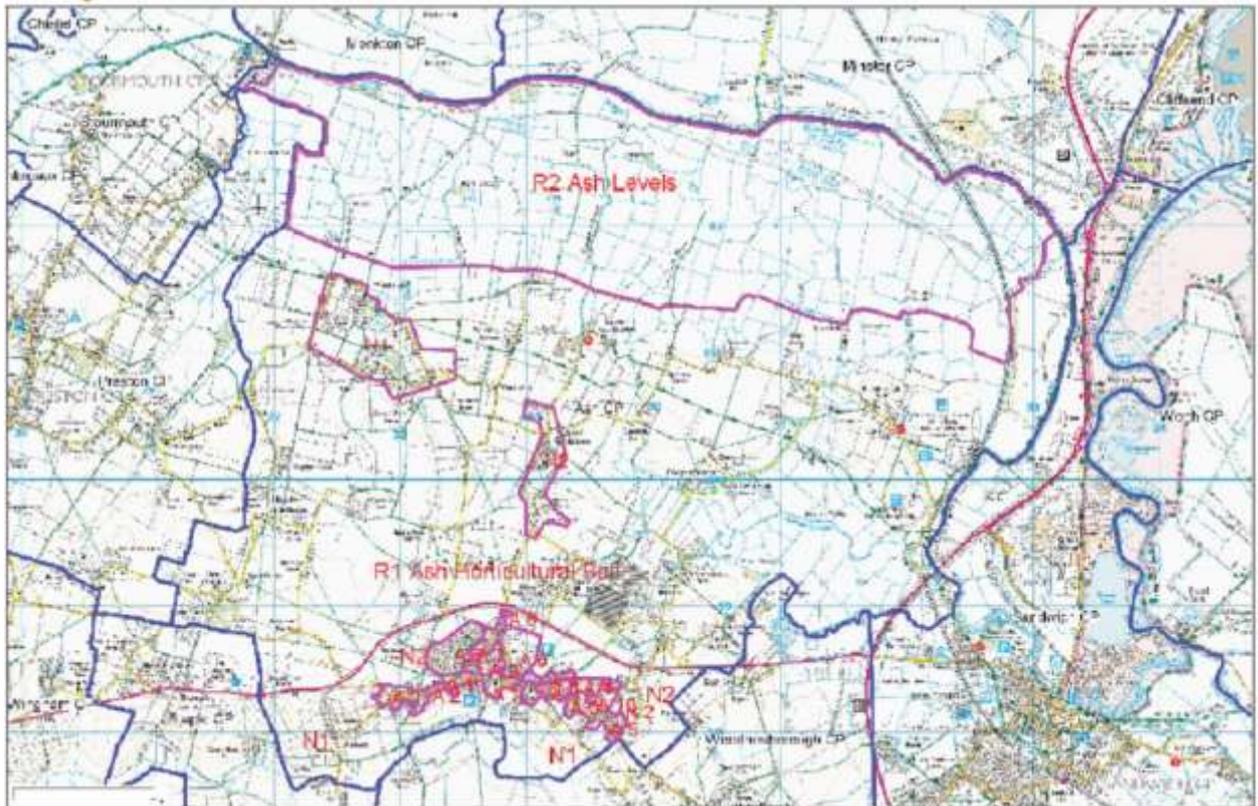


4 Ash village surrounded by agricultural land

Section 5

87. One of the most distinctive landscapes of the parish is the Ash Levels, as described in the Ash Character Assessment. The Levels are the marshland of the former Wantsum Sea Channel which forms the northern end of the Parish, bordered by the River Stour. The drainage ditches run along the field boundaries providing a strong pattern to the landscape and are the reason that the area can be used for summer grazing, a tradition that stretches back many years. The Roman fort of Richborough Castle can be seen from the Levels. This is one of three scheduled monuments in the parish. The Levels are one example of the combination of landscape, heritage and current agricultural use in the parish.

Map 3 Ash Six Rural Character Areas NI, N2, R1, R2, H1, H2



6 Richborough Stream on the Ash Levels



7 Summer grazing on the Ash Levels

Section 5

88. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Dover (2019) does not specifically relate to any allocated sites within the parish. However, there are areas of the village that do have surface-water run off issues.
89. The government's Flood Map for planning shows the area to the south of the village / Moat Farm along the Old Wingham River is substantially within Flood Zone 3. The Ash Levels, to the north of the parish, is within Zone 3b (the highest category risk of flooding) and Zone 2 and some parts of the hamlet of Westmarsh are within Flood Zone 3.

Map 4 Government Flood map for planning



Legend: Dark Blue Flood Zone 3; Pale Blue Flood Zone 2

90. The parish is made up from a mixture of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land and orchards and is in what is known as the 'Garden of England'. It produces some of the best vegetables and fruit in England. The Ash Levels are grade 4 agricultural land, part down to grass, some arable crops and the flood plain for the River Stour.
91. The parish has a rich and diverse bio-diversity with a number of sites containing some of the priority species as listed in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 41. There are a number of important biodiversity areas and a number of rare and endangered species.¹
92. Key species on the red list: turtledove, woodpecker, grey partridge, yellowhammer, herring gull, house sparrow, linnet, dunnock, starling.

Green and Open Spaces

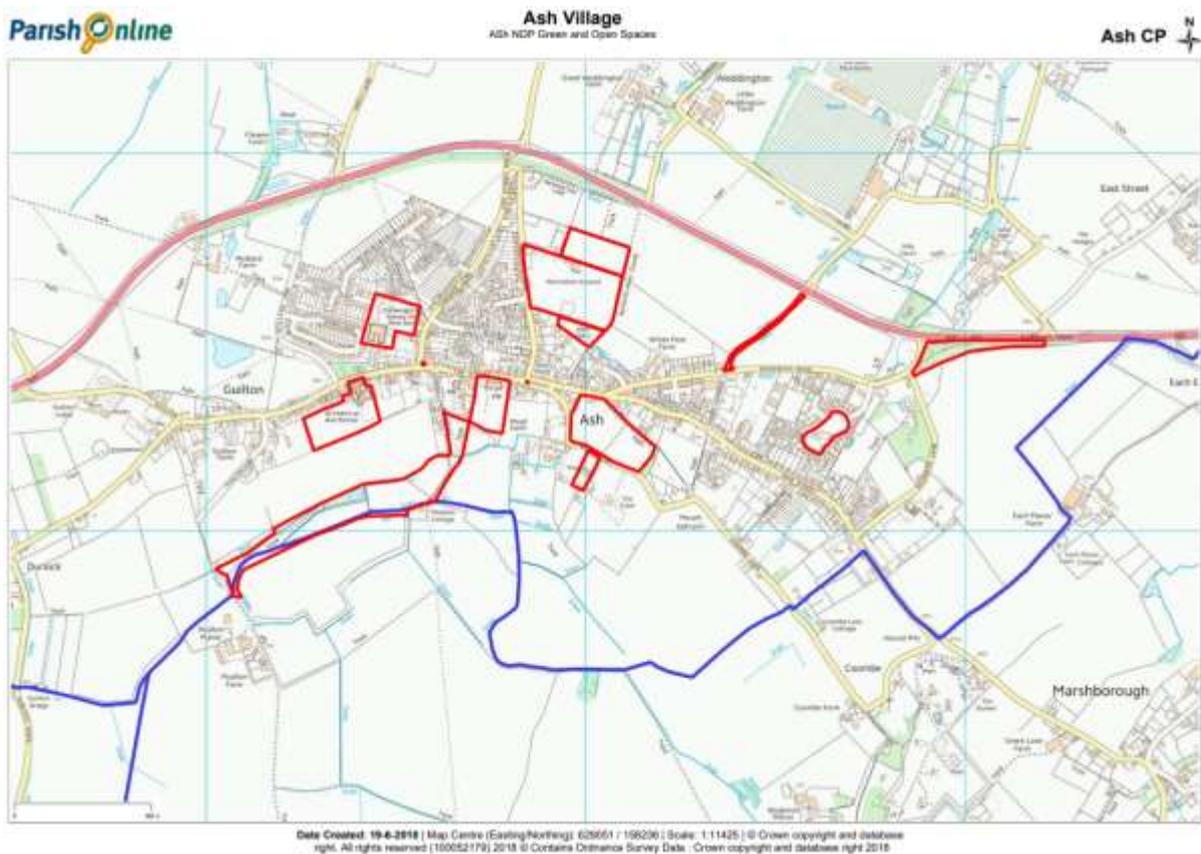
93. One of the distinctive features of Ash village is the amount of green and open spaces identified by the local residents.
94. The parish has 13 ha of green spaces. These include the Ash Recreational Ground which consists of open space used for rugby, soccer, cricket pitches, tennis courts, an equipped children's play area and the sports' pavilion and the allotments. The allotments are well used and there is generally a waiting list for them.

¹ See the Ash NDP Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Report for details on rare and endangered species.

Section 5

95. The sports facilities are well used, with Ash having senior rugby union and mini-rugby teams. One of the rugby pitches is floodlit in winter. Soccer is regularly played on the grounds in the winter and cricket in the summer. The tennis club is well supported and the courts are used most of the year as they are hard surfaced.
96. There is also a Bowls Club at Moat Lane and a considerable number of smaller open spaces within the village settlement boundary.
97. The green spaces also include the three central parcels of land held by the Jack Foat Trust on The Street and to the south of the village, off Pudding Lane.
98. There are around 100 miles (726 km) of Public Rights of Way (PRoW)² including numerous Public Bridleways within the parish. Kent County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the network is recorded, protected and maintained and welcomes the opportunity to work with the parish's active Footpaths' group who regularly walk and inspect the PRoW's.
99. The Ash NDP Group has undertaken a green spaces assessment that identified the areas of green spaces and where there is a need to enhance or increase them. The group has identified the importance of these spaces being linked to ensure people can walk or cycle to and between open spaces. (Open and Green Spaces Assessment in Evidence documents).

Map 5 Areas of green spaces in the village of Ash



Heritage

100. The important of the heritage of the parish is reflected by the active Heritage Group with over 100 members.. The group with the help of many residents raised the funds to build the Ash Heritage Centre based at the Ash village hall. This houses the detailed historical archives of the parish in written and pictorial forms. In addition, the NDP has produced an Archaeological Review that has been drawn from the Kent Historic Environment Record as baseline evidence of the rich history of the parish. Information from these valuable sources has been used within this plan. These archives are accessible to the public through the Heritage Centre and are a useful reference point to understanding the history of the parish.

² Kent County Council Explore Kent <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploreKent.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>

Section 5

101. This history of the parish is formally recorded in the Historic England List of the parish's 105 Listed Buildings. There are two Grade I buildings – the Norman Church (St Nicholas circa 1190) in the village and Richborough Castle to the north-east of the parish and there are four Grade II* and 99 Grade II listings. In addition, there are 789 records of archaeological sites, historic buildings and artefactual discoveries in the parish that are not legally protected, but which nonetheless contribute to the historic character of Ash.
102. The parish also contains three scheduled monuments, Richborough Roman Fort in the north east of the parish, the Anglo-Saxon burial ground at Ash Mill in Guilton at the western end of the village and the Medieval moated site at Chequer Court to the north west of the village (see Historic England list)
103. The village has three conservation areas within the village shown in Map 6. The Ash Design Guide looks at how the existing buildings can influence new development.
104. In addition, the NDP group has undertaken a Character Area Assessment of the parish. This has identified 16 areas of distinctive character in the parish, 10 within the village and 6 covering the hamlets and the farmed rural land.



Archaeological Assessment

105. The Ash NDP's Archaeological Review 2018 provides a helpful review of the archaeological history of Ash. It has been primarily drawn from the Kent Historic Environment Record and is evidence of the rich history of the parish. Information from these valuable sources has been used within this plan.
106. Due to the location of this area of Kent, close to mainland Europe and the changing coastline, it is not surprising that its history is one of long human habitation with archaeological finds from the key stages of human development. These are: Palaeolithic age (flint knappings); Mesolithic (hand axe Cop Street / Belle-Vue Farm); Neolithic (ditches and pits at Richborough); Bronze Age (Hoard from Hoaden found in 1971); Iron Age (gold found at Goss Hall); Roman (Richborough Roman Fort, and a burial ground under the old Gardners Brewery site); Anglo-Saxon (brooch from cemetery and grave goods at Ash Mill, Guilton) protected as scheduled Ancient Monument); Medieval (St Nicholas Church, six remaining Manor houses). In December 2019, there was a Bronze Age find of artefacts on the Chequer Lane development site. This was the first such find within the village.



Anglo Saxon Brooch

107. There are a number of well documented areas of known archaeological interest and many other areas with archaeological potential around the parish. According to the Historic Environmental Record (HER) for Kent ³, there are 417 records relating to Ash, including iron-age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval/ post-medieval (including a significant number of hay stack stances) and WWII records/ finds.
108. Dover District's Heritage Strategy 2013 (pg 21) says that 'although there are only four proven [Roman] villas in Dover District, an additional fifth possible villa site has recently been identified on aerial photographs near Ash.' The rich archaeological history is an important context in which new developments are undertaken. It is likely that the majority of new developments will uncover more artefacts and information about the life of the parish because of the density of finds to date.
109. Due to Ash's history and the number of archaeological finds, it is advisable that any developments with the potential to impact archaeological sites are discussed with the Kent County Council's Heritage Conservation Team at the earliest opportunity. Where the archaeological site is a Scheduled Monument (or believed to be of equivalent significance) or effects Grade I or II listed buildings, the applicant should also contact Historic England at the earliest opportunity.

³ Kent County Council (2020): 'Historic Environmental Record – Exploring Kent's Past [online] available at: <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/MultiResults.aspx?firstrec=101&lastrec=120>

Section 5

Key Views

- 110. In Ash, the landscape forms an intrinsic part of the character and setting of the parish and provides a backdrop that contributes to the attractiveness of the village as a place to live and visit.
- 111. Due to the location of the village on a ridge, the rural views from and into the village across the open land towards the Ash Levels and inland towards Sandwich and the villages of Staple and Wingham are an intrinsic part of the charm of the village and its position. In addition, there has been little change in the historic route ways within the parish. It contains a rich heritage of attractive historic lanes, often enclosed by hedges and trees that contribute to the distinctive character of the countryside whilst providing natural habitats.
- 112. The distinctive character and sensitive landscape would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location and / or design that would interrupt these views.
- 113. One of the distinctive features of Ash village is the visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from public places. The NDP has identified 11 important views. All views fall into two principal groups, those looking into the village and those looking out. The key views are indicated on Map 6. (Key Views Report including photos of each of the views is in the Evidence Documents)

Map 6 Key views in and around the village of Ash

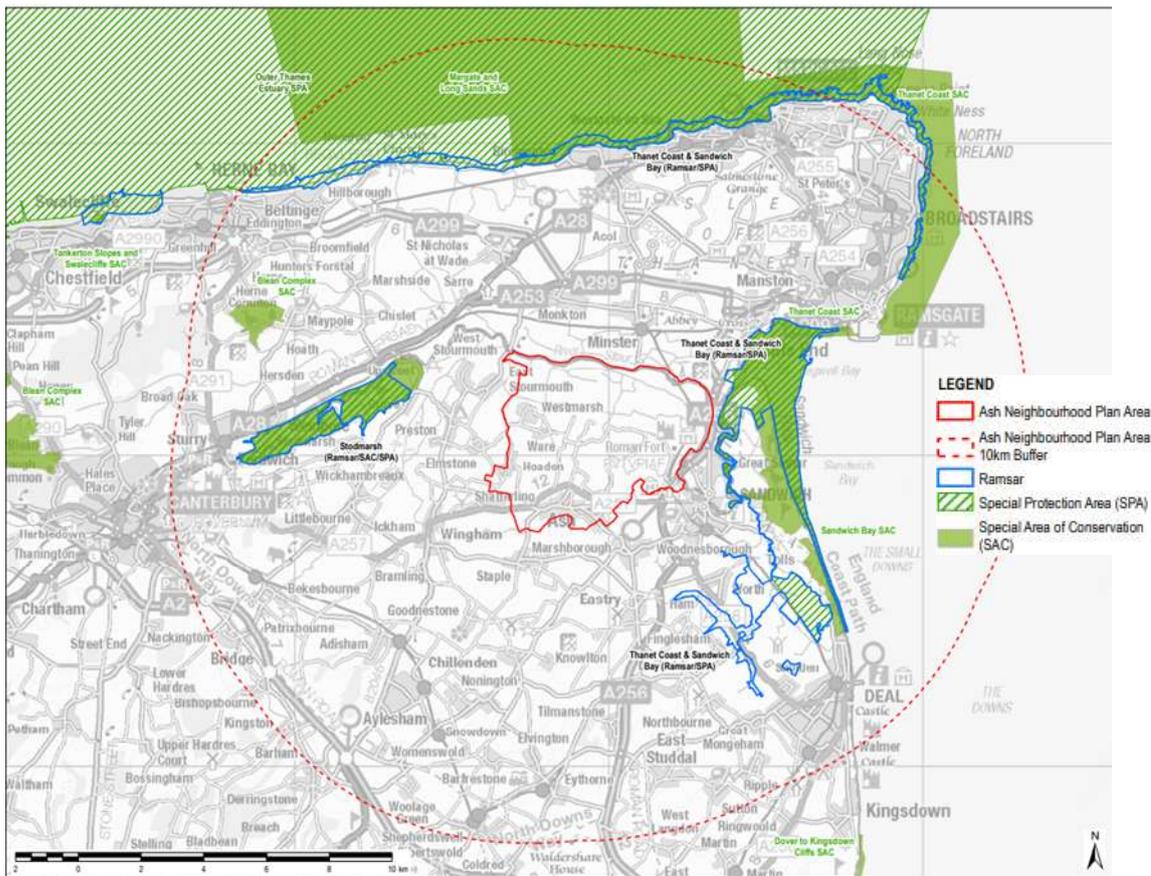


- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Sandwich Rd field gate to west | 2 Sandwich Rd bus shelter to north |
| 3 A257 end PRoW EE466 to the SSE | 4 A257 end of PRoW EE466 to west |
| 5 Middle of PRoW EE466 to NNW | 6 A257 end of PRoW EE465 to SSE |
| 7 A257 end of PRoW EE465 to WSW | 8 Weddington Lane path 500 yds from Queens Road to SW |
| 9 Molland Lane to Molland House to NNW | 10 PRoW EE123A to NW |
| 11 A257 end Guiton (road) to ENE | |

Biodiversity

114. The location of Ash and its considerable (7,000) acres of agricultural land naturally leads to a wide range of biodiversity. The employment this land brings to the area also heightens the community's awareness of the environment and biodiversity issues and the effect these have upon their life-styles and impact upon the economy.
115. The Natural England's maps indicate there are no nationally important nature conservation sites within Ash Parish. However, Ash lies wholly within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Ramsar Site (SSSI), and Sandwich and Pegwell Bay NNR and Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (also a SSSI). These sites have the highest level of legal protection of their wildlife and nature conservation value at both national and international level. Much of the Stour Valley marshes close to the river are under the government environmental scheme (Countryside Stewardship). These areas provide a vital corridor for birds migrating across England to and from mainland Europe and therefore has a wide range of biodiversity that supports them.

Map 7 Designated European Sites (from HRA Fig 1)



116. District Council confirmed that it would be necessary to have a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the potential adverse effect of the Ash Parish Neighbourhood Plan on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, otherwise known as European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), potential SPAs (pSPAs) and, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites), either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The HRA would also advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified. The report and the policy recommendations are referenced in the Consultation Statement Nov 2020 and are part of the Regulation 16 submission documents
117. There are a number of areas within the village that are high in biodiversity and the Public Bridleway EE466 (Hills Court Nature Trail off Sandwich Road, Ash) is maintained by the local community with the support and guidance of the KCC and DDC Natural Environmental Officers. These areas are regularly visited and the wildlife recorded over the four seasons by local residents.
118. The Ash NDP group worked with Buglife and the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory undertaking an extensive study of the eastern end of the village (Hills Court / Saunders Wood areas). This study identified over 140 species of invertebrates, birds, mammals, snakes, lizards and wildflowers. It also

Section 5

highlighted a number of rare species of insects and plants that are nationally identified as protected priority and red listed species. These include the turtle dove, yellow hammer, woodpecker, linnnet, marsh harrier, common lizard, dot moth, grass snake, bats, hares. These require additional protection. (Ash Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Report in Evidence Documents).

119. There has been a desk top study of the rest of the village that has highlighted significant wildlife and further investigation work is planned. The key areas in the village will be assessed so that the impact of future development or changes to landscape can be considered . This is likely to be undertaken as a community project and details are in Appendices – Community Projects.



Climate change

8 Public Bridleway EE466 (Hills Court Nature Trail)

120. People have become more aware of the impact that climate change has on their lives. It is now becoming a national and world-wide topic and there is a realisation that we all must take steps to alter the way we live. The plan has highlighted positive actions to be taken to improve people's lives.
121. There are two key ways this plan is influencing climate change. Firstly, through the use of improved design, building materials and techniques to ensure developments are sustainable and reduce carbon emissions, so that people's lifestyles are improved by better wellbeing and air quality.
122. Secondly, the link between landscape, biodiversity and habitats cannot be ignored as these can have a positive impact on carbon sequestration. Where possible additional habitats should be encouraged as an opportunity to sequester carbon to reduce the effects of climate change.

Summary of evidence on environmental issues.

123. Landscape - the vision statement includes “a rural community with green spaces”. The general level of interest placed upon this by the community shows that there is keen interest in accessing these public areas on a regular basis. The parish has a number of walking groups and many people with a very keen interest in wildlife and biodiversity who track activities within the parish. As many of the community earn their living from the land, there is a greater awareness of the impact the environment has on their livelihoods and the wider community. Refer Ash Character Assessment and Ash Green and Open Spaces Report.
124. Key Views – the value of the rural setting of the village was identified by residents as contributing to their sense of well-being. Key views have been identified by the NDP Group based upon an analysis of each view and the photo has been given a location using east / west co-ordinates and/or next to a prominent landmark, a street sign etc, to ensure their position is identifiable. Refer to Key Views Report
125. Heritage - Historic England List records 105 Listed Buildings, three scheduled monuments and numerous archaeological finds in Ash. The desire by the community to record the valued, distinctive

Section 5

character of the parish and to protect its archaeological record is reflected in the work volunteers carried out for all the Ash reports and assessments. Refer to the Archaeological Report and the Character Assessment.

126. Heritage and Design – reflecting the heritage of the existing buildings in influencing new development is important to residents so that the distinctive character of Ash is retained. Refer to the Ash Design Guide.
127. Biodiversity – the location of Ash and the considerable hectares of agricultural land naturally leads to a wide range of biodiversity. In addition, it lies wholly inside the SSI impact zone and borders the inland marshes of the River Stour. Refer to the Green Infrastructure Report and the Green and Open Spaces Report, the Habitats Regulation Report and Strategic Environment Assessment.
128. Climate change – the impact upon people’s lives is now nationally recognised and it is accepted that action must be taken to reduce the impact of climate change. Refer to the Habitats Regulation Report and Strategic Environment Assessment.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

129. They are:

- to improve the built environment through good design and sensitive development
- to preserve and enhance, where appropriate, the landscape, heritage and character of the area
- to maintain the distinctive, locally valued and historic views and visual connectivity of the village with the surrounding countryside
- to deliver net gains to biodiversity
- to improve climate change resilience

P1 Policy ANP1 – Development in the countryside

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

- 1.1 Development in the countryside beyond the Ash village settlement boundary will only be supported where it provides for a local business or community need on a site that is adjacent to or beyond the existing village settlement area and is physically well related to the existing settlement boundaries. The use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well connected to the existing village settlement will be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 1.2 Development proposals must have regard to the purpose of conserving and improving the physical surroundings and the natural beauty by enhancing and expanding the trees and hedgerows, preferably native/indigenous, and landscape within the designated area.
- 1.3 Developments should respect the natural environment within the designated site and adjacent land by enhancing and re-connecting the existing natural features such as veteran trees, hedges, protecting wildlife corridors/ watercourses.
- 1.4 Developments would maintain the distinctive views and visual connectivity of the village with the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up area, in particular those defined on Map 6 (Key views in and around the village of Ash).
- 1.5 In areas where there would be significant effect on Public Rights of Way, the network must also be included in the landscape planning of the infra-structure as a whole.
- 1.6 Developments should demonstrate how they will positively accommodate, divert or enhance paths and link networks.
- 1.7 Lighting should only be directed where necessary and there should be no loss of night-time dark skies due to light pollution.

Areas of Green and Open Space in and around the village

Background Ash Now⁴

130. Green and open spaces are vitally important spaces within the built-up areas of the village for the residents' well-being and are given as one of the reasons to live in the village environment. Dover District Council has its own Green Infrastructure Strategy PS17 and Open Space Designations 2010. The Ash NDP Group worked closely with DDC on the development of the Ash Open and Green Spaces Assessment and strategy.

Open Spaces of Historic Importance

131. The relationship of buildings and open spaces within Conservation Areas is important in creating their special character and in some cases, contributing to the setting of listed buildings.

Open Space of Local Visual Amenity Value

132. A number of open spaces within the built-up area provide important visual amenity for their beauty, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.
133. The Ash NDP Green Spaces assessment identified 13 green spaces and a number of green corridors within the parish these are indicated on Map 5 Areas of green space in the village of Ash.
134. There are over a 100 miles (726 km) of PRow's, including Public Bridleways, within the parish and these are well used by the public. The Ash Footpaths Group monitors the paths by regularly walking them and reporting back their general condition and accessibility to the Ash Parish Council Footpaths Committee and KCC. In addition, the conditions of the rights of way are raised at the monthly parish council meeting and reported to the responsible landowner or KCC which has a statutory duty to ensure the network is maintained.



Planning Polices

135. The NPPF (para's 91-101) states "access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sports and physical activity is important to the health and well-being of communities" and these should be protected.

DD Local Plan (2002) saved polices

- C08 Protection of hedgerows
- OS7 Proposals for outdoor sports and recreation facilities

DD Core strategy Polices (2010)

- CP7 Green infrastructure network
- DM25 Open spaces

DD Land Allocation Plan (2015) Section 3.5.1- Ash and polices LA20-LA23

⁴ This re-iterates paras 93 – 99 with additional information that is specific to policies ANP2 and ANP3

Evidence

- 136. One of the distinctive features of Ash Village is the amount of green and open spaces identified by local residents. Ash Green and Opens Spaces Report identifies and details the areas to be protected.
- 137. The residents high-lighted the importance of open spaces in the Ash NDP survey 2016, with 94% saying that access to the countryside was important / very important.
- 138. The regular reporting on the condition of the PRoW's is a clear indication that the paths are used and enjoyed by the public.
- 139. The high usage of the sports' facilities, recreation ground, allotments and general open spaces is a clear indication of how the community appreciates and benefits from them.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

- 140. They are:
 - To protect identified green and open spaces (as per assessment)
 - To create and / or enhance green and open spaces within new developments
 - To provide green corridor links between new developments and existing settlements.

Designated Local Green Spaces

<p>Site No 1. Saunders Wood A257 junction of Sandwich Road and junction of Saunders Lane, Ash CT3 2SH.</p> <p>This is a site of 1.08 hectares and comprises areas of deciduous woodland and some grassland. It provides an attractive and well-used area for walking and recreation by local residents.</p>	
	<p>Site No 2. Collar Makers Green Ash CT3 2BT. (DDC designated).</p> <p>This is the central green space within the Collar Makers Green residential area and contains a children's equipped play area. It provides a valuable recreational and amenity space within the residential area, as well as an attractive visual amenity.</p>

Site No 3. Hills Court Nature Path
opposite junction of Cherry Garden Land and Sandwich
Road, Ash CT3 2BJ.

It is a linear space of some 280 metres along the Public
Right of Way EE445 (bridleway) extending north-east
from Sandwich Road to the A257 road.
It has particular recreational importance and value as a
wildlife corridor.



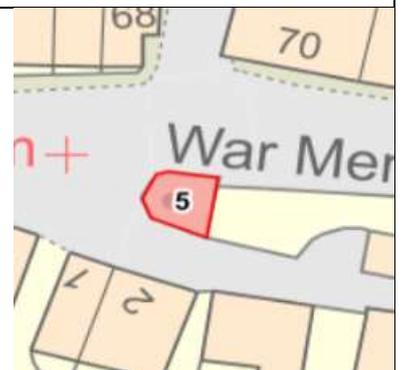
Site No 4. Street End Field, between The Street and Moat
Lane, Ash CT3 2AA (outlined in blue) and
Discovery Field adjacent to the east boundary of Street End
Field (outlined in red).

This site comprises of two fields totalling 2.58 hectares.
Street End Field is DDC designated.

It is accessible green space comprising of grass fields
(managed with grazing sheep) with trees on the boundaries.
Both fields provide a valuable area of green space at the
centre of the village and is extensively used for walking and
informal recreation. It also forms part of the setting of the
village contributing to the visual amenities of the area.

Site No 5. Ash War Memorial
junction of The Street and Moat Lane, Ash CT3 2AW.

This is a small site in the centre of Ash containing the village's war
memorial.
The site is of local historic importance and is a focal point for
remembrance and ceremonies.
It contributes to the local character of the village and the historical
heritage of the parish.



Site No 6. St Nicholas Church Yard
The Street, Ash CT3 2AW.
(DDC Designated).

The site is approximately 1.1 hectares in size and excludes the church.

It is accessible green space and a historical character area. The area is grassed with a number of mature trees. It is an area of peace and tranquility and provides a wildlife habitat in the centre of the village and is a focal point of the village.

St Nicholas Church and immediate confines are excluded from this designated area.



Site No 7. Ash Recreation Ground
Queens Road, Ash CT3 2BA. (DDC Designated).

This is a site of 3.8 hectares. The site provides outdoor sports facilities, shared with accessible green space. It includes facilities for the Ash sports clubs, including tennis, football, rugby union and cricket and outdoor gym equipment.

There is a children's fully accessible, fenced, equipped play area for the under 12's and a separate adventure play area and zip wire.

The open grassed area is used by residents for walking and informal recreation. There are a number of mature trees, many are upto 100 years old.

Site No 8. Ash Allotments
adjacent to the Ash Recreation Ground, Queens Rd,
Ash CT3 2BQ.
(DDC Designated).

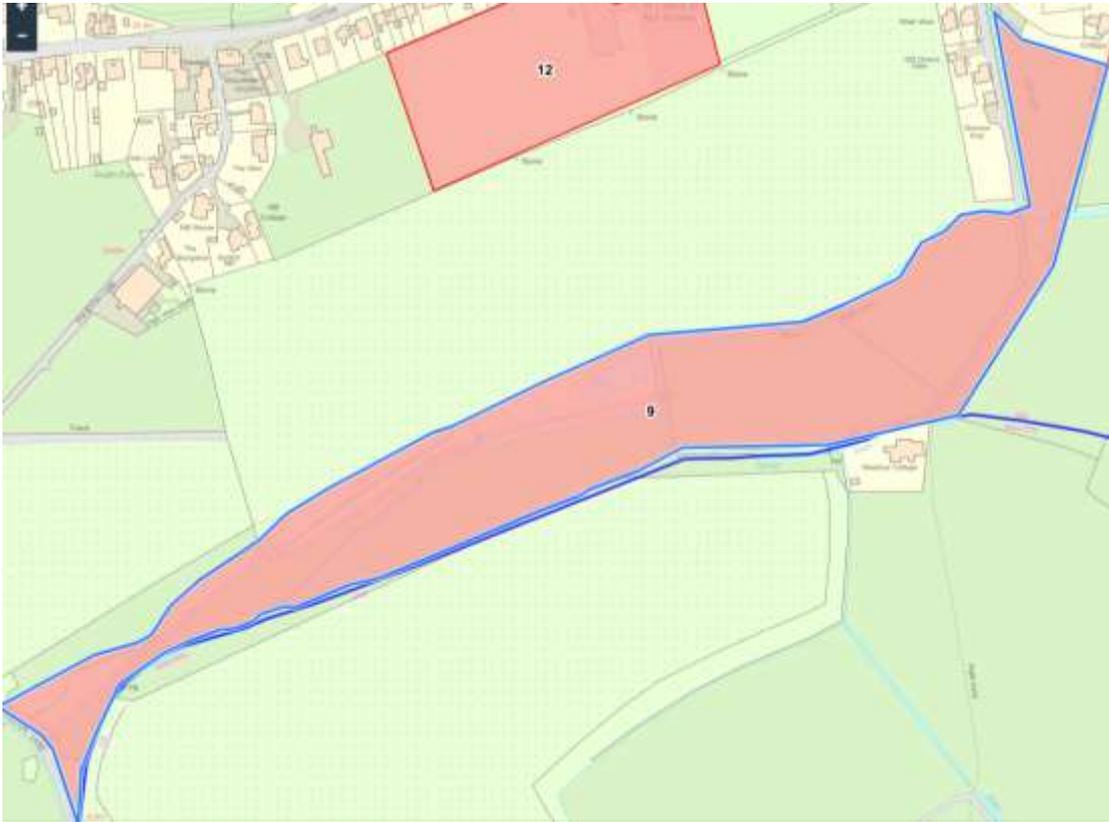
There are 30 plots, covering 0.44 hectares, that provide residents with the opportunity for local food production and recreational amenity.



Site No 9. Ten Acres Field / The Meadow

South of Pudding Lane, extending over to Poulton Lane, Ash CT3 2HW.

This site is approximately 4.66⁵ of accessible green space. It is a wide linear grassland meadow (managed by sheep grazing) with trees, shrubs, waterways and a small lake and has biodiversity importance. It is used for leisure and walking and has good access by footpaths from the surrounding area. The site offers excellent views south of the village towards the open countryside and the village of Staple.



Site No 10. Ash Bowls Club
 Moat Lane, Ash CT3 2DQ.
 (DDC Designated).

This site of 0.34 hectares provides a bowling green and pavilion for the Ash Bowls Club.

It is an important sporting and recreational facility for local residents.



⁵ Excludes the land outside of the Ash Parish Boundary

Site No 12. School Grounds, Cartwright & Kelsey (CoE) Primary School
 School Road, Ash CT3 2JG.
 (DDC Designated)

This site provides children’s equipped play space and outdoor sports facilities of 0.75 hectares, with an open play area, playgrounds, play equipment and informal nature areas.



Site No 12. School Grounds, St Faith’s Prep School
 The Street, Ash CT3 2HJ.
 (DDC Designated).

This site provides children’s equipped play space and outdoor sports facilities of 1.4 hectares, with open playing fields, playgrounds, play equipment and informal nature areas.

Site No 13. Pound Corner
 The Street, Ash CT3 2ET.

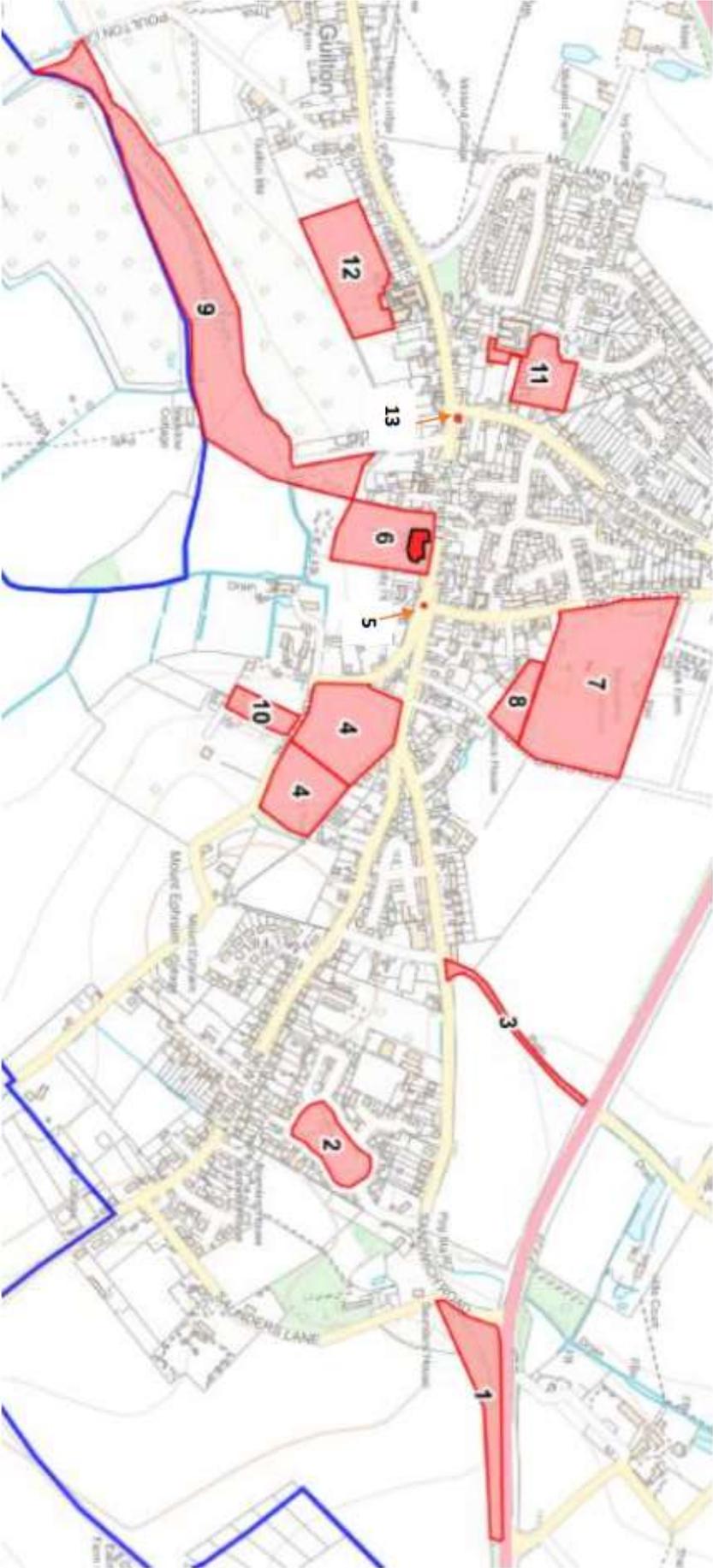
This is a small, landscaped amenity space within the centre of Ash village that provides an attractive setting to the surrounding buildings.

It provides an important and well-used space by residents and visitors to Ash for rest and relaxation.



Section 5

Map 8 Local Green Spaces ANP2



Legend: Dark blue line – parish boundar,

P2 Policy ANP2 – Designated local green spaces

- 2.1 Development proposals that result in the loss of local green spaces or result in any harm to their character, setting, accessibility, appearance, or general quality or amenity value will not be supported.
- 2.2 The provision of high-quality local green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation space and/or access to these via green routes should be a priority of all developments.
- 2.3 The areas listed below are designated as Local Green Spaces and subject to this policy. (They are shown on Map 8 (Local Green Spaces) and their designation is shown in the listing entitled Designated Local Green Spaces on Page 28).
 - 1 Saunders Wood
 - 2 Collar Makers Green
 - 3 Hills Court Nature Path
 - 4 Street End Field and Discovery Field
 - 5 Ash War Memorial
 - 6 St Nicholas Churchyard
 - 7 Ash Recreation Ground
 - 8 Allotments
 - 9 10 Acres Field / The Meadows
 - 10 Ash Bowls Club
 - 11 School Grounds (Cartwright and Kelsey CoE Primary School)
 - 12 School Grounds (St Faiths at Ash Prep School)
 - 13 Pound Corner.

P3 Policy ANP3 Green and open spaces in new developments

- Developments of five or more dwellings should provide appropriate green and open spaces, in accordance with the District Council’s standards, for residents’ health and well-being and recreational use, and:
- 3.1 Provide high quality, open green spaces and opportunities for recreational space and/or access to these via green routes, as a priority of all developments, and developers should refer to the Kent County Council ROWIP, PRoW’s and “Access Good Design Guidance”;
 - 3.2 Provide green infrastructure linking new developments to existing corridors and provide access by foot or cycle to and around the village and public amenities; and
 - 3.3 Should be sensitive to the rural setting, relate to the existing landscape and enhance the built environment.

Biodiversity

Background Ash Now⁶

141. The location of Ash, and its considerable (7,000) acres of agricultural land, naturally leads to a wide range of biodiversity. The employment this land brings to the area also heightens the community's awareness of the environment and biodiversity issues and the effect these have upon their life-styles and impact upon the economy.
142. There are a number of areas within the village that are high in biodiversity and are maintained by the local community with the support and guidance of KCC and DDC Natural Environmental Officers.

National and Local Planning Policies

143. These are:

NPPF Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, (para's 170-171, 174-177)

DD Local Plan Policies (2002) saved policies - C08 Protection of hedgerows

DD Core Strategy Policies (2010)

- CP7 Green infrastructure Network
- DM15 Protection of the countryside

DD Land Allocations Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 – Ash and policies LA20 - LA23.

Evidence

144. The Natural England's maps indicate there are no nationally important nature conservation sites within Ash Parish. However, Ash lies wholly within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Ramsar Site (SSSI), and Sandwich and Pegwell Bay NNR and Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (also a SSSI). These areas provide a vital corridor for birds migrating across England to and from mainland Europe and therefore has a wide range of biodiversity that supports them.



145. The Ash NDP Group worked with Buglife and the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory undertaking an extensive study of the eastern end of the village (Hills Court / Saunders Wood areas)⁷. This study identified over 140 species of invertebrates, birds, mammals, snakes, lizards and wildflowers. This also highlighted a number of rare species of insects and plants that are nationally identified as protected priority and red listed species. These include the turtle dove, yellow hammer, woodpecker, linnets, marsh harrier, common lizard, dot moth, grass snake, bats, hares. These require additional protection. (Ash Biodiversity Report in evidence documents).



146. There has been a desk top study of the rest of the village that has highlighted significant wildlife and further investigation work is planned. This is likely to be undertaken as a community project.
147. The Strategic Environment Assessment Nov 2020 and the Habitats Regulations Assessment Nov 2020, each provide a vital source of information and add further weight to the potential effects the new developments could have upon the parish, both positive and negative.



148. The HRA recommended that there should be a policy that included mitigation to reduce the impact of development and evidence that there would be no adverse effects on the European sites.
149. The Ash NDP Survey 2016 highlighted that 87% of respondents said that the physical environment was very important / important. The survey also highlighted a desire to improve the village appearance and encourage more wildlife and flowers.

⁶ This re-iterates paras 114-119 and is specific to policy ANP4

⁷ The photos were taken at Hills court Nature Trail between 2018-2019 by local volunteers.

Nutrient Neutrality

150. The water environment within the Stour Catchment is one of the most important for water dependent wildlife in the UK. There is evidence that high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous input into this environment are causing eutrophication to the Stour European sites. (Eutrophication is an enrichment of water by nutrients that causes structural changes to the ecosystem such as increased production of algae and aquatic plants, depletion of fish species and general reduction in water quality that has an impact upon the eco-system).
151. It is thought that the main sources of these nutrients are wastewater from housing developments and agricultural sources. Increasing housing development within the Plan area could further contribute to nutrient input into the European sites. Currently, local wastewater treatment plants are under investigation with regard to their impact on the Stodmarsh European sites. The report is due to be published in 2022 by the Environment Agency Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP).
152. Due to the uncertainty of the impact on the Stour catchment area of the new residential developments, all developments must ensure they achieve nutrient neutrality (as set out at paragraph 3.9 in the Ash Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) report prepared for this Plan) using the standard metrics to calculate the impacts. Developments must secure agreement measures with the water treatment providers to maintain and increase nitrogen/phosphorus offsetting within the catchment area.

Planning policy intention and objectives

153. They are:
- To secure existing areas of high biodiversity identified by the survey
 - To retain and enhance the biodiversity across the parish
 - To ensure that there would be no adverse effects on European sites
 - To ensure a 10% measurable net gain is made for every development as set out by the DEFRA metric and best practice guidance by Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), Chartered institute of Ecological & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) and the Government's 25 year 'Environmental Plan 2018', Kent County Council's 'Kent Biodiversity 2020 and beyond – a strategy for the natural environment 2015-2025' or subsequent publications.

P4 Policy ANP4 – Biodiversity

- 4.1 Developments should provide biodiversity net gains of not less than 10% (as set out by the DERFA metric) at all stages of the mitigation processes. Developers must demonstrate that they have followed the mitigation hierarchy.
- 4.2 New developments present an opportunity to maximise the benefits for biodiversity and should therefore seek to maximise these while ensuring there is no detriment to the Sandwich Bay and Thanet Coast SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites, the Pegwell Bay NNR and the Stodmarsh SSSI.
- 4.3 Developments should seek to avoid any harm and to minimise any adverse impact upon the local biodiversity, habitats and wildlife. Where necessary and appropriate, proposed development should demonstrate that the conservation of protected and rare species will be maintained, including that of their foraging habitat. Compensatory provision elsewhere should be the last resort and used only if the development demonstrates an overriding benefit to the local community.
- 4.4 Where necessary and appropriate, development should incorporate additional features for the support of protected species, such as bird and bat boxes, swift bricks and roosting sites and access routes for wildlife (e.g. hedgehogs).
- 4.5 Developments will only be supported when they provide an independent survey report that is supported by the local planning authority, which agrees a robust mitigation plan that identifies there are no alternatives, or that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place.
- 4.6 Developments will only be supported if they comply with the most recent mitigation strategies relating to the Thanet Coast and the Sandwich Bay SPA and Sandwich Bay SAC, where applicable.
- 4.7 Developments can evidence they will not cause an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site within the proximity of the Plan area.
- 4.8 Development can achieve nutrient neutrality regarding the Stodmarsh SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, as described at paragraph 150 of the Plan.

Climate Change

Background Ash Now⁸

154. The residents of the parish understand the impact that climate change has upon them and the lifestyles of working and living in the countryside. While this was not raised as a key issue at the time of the scoping report, it has become evident during the development of the NDP that there is a heightened awareness by the residents of the need to imbed changes within the plan. This aims to help reduce the impacts they have on the parish and surrounding environment. While a number of farms and domestic dwellings have fitted PV panels, more has to be done to meet the government's requirements of zero carbon by 2040.
155. The Ash Parish Council has committed to ensuring that all parish council buildings are low carbon by 2035 and where possible a net contributor to energy supply systems.
156. There are a number of opportunities associated with climate change and the transition to low carbon. These are:
- Air quality improvement
 - Improved community awareness
 - Healthier lifestyles
 - Remote working to improve work life balance
 - Lower fuel bills
 - Increased energy resilience
 - Enhances habitats to improve carbon sequestration

National and Local Planning Polices

157. The NPPF (section 14, paras 148-165) Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change) states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas, emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
158. New developments should be planned for in ways that:
- Retain, improve, increase areas of biodiversity and habitats to sequester carbon and remove carbon from the atmosphere
 - Avoid increased vulnerability to a range of impacts arising from climate change, including run-off by the use of Sustainable Drainage (SUDs)
 - Can help to reduce greenhouse gas emission, through a number of simple techniques.
159. Dover District Planning Policies on climate change are being revised and it is understood that responses to their climate change emergency policy will in future inform their Local Plans.

Evidence

160. There is clear evidence of the impacts of climate change across the world. This can be distilled to a local level. While there is limited technical data on the effects of climate change within the parish, there is an awareness that summers are getting hotter, dryer and longer and winters wetter. When it rains there are occasions when the amount of rain falling in a short space of time is increasing, causing localised flooding. As a key part of the parish economy is farming, this awareness is further heightened because of the effects upon crops and general agricultural practice. The NDP has developed an opportunities and challenges matrix to guide the parish through the next few years. This is in Appendix III Climate Change Matrix.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

161. They are:
- To reduce the amount of greenhouse gas and become a zero carbon zone in line with DDC and KCC emission target dates

⁸ This re-iterates paras 120-128 and is specific to policy ANP5

Section 5

- To ensure all new development is low carbon and contributes to carbon sequestration
- To promote retro-fitting of low carbon technologies to existing building stock
- To reduce the amount of rainwater run-off within new and existing developments or where substantial upgrading takes place

P5 Policy ANP5 Climate Change

- 5.1 Proposals for new development will be supported where it is evident that they seek to meet the following criteria:
- a) are designed to minimise vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change by maximising energy efficiency, utilising low carbon energy and reduce greenhouse emissions;
 - b) are resilient to climate change and demonstrate how the development will respond to climate change adaption measures;
 - c) incorporate one or more low carbon technologies;
 - d) do not increase, and where possible, reduce surface water run-off through increased permeability of surfaces and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems;
 - e) incorporate, where appropriate, bio-diverse green roofs and green walls;
 - f) provide public or private open space that is accessible to shade and shelter and is multi-functional;
 - g) provide opportunities to encourage local food sources, recycling and composting;
 - h) adopt the Home Quality Mark and Passivhaus design standards;
 - i) provide electric vehicle car charging points; and
 - j) provide good quality pedestrian/cycle infrastructure.
- 5.2 New developments should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the use of renewable and low carbon energy and heat by reflecting the Government's policy for national technical standards.
- 5.3 New developments should submit a positive strategy as part of the planning application, demonstrating how the development will achieve carbon sequestration. It should also demonstrate how low energy consumption will be achieved based upon low carbon technologies (e.g. air/ground source heat pumps, photovoltaic panels, solar water heating, rainwater harvesting etc.). If a positive strategy cannot be achieved, a statement outlining the reasons why it cannot be achieved will be required.

Design of new developments and conservation

Background Ash Now⁹

162. The Parish of Ash has a significant historic heritage and is part of the environment and the character of the village that is very important to the local residents and their well-being. This rich history must be retained and respected as and when changes to existing buildings / areas or new developments take place to ensure the integrity of the parish is retained.

National and Local Planning Policies

163. The NPPF 2018 (para 184-202) Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment states that: heritage assets range from sites to buildings of local historic value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of the existing and future generations.

164. Dover District Planning Policies

DD Core Plan strategy (2010)

- DM19 Historic parks and gardens
- DM20 Shopfronts
- DM21 Security shutters and grills

DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 – Ash and polices LA20-LA23

Evidence

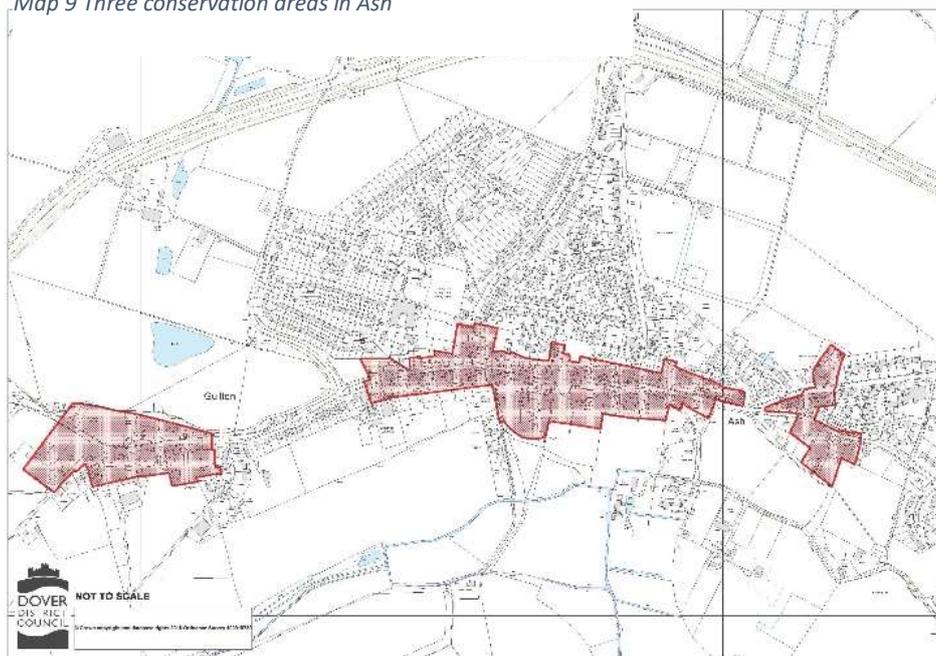
Heritage - Conservation Areas and Listings

165. Historic England's register shows there are 105 listed buildings within Ash Parish. There are two Grade I buildings, one of which is the Norman Church (St Nicholas circa 1190) and there are four Grade II* and 99 Grade II listings. There are three Scheduled Monuments. This high number of listings reflects the long and important heritage and the preservation of buildings and sites within the parish. (See Historic England list).

166. There are 417 archaeological records relating to Ash and the development in 2019 at Chequer Lane discovered significant bronze-age artefacts that are being catalogued by the University of London. (See Kent Historic Environment Record).

167. There are three conservation areas within Ash.

Map 9 Three conservation areas in Ash

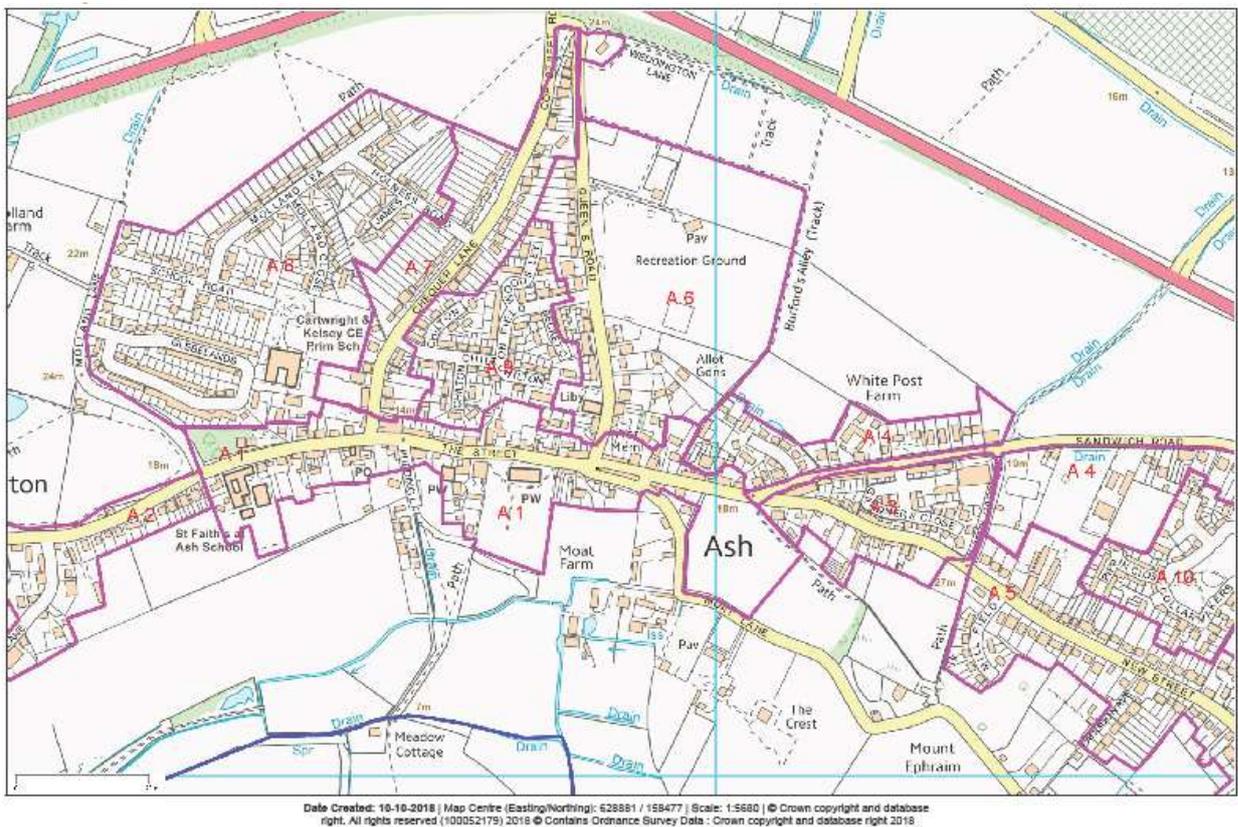


⁹ This re-iterates paras 83-113 and paras 120-122 and is specific to policy ANP6

Distinctive character and design

168. Key Views One of the distinctive features of Ash village is the visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from public places. New development of an inappropriate scale, location and / or design that would interrupt these views could destroy the rural setting and character of the village. The NDP has identified 11 important views. (See Key View Report and Map 7).
169. Character Areas. To ensure there is a clear understanding of what is distinctive within an area, the NDP group has undertaken a detailed character assessment of the village. Through this detailed assessment there is a clear understanding of the distinctive character areas. The assessment identified 10 character areas (see Map 10) within the village settlement boundary (Map 8). (See the Ash Character Assessment)
170. Design Guide -- To help inform the design of new developments within the parish, the NDP Group has produced a Design Guide that sets out the key features that should be considered for any development to enable buildings to blend into one or more of the character areas and to prevent poorly designed, monolithic housing developments that would not be in keeping with the character of the parish.(See the Ash Design Guide)
171. Climate Change – The impact upon people’s lives is now nationally recognised and it is accepted that action must be taken through the design of new developments that will be sustainable and resilient. Reducing carbon emissions and increasing carbon sequestration will improve the well-being of both people and the environment.

Map 10 Ash Village Character Areas



Planning policy intentions and objectives

172. They are:

- To ensure developments within the parish reflect the heritage and distinctive characteristics of the location they are to be developed within and or near
- To ensure design layouts of the new developments are in keeping with the village character and heritage
- To preserve and enhance the heritage and character of the area and to protect the historic heritage assets
- To provide through design sustainable, high quality, climate change resilient development

P6 Policy ANP6 – Developments and Conservation

Proposals for new development in the Plan area should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan. Proposals which assist in delivering the social and environmental aims of the Plan will be supported. In particular, proposals will be supported which:

- 6.1 Demonstrate a high standard of design which respects and reinforces the local distinctiveness of its location, surroundings and the individual character areas of the Parish, as described in the Ash Character Assessment (2018).
- 6.2 Building design should respect and respond to the village setting, taking account of the Ash Design Guide, in relation to:
 - a) scale, density, massing, height of nearby buildings, orientation, use of local natural materials, fenestration, landscape layout and access; and
 - b) the scale, design and materials of the street furniture in the public realm (highways, footways, open spaces and landscape).
- 6.3 Buildings should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscape to minimise energy consumption.
- 6.4 All new developments should be designed to avoid increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by:
 - a) ensuring development schemes demonstrate how adaption measures and sustainable development principles have been incorporated into the design and proposed implementation;
 - b) planning applications which use the Home Quality Mark and Passivhaus design standards will be positively supported;
 - c) conversions and extensions of 500 sq.m. of residential floorspace or above, or five or more dwellings, to achieve 'excellent' in BREEAM domestic refurbishment; and
 - d) expect non-domestic developments over 500 sq.m. of floorspace or above, to achieve 'excellent' in BREEAM assessments and encouraging zero carbon in new developments from 2021.
- 6.5 All new developments must provide facilities for cycle storage and in the case of dwellings for the disabled and older persons, suitable access for mobility scooters.
- 6.6 Provision for electric charging points to either each dwelling or one point per five dwellings.
- 6.7 Respects, conserves and enhances the settings of Listed Buildings and street frontages as described in the Ash Character Assessment.
- 6.8 Respects the integrity, character and appearance of the conservation areas.
- 6.9 All development works should review the possibilities of archaeological finds within the site confines and seek early discussions with the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation team.

Section 5

5.2 Housing

Background Ash Now

Profile

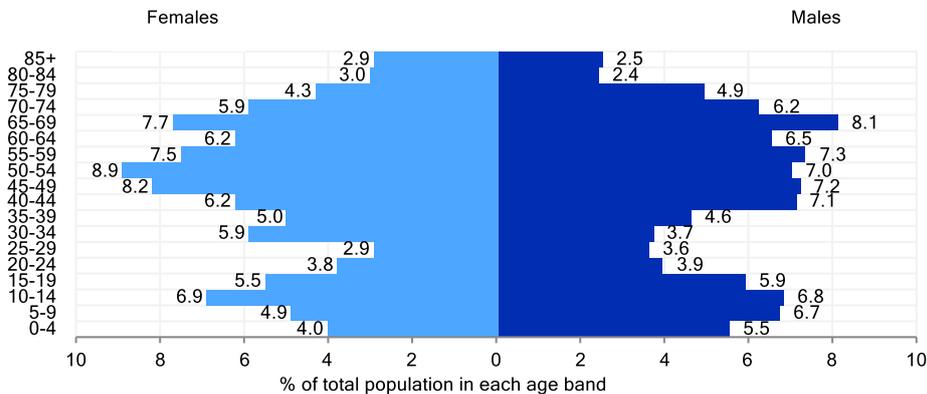
- 173. The 2011 census recorded 3,365 people in the Ash Parish. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year 2016 figure is 3,385.
- 174. The population of the parish has grown slowly over the decades, until the marked increase in the first decade of the 21 century, as shown in Table 1 below. This growth indicates that the parish has been sustainable for many years and continues to develop. Ash is a place where people wish to live and work.

Table 1 Population Growth for the Parish of Ash¹⁰

Year	Population	Year	Population
1705	1,191	1971	2,615
1861	2,039	1981	2,664
1891	2,242	1991	2,707
1911 ¹¹	2,055	2001	2,767
1951	2,300	2011 ¹²	3,365
1961	2,341	2016 ¹³	3,385

Table 2 Breakdown of Ash population by age and gender¹⁴

Figure: Population estimates by 5 year age band
 Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016



¹⁰ ONS

¹¹ Boundary change for parish as secular parish established in 1894

¹² Two new housing developments, Collarmakers Green and Gardners Close in the 2002 / 2003

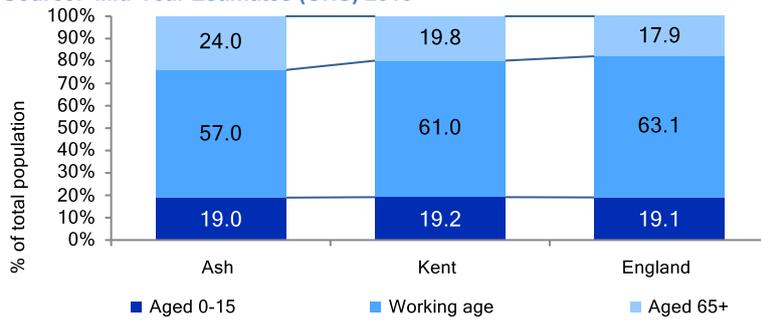
¹³ Source Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016

¹⁴ OCIS Report May 2018 Pg 4

Section 5

Table 3 Comparison of population by age between Ash, Kent and England¹⁵

Figure: Population by age
Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016



Occupation, Housing Types and Tenure

175. Composition of a household is a useful indicator of the type of occupancy. These are :

- Pensioner household - 24.1%
- One-person household under 65 with dependent children - 11.1%,
- One-person households all families with dependents - 16.2%
- Married households - 42.3%
- Cohabiting households -10.4%

176. Housing Types. In 2018 there were 1,363 DDC rateable properties¹⁶ (occupied houses) within the parish. Note: data shown is from the 2011 Census.

Table 4 Breakdown of types of housing in Ash¹⁷

Detached 524 37.6% (England average = 22.3%)	Semi-detached 501 36.0% (England average = 30.7%)	Terraced 285 20.5% (England average = 24.5%)	Purpose built flat 28 2.0% (England average = 16.7%)
Flat (in converted house) 05 0.4% (England average = 4.3%)	Flat (in commercial property) 09 0.6% (England average = 1.1%)	Caravan or other temporary dwelling 40 2.9% (England average = 0.4%)	Second homes 03 0.3% (England average = 0.6%)
Source: Census 2011			

Note: Census 2011 data was prior to DDC transferring its housing stock to the East Kent Housing Association. Housing Association or Social Landlord category includes the properties owned by two Ash Charities.

177. The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should support the strategic housing development needs set out in local plans and positively support local development, considering any profile policies in the Framework that indicate development should be restricted.

178. The DDC Adopted Core Strategy 2010-2026 classifies Ash village in the settlement hierarchy as:

- A Local Centre – with a secondary focus for development in a rural area.

179. The final tier of the hierarchy classifies the hamlets in the parish as:

¹⁵ OCIS Report May 2018 Pg 4

¹⁶ DDC - June 2018

¹⁷ OCIS Report May 2018 Pg 22

Section 5

- Hamlets – all other settlements in the rural area, not suitable for further development unless it functionally requires a rural location.

Existing Housing Stock

180. Ash housing stock as at June 2018 shows a total of 1,363 dwellings¹⁸ compared to the Census 2011 data of 1,332 dwellings, the difference is due to windfall completions since 2011.

Tenure

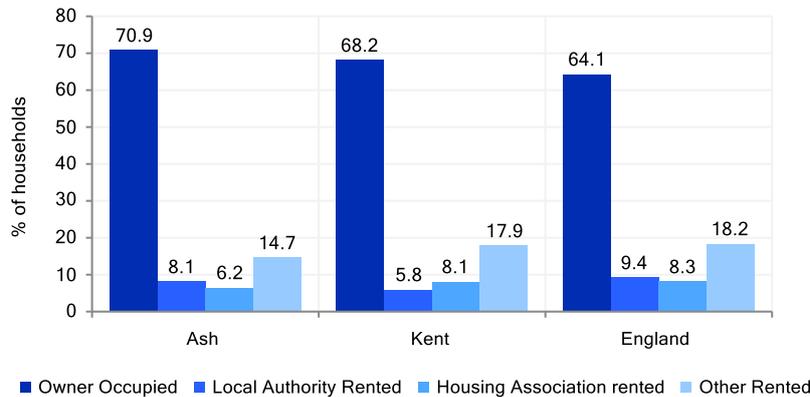
181. The breakdown of the housing stock from the 2011 census data is shown below. The tables compare Ash to the national averages to provide a comparison and place the tenure of the parish into context.

Table 5 Housing Tenue Ash¹⁹

Owner occupied	Owner-occupied: owned outright	Owner-occupied owned: with mortgage or loan
945	500	436
70.9% (England average = 64.1%)	37.5% (England average = 30.6%)	32.7% (England average = 32.8%)
Owner-occupied: shared ownership	Social rented households	Rented from Council
09	191	108
0.7% (England average = 0.8%)	14.3% (England average = 17.7%)	8.1% (England average = 9.4%)
Rented from Housing Association or Social Landlord	Rented from private landlord or letting agency	Other rented dwellings
83	142	54
6.2% (England average = 8.3%)	10.7% (England average = 15.4%)	4.1% (England average = 2.8%)
Source: Census 2011		

Table 6 Comparison of Housing Tenure between Ash, Kent, England²⁰

Figure: Housing tenure breakdowns
Source: Census 2011



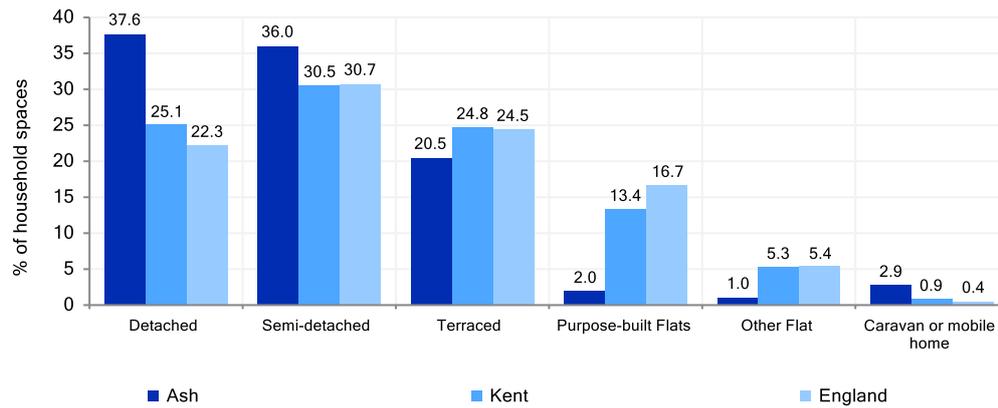
¹⁸ Source - DDC June 2018

¹⁹ OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 23

²⁰ OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 23

Section 5

Table 7 Comparison of dwelling types between Ash, Kent, England²¹



182. The OCSI Local Rural Place Profile 2018 (in Evidence documents) revealed that while most of the stock is in good condition, there is 8.7% of the housing stock without central heating. This should be addressed by owners or landlords. By 2020, legislation will require rented properties to have an Energy Performance Certificate minimum rating E that requires properties to have insulation and usually double glazing. However, it does not apply to all properties and does not require properties to have central heating but it is hoped that this change in legislation will improve some of the above.
183. The Ash Housing Needs Survey 2016 highlighted that the highest proportion of houses within the parish have 2 occupants, with the second highest having 1 occupant, the third being occupied by 3 people, closely followed by 4 people.
184. The parish has two charitable trusts that provide homes for those with connections to the village. The Jack Foat Trust has six properties and the Ash United Charities have eight for the elderly. There is a high demand for these properties with long waiting lists that does lead to some prospective tenants having to relocate out of the parish to find suitable and affordable accommodation.
185. There is a number of affordability issues across the whole housing sector. The key issues are the lower pay within the rural community make buying or renting affordable houses outside the range of some people in the community i.e. above the 25% threshold. These issues are described in more detail in the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment..

Current Housing Needs

186. The parish council is aware of the housing issues within the parish and the importance good quality and affordable housing has on the community and therefore has made considerable efforts in understanding how these can be addressed within this plan.
187. The process started with a workshop and a housing needs questionnaire, then a more detail survey of every household, followed by an independent Housing Needs Assessment. These documents have been used as the basis of the number and type of tenure of housing required within the parish over the plan period.
188. Arriving at housing needs is a complex process and key documents should be read in conjunction with this section for a clear understanding of the issues. These are: Ash Housing Needs Survey July 2017; Housing Needs Assessment AECOM, April 2019; DDC review of AECOM report by PBA May 2019. (See evidence documents).
189. The Ash Housing Needs Survey 2017 was issued to every household and responded to by 22% of the residents. Following analysis of this survey, there were a number of key themes. These are:
- while 80% said “no more houses”, (this was probably due to the amount of housing built within the last 10 years as explained below). They also said housing should be truly affordable for local people; houses for the elderly – for example bungalows
 - concerns over traffic congestion
 - concerns about overcrowding within the village making access to schools / doctors difficult
 - no loss of agricultural land.

²¹ OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 22

Section 5

190. The comments above about “no more housing” are likely to be due to the village having had considerable development since 2002, with over 132 houses being built in two large developments – Collar Makers Green (82 units) and Gardners Close (50 units). In addition, the DDC Land Allocation and Local Plan 2010 has identified two sites that would accommodate 190 houses. One of these sites for 93 units started in November 2020. In addition, there have been 29 windfall site completions between 2005 and 2017.
191. The report also identified a need for 19 affordable homes and a requirement for 10 homes for the older household. The table below indicates the need.

Table 8 Housing Needs from Ash Housing Needs Survey 2017

Affordable Homes	Homes for Older People
7 single people	5 single people
4 couples	5 couples
7 families	
1 pair of siblings sharing	

192. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment 2019 also confirmed the type of housing that is required. The key areas are affordable housing, smaller houses to accommodate downsizing and the need for a considerable amount of housing for the elderly (known as specialist housing in the AECOM report).
193. The Ash Housing Survey 2017 also indicated that the local residents, by their responses clearly identified with the requirement for affordable housing and for housing for the elderly.
194. There is a strong community feeling that social housing should be primarily for Ash people.
195. One of the key themes from the vision workshop was the need to “enhance the range of housing to allow all types and ages of residents to remain within the parish for life.”

National and Local Planning Policies

196. The NPPF states that: plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and local authorities should identify numbers and sites within their areas. The application of the presumption has implications for the way communities engage in neighbourhood planning.
197. Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans i.e. presumption of sustainable development.
198. DDC are currently reviewing their Local Plan and as the Ash NDP has been developed before the publication of the DDC review, the parish council worked closely with DDC to arrive at a number of dwellings and policies within the NDP that will comply with their emerging plan.

What type and number of housing are required for the Plan period 2018 – 2037?

Background Housing Needs

199. It is important to review the data and forecast the demand for housing needs over the plan period to meet the identified need for housing in the parish. It was also important to agree with DDC the amount of housing that should be allocated to Ash, as part of their overall housing needs, based upon Ash’s place in the housing hierarchy, as a “Local Centre”.
200. The parish council commissioned AECOM to undertake a full housing need assessment based upon the national and district criteria as agreed with DDC. This used local OICS data and the findings of the Ash Housing Survey 2017 to arrive at a robust conclusion on the number and type of dwellings that are required that could be signed-off by all parties.
201. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment April 2019, highlights the following issues for Ash:
- requires an increase in affordable family households
 - requires an increase in one person and couple households
 - households with children are predicted to show little growth
 - those aged between 24 and 44 are forecast to decline
 - those over the age of 65 will increase
 - those aged over 85 will grow substantially and likely to need suitable housing
 - the assessment also highlights that for households on lower incomes, their options for house ownership or rental in Ash are very limited

Section 5

- those on middling incomes would be able to afford social housing prices and this income group may have the option of shared ownership.
- those with above average incomes will struggle to afford even the cheapest open market for-sale homes
- there is a limited number of smaller dwellings (1-3 habitable rooms)
- there is an insufficient supply of 1-2 bed smaller dwellings.

202. This information clearly indicates that the trends for households and the type of houses required will need to change over the plan period. Existing and / or new housing stock needs to positively respond to these changes to ensure there are the right number, of the right type, in the right place, to enable people to remain in the parish for life and for them to be able to thrive. Table 6.7 is from AECOM HNA Pg 37

Table 6-7: MHCLG Household projections for Ash by household type

	One person	Couple and no other adult	Couple and one or more other adult	Households with dependent children	Other
2014 (000s)	15.743	14.364	3.663	12.729	2.987
2039 (000s)	20.408	18.366	4.464	12.997	4.360
% change	23%	22%	18%	2%	31%

Source: Household projections for England and local authority districts (2014-based)

Type of Housing Required

203. The AECOM report indicates that because of the change in the composition of households over the plan period, there will be a requirement to change the type of housing available. To understand the likely amount of change required, it is important to know the likely figures of such a change. The table below provides an indication of the movement in the age profiles. Table 6.9 is from AECOM HNA Pg 39

Table 6-9: Rate of change in the age structure of the population of Ash, 2001-2011

Age group	Ash	Dover	England
0-15	18.5%	-3.9%	1.2%
16-24	31.5%	11.8%	17.2%
25-44	8.6%	-4.1%	1.4%
45-64	21.9%	18.6%	15.2%
65-84	36.6%	12.8%	9.1%
85 and over	58.2%	26.9%	23.7%

Source: Census 2001 and 2011, AECOM calculations

Specialist Housing Provision (homes for the elderly population)

204. The AECOM Housing Needs Assessment April 2019 identifies the need for specialist housing. This has been done by using tenure-led projects and using the Housing Learning and Improvement Network's recommended levels per 1,000 head of population, (page 33-36 AECOM report). This is a vital

Table 7-2: Projections of elderly population in Ash to 2031

	2011 Ash (Census)	Dover(Census)	2031 Dover Projection (ONS SNPP 2014)	Ash Projection (AECOM Calculation)
All ages	3,365 (3% of the district total)	111,674	126,341	3,790
75+	286 (8.5% of the NA total)	10,596	21,095	633 (16.7%, in line with proportion of those aged 75+ in the District)

Source: ONS SNPP 2016, AECOM Calculations

Section 5

piece of work considering the statement above indicated the aging profile of the population and indicates the number of houses to accommodate older people required within the parish. The table above (AECOM HNA Pg 42) indicates the likely growth in the elderly 75+ will increase by 16.7% by 2031 and there is a likely requirement for 135 specialist homes.

205. While the findings of the research are complex, it is possible to produce some indicative figures for specialist housing required over the plan period. These are:
- Extra care homes. These are homes that have been designed to support the elderly to ensure they can retain independence.²² The number required over the planned period is 82
 - Sheltered Homes. These are retirement type homes possibly linked into a complex where each occupant lives independently.²³ There is access to wardens, etc. The number of these required over the plan period is 114.
206. It is unlikely that the above numbers could be delivered over the plan period (and they need not all be provided for in Ash) because of the higher cost of this type of accommodation that could affect the viability of sites. It is not the intention of the parish to create a retirement village on one or more sites but there needs to be a reflection of these needs in the planning policies and developments coming forward to ensure that the parish remains an inclusive community.
207. The housing assessment identifies a range of issues that the housing sector needs to address within new developments. The key ones are ensuring there is a mixture of housing types and tenure, affordability and special consideration given to the type of homes available for the elderly.²⁴

Quality

208. The analysis of the housing needs of Ash over the plan period, has shown that it is possible to use the data to arrive at a housing required figure (unconstrained demand). This has been done by using a combination of the Standard National Formula and DDC local policy needs.
209. The calculation of housing numbers is a complex issue. While AECOM used national local and DDC data, as their report was completed earlier than the DDC's review of its strategic policies, there was a difference between DDC's requirement and the report for the base housing numbers for Ash. This altered the unconstrained housing numbers by a small amount (22 upwards).
210. After a discussion between Ash Parish Council and DDC, an acceptable number has been agreed for the unconstrained housing needs for Ash Parish over the Plan Period of 323 for main site developments plus windfalls.

Windfall Allowance

211. The windfall allowance is based upon the assumption that historic new buildings / conversions that have taken place in Ash Parish over the past 10 years averages 3 pa (31) and will continue as there are a few small sites remaining, plus barn conversions coming forward under permitted development. Therefore, the windfall allowance of 2 per annum, **38** over the plan period, is a reasonable assumption and was agreed with DDC.

Total Housing Requirement

212. The total unconstrained number of dwellings needed for Ash, over the plan period, as **323** plus **38**, totalling **361**.
213. In September 2020, a further site that was assessed through the NP process and considered unsuitable, received outline planning permission in principle for 76 units. This will bring the total unconstrained number of dwellings needed for Ash, over the plan period, as **323** plus **76**, plus **38** (windfall) totalling **437**.

What are the options?

214. It is clear from the number of houses required that it will not be possible to accommodate these on existing sites identified within DDC Allocated Sites 2015 (Chequer Lane, Agri, Old Council Yard) and therefore there is a requirement for additional sites to be allocated within the parish. This process is explained in paras 221-235.

²² AECOM Housing Needs Assessment April 2019 Pg 49 for detailed description

²³ Ibid Pg 54 for detailed description

²⁴ There are signs that the housing sector may be taking some of these issues onboard as the new Chequer Lane development contains no houses over 3 bed and has some single accommodation flats that could suit the elderly.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

215. As part of the public engagement, the community highlighted what the residents saw as vital to ensure the community develops coherently. These are:
- To facilitate local people living in the parish for the whole of their lives, with a focus on the provision of local needs housing i.e. starter homes, downsizing homes, homes for the older population (specialised housing).
 - To ensure there are sufficient truly affordable houses for the young and local workforce with connections to the village to remain in the village.²⁵
 - To ensure that social housing is primarily for people with links / work within the parish.
 - To ensure there is sufficient housing for the elderly, be it single units, blocks or warden assisted²⁶, the provision of which will free up larger houses helping to solve the shortage of housing generally.
 - To ensure that over-development of the village does not take place considering the number of houses Ash has had in comparison to other villages and surrounding towns between 2000-2018.
 - To have a mixture of houses on new residential developments that maintains the essential characteristics of the village and its immediate surroundings.
 - To make best and effective use of brownfield sites and promote the development of small-scale sites.
 - To develop the village from the centre outwards, ensuring good connectivity to the local facilities (i.e. schools, GP's, shops, village hall) and reduce the isolation that new developments experience when placed on the outskirts of the village e.g. Collar Makers Green.

Allocation of development sites

216. The Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan allocates development sites and this section explains the process adopted to identify sites.

Assessment Process

217. The parish council appointed AECOM to undertake a review of possible development sites. (See AECOM Site Assessment Aug 2018). Working closely with DDC, it assessed the sites that had come forward for Ash from the 2018 DDC call for sites, as part of their emerging Local Plan.
218. As the NDP is ahead of the DDC emerging local plan, DDC provided AECOM with the agreed approach and criteria for the site assessment to ensure the outcome would be consistent with DDC's approach. The DDC assessment (was completed in March 2020).
219. Sites have been carefully assessed against specific policies in the NPPF, the DDC Core Strategy and DDC Local Plan Topic Paper: Overarching Strategy (Part 1) June 2019.
220. The key policies being:

NPPF section 5 (para 59-79): Policy making authorities [Ash NDP] should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, identifying sites available for years 1 to 5, 6 to 10 and 11 to 15 years.

NPPF section 5 (para 77-79): Planning policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs; and bring forward exception sites that would provide affordable housing to meet identified needs.

NPPF section 5 (para 70): where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply.

DDC Policy CP1 Settlement Hierarchy: Identifies Ash as a 'Local Centre' - a secondary focus for development in a rural area that is suitable for a scale of development that would reinforce its role as a provider of services to its home and adjacent communities.

²⁵ AECOM Housing Needs Assessment April 2019 Appendix A provides affordability numbers

²⁶ Ibid Section 7 as identified and described under Specialist Housing Section 7

DDC Policy CP4 Housing Quality, Mix Density and Design says ... ‘Density will be determined through [the] design process at the maximum level consistent with the design. Density should whenever possible exceed 40 dwellings net per hectare and will seldom be justified at less than 30 net per hectare.’ However, a threshold of 30 dwellings net per hectare is consistent with a Local Service Centre. It should seldom be justified at less than 30 dwellings net per hectare. *(Due to the rural setting of the parish and Ash being defined as a Local Service Centre, an existing housing density of 30 houses per hectare or lower, where the sites about the rural landscape, is considered more acceptable by the residents).*

DDC Policy DM1: Settlement Boundaries - requires that development is not to be permitted on land outside the urban boundaries and rural settlement confines. (As some of the sites are outside the existing confines these will be realigned as part of this Plan or DDC changes to settlement boundaries within their emerging plan)

DDC Policy DM5: Provision of Affordable Homes – defines the number of affordable homes per development

DDC Policy DM15: Protection of the Countryside - aims to reduce any harmful effects on the countryside character, permitting development if it is justified by a need to sustain the rural economy or rural community and it cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

DDC Policy DM 16: Landscape Character - requires that development be sited to avoid or reduce harm on the character of landscape and / or incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts to an acceptable level.

Existing sites from DDC Local Plan 2015 (not reassessed)

221. The existing DD Land Allocations Plan 2015 identified and allocated three sites, one of which has been built (Land at Mill Field) and one has been carried over Policy LA23 Former Council Yard for 5 dwellings, marked in beige. The remaining sites are:

90 dwellings	Land west of Chequer Lane LA20 (reserved matters agreed Nov 2019)
95 dwellings	Land South of Sandwich Road (Agri) site LA21
5 dwellings	Former Council Yard LA23

222. These sites remain as part of the land allocation and have not been reassessed in the AECOM sites assessment but have been taken forward by the parish council when allocating sites over this plan period.

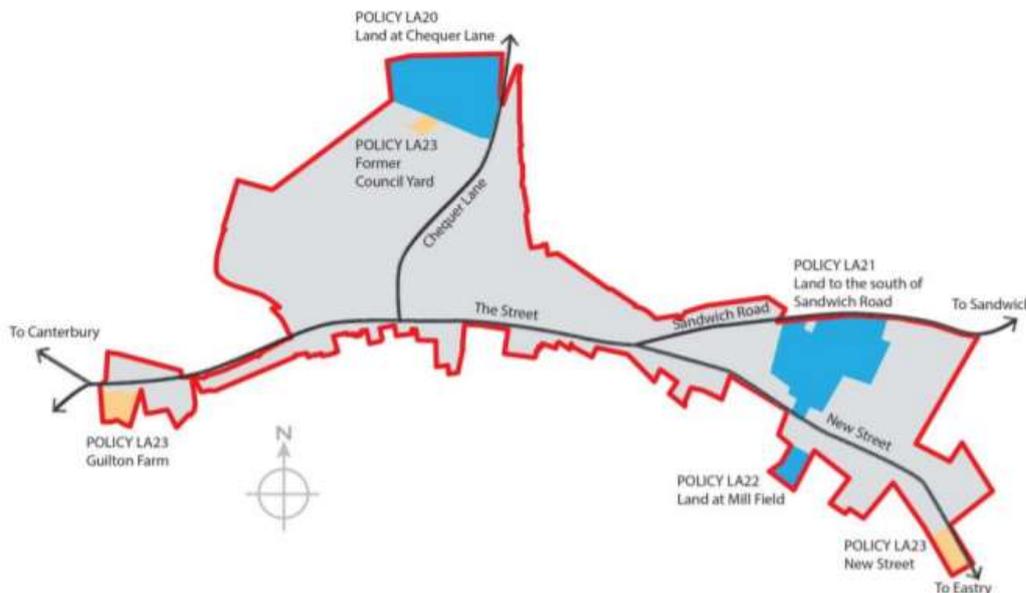
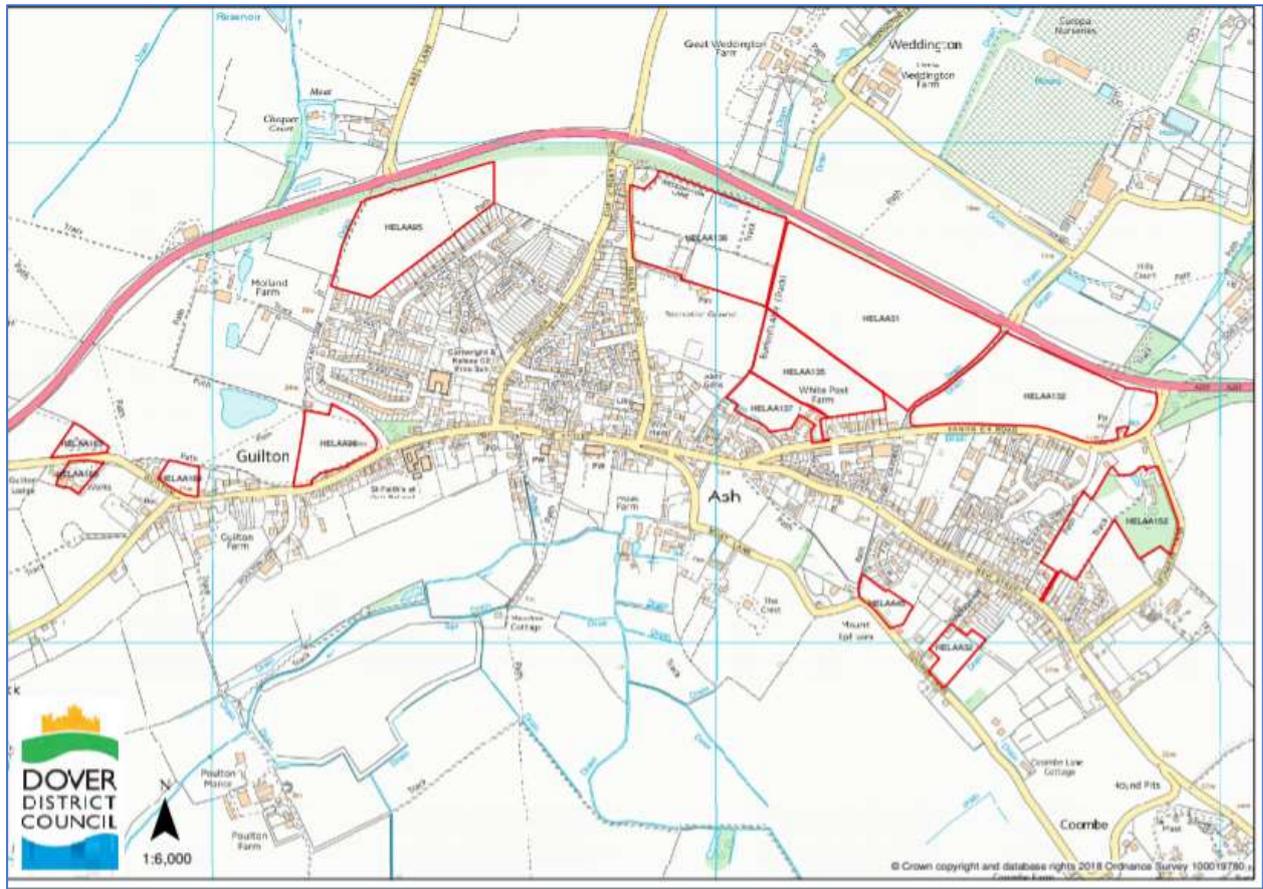


Figure 9 Allocated sites in Ash with changes to settlement confines. Source: DDC

Map 11 Sites identified in the Dover District Call for Sites for Ash



223. From the list of sites brought forward from the DDC call for sites (12 sites plus 3 in the allocated plan). All the 12 sites were reviewed to ensure they were available, deliverable, viable and appropriate for allocation. However, during the site review, one site, White Post Farm, (Site HELAA 137) received outline planning approval on appeal. This site has been excluded from the available site selection but included in the overall housing needs site allocation. Therefore, the remaining number of sites reviewed was 11.
224. A “traffic light system” of rating all sites has been based on whether the site is an appropriate candidate for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. The traffic light rating indicates ‘green’ for sites that are appropriate for allocation, ‘amber’ for sites that are potentially suitable if issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated, and ‘red’ for sites that are currently not suitable for allocation.

Housing Density

225. The NPPF (section 5 page 15 para 59 -71) states that it is important to make effective use of land and that it is important that densities match the surroundings; that neighbourhood plans should consider the opportunities to allocate small to medium-sized sites²⁷ with 10% of housing requirements on sites no larger than 1 hectare.
226. In considering appropriate densities, account should also be taken of the DDC Landscape Character Assessment; the Ash Neighbourhood Character Assessment; Ash Design Guide and the three DDC conservation areas in Ash.
227. Development proposals will be expected to deliver housing at densities that reflect the specific characteristics of the site and its surrounding area (in terms of both built form and landscape). These factors may justify a lower density threshold than 30 dwellings per hectare, especially where sites abut the rural landscape.

²⁷ NPPF para 68-68a

Section 5

228. The number of houses upon these sites in the site assessment is based upon DDC policy CP4 - 30 dwellings per hectare in and are in-line with that expected for a Local Service Centre.
229. Taking the above into account, the density of the sites selected may have to be slightly reduced. This will only become clear when outline design work has been undertaken but where appropriate, the parish council has taken into account its local knowledge of each site and proposed a more realistic housing number to ensure the surrounding character of the village / rural landscape is considered. However, the total site areas allocated will accommodate the housing needs figure of 323, and the changes are relatively small and not likely to affect the viability of the sites selected. Each site policy reflects the numbers from the site assessment and the parish council adjusted number of units

Selected Sites

Assessment

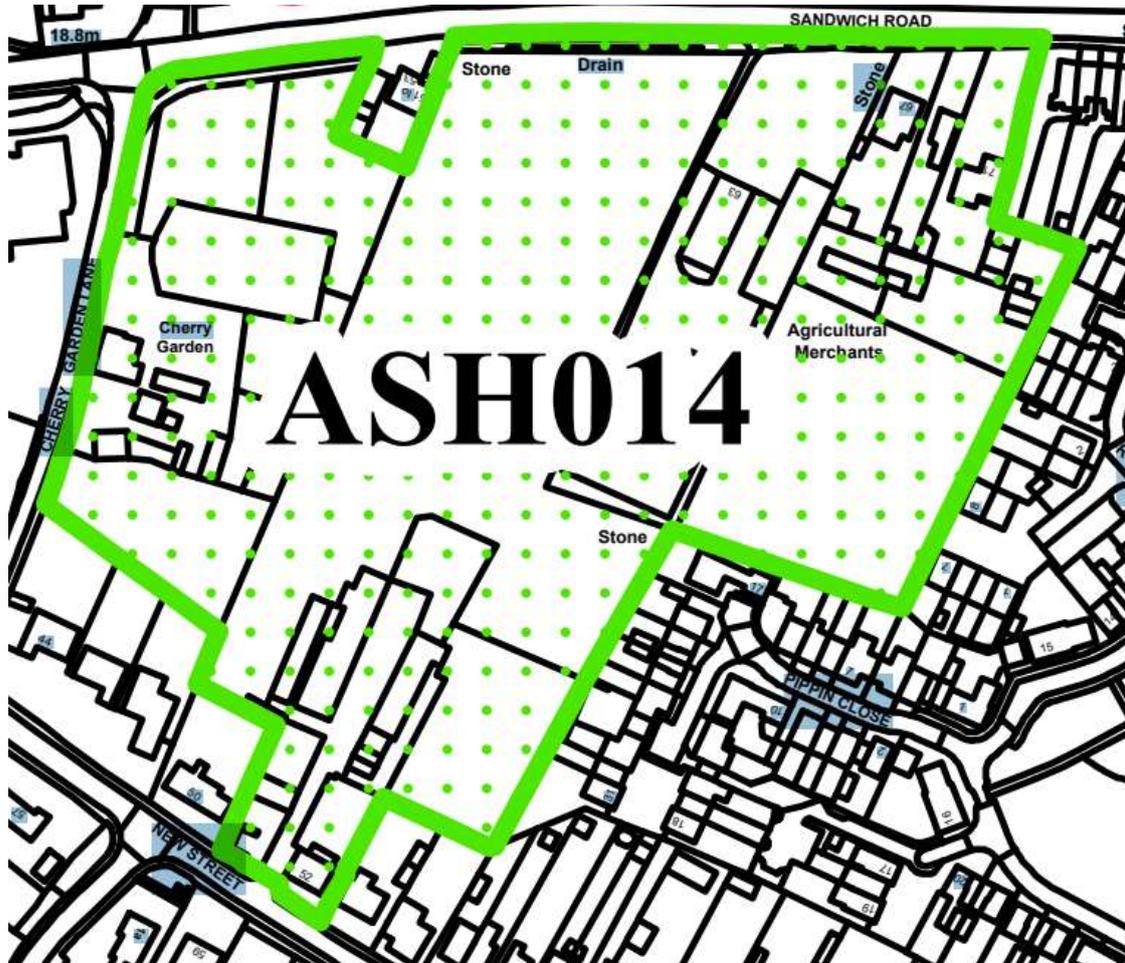
230. The assessment identified 11 sites that were assessed on the traffic light system “RAGNo sites were green, five were amber, and six were red and not appropriate for allocation.
231. In addition to the new sites coming forward, there are three sites taken forward from the DD Land Allocation 2015. These have not been reassessed but have been included in the site allocations for this plan period.
232. The parish council held a special meeting on 1st July 2019 to discuss the site assessment report and the findings. The council reviewed each of the sites and agreed:
- That the red sites were correctly designated as not suitable for development, with one exception, HELAA 163 the southwest side of Guilton (road) as the site is a brownfield site. The red sites are:
 - HELAA 31 Land south of A257 at Ash
 - HELAA 32 Land at the end of Langdon Avenue
 - HLEAA 132 Land off Sandwich Road
 - HELAA 136 Land to the east of Queens Road
 - HELAA 152 Land adjacent Saunders Lane
 - HELAA 163 Guilton northwest side
 - That the amber sites should be considered for development provided suitable mitigation measures such as boundary treatments were included in the policies.
 - The amber sites are:
 - HELAA 45 Site At Millfield recommended
 - HELAA 95 Land north of Molland Lane recommended
 - HELAA 96 Land at Molland Lane not suitable
 - HLEAA 134 Land to the rear of No 24 not suitable
 - HELAA 169 Land at Guilton not suitable
 - The three sites already allocated (2015 Local Plan) were still relevant and should be included in the selection of sites.
233. The parish council using its local knowledge also considered possible exception sites within or adjacent to the village confines but were unable to identify any that could be brought forward.
234. Following the review of sites by the parish council, a public exhibition was held on 28th September 2019 where the sites were displayed with a general explanation of the selection process and planning policies linked to each site. This was followed by a public meeting on 16th October 2019 conducted by a RIPT planner, where residents could express their views and receive authoritative answers, to ensure that the presentation was coherent and relevant to the NPPF and DDC planning framework.
235. Following these two events, the information and feedback from the residents was collated. This information was then used by the parish council to confirm the final list of sites and the mitigation measures required to enable developments to take place in line with the policies in this Plan, the NPPF and DDC.

236. In March 2020, the site HELAA 136 (Land to the east of Queens Road) has been identified by Dover District Council in their emerging Local Plan as amber and suitable for development with mitigation. This site will be included in DDC's Regulation 18 consultation that will take place in January 2021.

Description of sites selected

Agri / Cowans site

Map 12 Agri / Cowan site ANP7a)



- 237. 6-10 years deliverability, site brought forward from 2015, Land Allocations Plan. 95 dwellings (NDP 95 taken forward).
- 238. The 3.23 ha site is located on the eastern side of Ash, south of Sandwich road and is within the Ash Settlement Boundary. The site is in multiple ownership and the existing uses reflect this, consisting of garden land paddocks, agricultural land (old orchard), residential properties and business use. The residential properties front Sandwich Road and have been included within the site boundary to enable access to the site.
- 239. There are hedgerows along the western frontage with Sandwich Road, Cherry Garden Lane and within the site delineating land ownership. Southern Water has advised that a sewer crosses this site and there is insufficient sewerage (underground) capacity directly available to serve this site.
- 240. There are a number of existing access points from Sandwich Road and New Street. The site also includes Cherry Garden, a residential property that has direct access from Cherry Garden Lane.

Site context

241. The site is located on the edge of the built form of the village with residential developments to the east, west and south sides of the site. There are open agricultural fields to the north, beyond Sandwich Road.

Section 5

242. A combination of the scale of the development and the proximity of the site to European designated nature conservation sites means that any planning application will have to develop a strategy with a range of measures and initiatives, such as provision of informal open space or walking routes (leading to a wider PRow)) within the development.

Proposed Development

243. As the site is in multiple ownership it is important that any development should be considered comprehensively, rather than piecemeal, with one spine road through the whole site. If the site was developed incrementally, each phase must demonstrate that it will not prejudice the implementation of the whole development. This is particularly important for the western most parcel of land that would not otherwise have a suitable access.

244. To ensure that the site is developed comprehensively Dover District Council will require a development brief for the whole site to accompany any planning application, (whether it is for part of the site or the whole site). The development brief should identify 'constraints and opportunities' and include sections on density, design including heights, scale and massing) and access. It should also demonstrate how overall development meets the requirements for Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA mitigation, open space, green infrastructure, water drainage and any contributions to off-site infrastructure that may be necessary. The brief should be agreed by all landowners within the allocation and drawn up in consultation with the parish council.

245. There are a number of potential access options to the area of land to rear of 71 Sandwich Road. The outcome of the public consultation (DDC Land Allocation 2002) indicated that the preferred access arrangements would be for the main access / accesses to be from Sandwich Road with emergency access from New Street. This is the council's preferred option. Vehicular access should not be from Cherry Garden Lane, as this would have a detrimental impact on the character of this road and setting of the village.

246. An integral part of the proposed development will be to create a soft edge to Ash. The design and height of buildings is an important consideration to avoid any detrimental impact on the setting of the village or the wider landscape.

10 DDC Policy LA21. Source Land Allocations Local Plan Adopted 2015 Pg 87

Land to the South of Sandwich Road, Ash.

The site is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 95 dwellings. Planning permission will be permitted provided that:

- i. any application for development is preceded by, and is consistent with a development brief for the whole of the site which has been agreed by the Council;
- ii. there is a comprehensive approach to development of the whole site but if the site is developed incrementally, each phase must demonstrate that it will not prejudice the implementation of the whole development;
- iii. the impact of development on the setting of the village and wider landscape is minimised through the siting, massing and scale of new buildings;
- iv. the existing boundary hedgerows and vegetation are retained and enhanced as part of the development;
- v. vehicular access is located from Sandwich Road with an emergency access from New Street;
- vi. there is no vehicular access from the development on Cherry Garden Lane;
- vii. development should provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity and ensure future access to the existing water supply infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes; and
- viii. a mitigation strategy to address any impact on the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar and SPA sites and Sandwich Bay SAC site is developed. The strategy should consider a range of measures and initiatives.

247. The size of the site and its location on the edge of the village provided the opportunity to offer a range of dwellings that would improve the housing offer to Ash. The starting point for any proposal would be the mix identified in the SHMA and / or Ash housing needs assessment. There is an opportunity to provide larger, lower density, family dwellings along the frontage of Sandwich Road to ensure the development reflects the loose rural character of this road (Ash Character Assessment). The opportunity exists to create higher density smaller units within the central area of the site, similar to the neighbouring residential development at Gardners Close. Parking standards should be a minimum of Kent County Guidance for Rural Areas.

P7 ANP7a) Agri / Cowans land brought forward from DDC 2015 Land Allocation

This site, as defined on Map 12, is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 95 dwellings.

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- 7a.1 Any application for development is preceded by and is consistent with a development brief that has been agreed by Dover District Council; this must include an ecological survey;
- 7a.2 Any application of development is preceded by an archaeological assessment of the site and its submission to Kent County Council;
- 7a.3 There is a comprehensive approach to development of the whole site but if the site is developed incrementally, each phase must demonstrate that it will not prejudice the implementation of the whole development;
- 7a.4 The impact of the development on the setting of the village and wider landscape is minimised by reference to Policies ANP4, ANP5 and ANP6;
- 7a.5 The existing boundary hedgerows and vegetation are retained and enhanced as part of the development;
- 7a.6 Vehicular access to the site is from Sandwich Road and New Street;
- 7a.7 There is no vehicular access to the site from Cherry Garden Lane;
- 7a.8 Open and/or shared spaces should be maintained by a management company established by the developer with on-going maintenance responsibilities being held by this company; and
- 7a.9 Development should ensure that occupation is phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, provide connection to gas supply and ensure future access to existing water supply and/or wastewater infrastructure for maintenance and capacity improvements.

Former Council Yard – Molland Lea

Map 13 Former council Yard - Molland Lea ANP7b)



248. 0-11 years deliverability, 5 dwellings. (ANP 5 dwellings taken forward).

249. This site has been identified in the DD Land Allocations 2015 as suitable for development and is subject to Policy LA 23 pg 89.

Site Context

250. This is a small site located within the area of Molland Lea estate, within the Ash Settlement Boundary and has limited access via Molland Lea. The site is the location of the Local Scout Hut that would have to be replaced either on site or relocated as part of the development. The housing number has been included in the overall housing allowance of **323**.

Proposed Development

251. The site location makes it suitable for small houses, possibly specialist housing because of its location, close to the village centre and access routes.

P8 ANP7b) Old Council Yard, land allocated from DDC 2015 Land Allocation

This site, as defined on Map 13, is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 5 dwellings and would be suitable for specialist housing.

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- 7b.1 Any application of development is preceded with a development brief for the whole site, including the retention and/or replacement of the Scout Hut, that has been agreed by Dover District Council;
- 7b.2 Any application of development is preceded by an archaeological assessment of the site and its submission to Kent County Council;
- 7b.3 The impact of development on the setting within the village and wider landscape is minimised by reference to Policies ANP4, ANP5 and ANP6; and
- 7b.4 Vehicular access to the site is from Molland Lea.

Chequer Lane Site

252. 0-5 years deliverability, brought forward from 2015 land allocation; construction due to commence late 2019. 93 dwellings. (ANP 73 dwellings taken forward).
253. As this site has received planning approval, a description has not been included, as the parish council and DDC have accepted the designs, number and type of housing. However, as the site is not likely to be built out before the NDP goes to referendum, it is assumed that only 20 will be completed and therefore an allowance of 73 dwellings has been made in this plan to be included in the overall housing allowance of 323.

White Post Farm

254. 0-5 years deliverability, 33 dwellings (planning application approved on appeal). (NDP 30 dwellings taken forward).
255. This site received outline planning approval (on appeal). Reserved matters DOV/20/00321 received approval on the 28th August 2020, therefore no planning stipulations have been made. The parish council had input into the full planning application to agree design, materials, massing etc, via its normal planning route. As it is unlikely to be built out before the NDP goes to referendum, an allowance has been made of 30 dwellings in this plan to be included in the overall housing allowance of 323.

HELAA 152 Land adjacent to Saunders Lane

256. 0-5 years deliverability, 76 dwellings, This site has received outline permission in principle (DOV/19/01462 Land to the north of Orchard View and west of Saunders Lane) and is likely to receive full approval before the NDP is adopted. The Ash Parish Council had agreed that this site was unsuitable for development. There were a number of reasons for this decision:

- It had been assessed RED by the AECOM Site Assessment and residents during the site selection process had agreed that the site was unsuitable for development.
- There are traffic safety issues and the cumulative impact of the adjacent Collar Makers Green estate, from the allocated Agri/Cowan site and the approved White Post Farm site
- There are significant drainage and surface-water run-off and site topographical problems.
- It is against the Ash NDP principles of developing from the centre of the village outwards. and
- There would be a loss / negative impact to a priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland that could have the potential to support protected species
- The walking distance to the Cartwright & Kelsey School and the pre-school provision of 2.2km would not be possible for young children
- Development of the site would have a negative impact on the natural heritage of the site and the immediate area.

DDC Planning Committee agreed the application on a casting vote. The committee accepted the mitigation on changes to Sandwich Road that many of the site issues could be dealt with under reserved matters and

- It had been assessed as amber in the DDC review of sites that had come forward in 2017
- It would make a substantial addition to the availability of housing sites within the district
- It was a sustainable site and had easy walking access to the village centre
- Other issues could be dealt with under reserved matters that also included conditions on proposed site levels, ecological mitigation, full engineering, gradient and level changes relating to adjacent land, protection of trees and hedges and tree retention and RPZ zones and a surface water drainage strategy.

257. As it is unlikely to be built out before the NDP goes to referendum, an allowance has been made of 76 dwellings in this plan and it has been added to the overall housing allowance of 323. The reasons for going beyond the plan's initial allowance are:

- it will help to ensure deliverability of the housing needed within the plan area
- it will provide a buffer to the housing requirement thus providing greater certainty
- it will discourage speculative planning applications for sites not within the Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan in the future.

HELAA 45 Land South of Millfield

Map 14 Land South of Millfield ANP7c)



- 258. 5-10 year deliverability (amber) 12 units, (NDP 9 dwellings taken forward).
- 259. The 0.4 ha site is located on the south eastern side of the village and sits outside the village settlement boundary. This makes it inconsistent with DDC Policies DM1 and DM15. The northern part was allocated for 10 dwellings (9 actually built) in DDC 2015 Local Land Allocation. The land is generally level and with a slight fall toward the southern boundary and is currently unused agricultural land.
- 260. The site is accessible from New Street through Mill Field estate and an access road head has been constructed as part of the previous development.

Site Context

- 261. The surrounding uses of the land are housing to the south, open countryside south east and west, with long views to the adjacent village of Staple. There is a boundary of hedging to each side of the site that is poorly maintained. The site is considered appropriate for development within the context of the NDP planning policies ANP1 and ANP3.

Proposed development

- 262. The site requires mitigation to the boundaries by the maintaining the existing hedgerows / planting of new trees, hedgerows of native species to the south east / west to reduce the impact upon the long views towards the village from Staple and surrounding countryside. There should be a buffer zone of green space to the north side of the site between the development and the existing houses in Millfield.
- 263. It is expected that the developer will submit a detailed mitigation plan to the parish council before planning is approved.
- 264. The development’s design should be of a mixture of two-story dwellings in terms of size, massing height and be individual in nature, so as not to replicate the existing dwellings leading into the site.

Section 5

Materials should reflect the local type and designs and should be consistent with the NDP Character Assessment for the area and the Ash Design Guide. Dwellings should be designed and constructed to the “Design for Life” principles and “Code of sustainable buildings” code 5.

265. As Ash has a high density of homeworkers, a number of the dwellings should have work/life accommodation opportunities within the dwelling or grounds, via an office.
266. 10% of the houses should be designed for the elderly with level access, walk in showers etc.
267. As this site will be a cul-de-sac, there should be sufficient car parking to each dwelling to ensure the access roads are kept clear for the access of emergency vehicles. Parking standards should be a minimum of the KCC (Guidance Note 3, Nov 2008 for Rural Areas).
268. Charging for electric vehicles should be provided to each dwelling or to a cluster of 5 dwellings providing it is not more than 100 meters away from them and should have a designated parking bay

P9 Policy ANP7c) - HELAA 45 Land South of Mill Field

This site, as defined on Map 14, is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 9 dwellings.

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- 7c.1 Any application of development is preceded by an archaeological assessment of the site and its submission to Kent County Council;
- 7c.2 The existing boundary hedgerows and veteran trees are retained and enhanced with native/indigenous species as part of the development boundary; new hedgerows of no less than 10 metres width should be established along the southern, western and eastern boundaries;
- 7c.3 A green buffer zone is provided between the development and the existing houses to the north side of the site; and
- 7c.4 Vehicular access to the site is from the existing road through Millfield.

Section 5

HELAA 95 Land North of Molland Lane

Map 15 Land North of Molland Lane ANP7d)



269. 11-15 years deliverability (amber) 114 units (NDP 105 taken forward).

Site location and characteristics

270. The 3.8 ha site is located to the northern side of Ash, adjacent to the A257 Ash By-pass and west of the Chequer Lane site. The site is in single ownership and is agricultural land. The land is flat and the site rises slightly to the western boundary. There are three public rights of way through the site. EE90A runs north west to south west and EE112 runs west to east and joins the southern boundary of the Chequer Lane site. These two PRoW's join at the A257 bypass. They provide access from the countryside to Chequer Lane (and the new housing development) and the existing housing on Molland Lea. There is a Public Bridleway EE464 running north to south alongside the site on the western boundary. No details on sewerage or water supply have been obtained but on the adjacent site, Southern Water stated that there was insufficient sewerage (underground) capacity directly available for this site, so it is assumed the same would apply.

Site Context

271. The site is outside the village settlement boundary. While this makes it inconsistent with CS policies DM1 DM15, it is considered that as it is adjacent to the existing housing on Molland Lea (southern boundary) and to the new development of Chequer Lane (eastern boundary) it would be suitable for development and should be brought into the settlement boundary.

272. The western boundary is next to the Guilton Conservation area and has views into the village. The site is considered to have low sensitivity to development and low visual impact subject to mitigation of the views from Molland Lea.

273. There is limited access for vehicles to the site at present. Access would have to be via the new Chequer Lane development (that has an access route designed into its overall site plan) onto Chequer Lane, the A257 Ash by-pass and / or Molland Lane if this was upgraded. Details would have to be agreed with the Highways Authority as part of the outline planning approval.

Proposed Development

274. The access to the site via the Chequer Lane site, or an upgraded Molland Lane or access in the vicinity of Molland Lane, provides an opportunity to create a distinctive village area and generally enhance the village. However, access to the site from the A257 by-pass could lead to a development

Section 5

- with no direct road links to the village making it appear, in all purposes, a separate village. This should be avoided by careful design consideration of all possible access routes.
275. Development proposals will have to demonstrate the ability to accommodate a satisfactory vehicular access.
 276. In order to provide the opportunity for a greater degree of connectivity by foot and cycling between the proposed development and the centre of Ash village and the local primary schools, it will be important that the three Public Rights of way are enhanced and incorporated into the design layout, as they should provide a link from the new Chequer Lane development to Chequer Lane and the village Recreation Ground beyond, via the PRow's.
 277. Development should create a new western boundary to the site through additional landscaping to protect the Guilton conservation area and provide a wildlife corridor between the open countryside to the north bund of the site formed by the A257 Bund and screening. In order to provide a sufficient substantial boundary this landscaping should be no less than 15 m in width to accommodate native species of trees and Sustainable Underground Drainage (SUDs). This area could also be used for informal recreation. In order to reduce the landscape impact, the development should create a 'soft' edge by reducing the density of development and creating a looser grain along the western boundary looking towards the Guilton conservation area.
 278. The boundary to the northern side of the development should also be improved by landscaping the southern side of the bund running along the A257. This will not only improve the views from inside the development but careful design could reduce the impact of air and noise pollution into the development.
 279. The development should create a new southwest boundary to the site where it abuts Molland Lea housing. In order to reduce the development impact upon the existing Molland Lea homes and provide a sufficient substantial boundary. The landscaping should be no less than 10 m width to accommodate native species of trees and SUDs. This area could be used for informal recreation.
 280. Early discussions should take place with Southern Water to establish the capacity required of the sewerage drainage system and where the nearest point of connection would be, to reduce any impact upon the current village system in the vicinity.
 281. A combination of the scale of the development and the proximity of the site to European designated nature conservation sites means that any planning application will have to develop a strategy with a range of measures and initiatives such as the provision of informal space or walking routes (leading to other PRow's) within the development.
 282. Due to the site's distance from the Ash Recreation Ground, there should be adequate designated open recreation and play areas, with play equipment within the development for the residents.
 283. The size of this site and its location on the edge of the village provides an opportunity to offer a range of dwellings that would improve the housing offer in Ash. The starting point for any proposal would be the mix identified in the SHMA but there is an opportunity to provide larger lower density dwellings, towards the western edge of the site, reflecting the looser grain of the rural edge, with higher density created along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries.
 284. Due to the demands for certain size houses and housing for the elderly (specialist housing because of the age profile) one / two bed or warden assessed dwellings should be included within the development (5-10%). This approach would make the development more inclusive and retain the village feel with the inclusion of a mixture of age groups.
 285. Car parking is an issue within all new developments and careful consideration should be given to the amount, location and how the development manages traffic flows, parking etc by good innovative design. The minimum standard should be the KCC Guidance Note 3, Nov 2008 for Rural Areas.

P10 Policy ANP7d) - HELAA 95 Land north of Molland Lane

This site, as defined on Map 15, is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 105 dwellings.

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- 7d.1 Any application of development is preceded by an archaeological assessment of the site and its submission to Kent County Council;
- 7d.2 The existing boundary of trees and hedgerows along the A257 are retained and enhanced landscaping, of no less than 15 metres in width should be established, to reduce the impact of noise and air pollution from the A257. New boundaries of native trees and indigenous hedgerow of no less than 10 metres in width are established along the southern and western boundaries to reduce the impact of noise, air pollution and visual impact to maintain the rural setting;
- 7d.3 The density of development along the western boundary is reduced to mitigate the loss of the rural landscape;
- 7d.4 The Public Rights of Way EE90A, EE112 and the Public Bridleway EE464 are enhanced and incorporated into the design and the layout to improve cycle and pedestrian connections to Chequer Lane (through the new development) and Molland Lea;
- 7d.5 The main vehicular access to the site could be from the Chequer Lane development and/or in the vicinity of Molland Lane;
- 7d.6 The impact of development on the setting of the village, surrounding dwellings and the wider landscape is minimised through design, materials, setting, massing and scale of new buildings; and is minimised by reference to Policies ANP4, ANP5 and ANP6; and
- 7d.7 Development should ensure that occupation is phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure.

Map 16 Land south of Guilton ANP7e)



286. 6-10 years delivery (site of yard and buildings for agricultural machinery repairs, storage only (not the land to the northeast of the road), (red). 10 units. (ANP 9 dwellings taken forward).

Site Location and Characteristics

287. The 0.5 ha brownfield site is located to the north western end of the village and to the west of the access road to the village. It sits on the top of the rise of the village with long distant views. The site is flat and consists of a number of buildings, workshops, used for the maintenance of agricultural equipment and machinery and areas for the parking of such machinery. The site sits adjacent to a large garden to the southern boundary and open countryside to the north, west and east. The site sits outside the village settlement boundary and is inconsistent with CS Policy DM1, DM15. However, because of its brownfield status, this could provide an opportunity to improve the street scene and entrance into the village. The site is considered suitable for development in line with NDP Policies ANP1 and ANP2.

Site Context

288. It is adjacent to the main road leading into the village. It is a brownfield site and is close to the Guilton Conservation area. It can be viewed on approach to Ash and as it is on higher ground it can be viewed from Pedding Hill, and Guilton. The site sits back from the road with a hedgerow along Guilton (road) that is one of the main entry / exit routes from the village. The site has medium landscape sensitivity but is close to the Guilton conservation area. It is considered to have low visual impact on the surrounding areas.
289. The site is some distance from the village centre but there is housing within the village (Collar Makers Green) that is an equal distance from the shops on The Street.
290. The use of this site for development would improve the entrance to the village from the west.
291. The site accesses Guilton (road) that rises out of the village at this point and is on a slight bend.

Proposed Development

292. This site sits to the west side of the entrance to one of the routes into the village. Development on the site provides the opportunity to create a design that defines and creates an entrance into the village.
293. Due to the site's location on a rise in the road and on a slight bend, development proposals will have to demonstrate the ability to accommodate a satisfactory vehicular access and improved sight lines.
294. The public pavement runs from the current site entrance towards the village on the western boundary, where it ceases about 100 meters away. To continue to use a public footpath into the village, it is necessary to cross the road. To provide for a greater degree of connectivity by foot between the development and the centre of Ash village and schools, safe access to the public pavement on the opposite side of the road from the development will have to be provided by the installation of a pelican crossing or similar.
295. Development proposals should create a new boundary to the south eastern boundary of the site to reduce the impact upon the neighbouring garden. This should be a hedgerow of indigenous types. A new boundary to the northern and north western side of the site should be created of hedgerows of native types, to reduce the visual impact entering the village. To provide a sufficient substantial boundary, this landscaping should be no less than 5 m in width to accommodate native hedgerows, trees and SUDs.
296. The design of the dwellings should be of a low density, individual design and vary in massing to reflect the spatial character of the existing buildings and its rural location on the edge of Guilton conservation area and the entrance to Ash village.

P11 Policy ANP7e) HELAA 163 Land South of Guilton

This site, as defined on Map 16, is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 9 dwellings.

Development proposals should comply with all relevant Policies in this Plan.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- 7e.1 Any application of development is preceded by an archaeological assessment of the site and its submission to Kent County Council;
- 7e.2 The existing boundary hedgerows and veteran trees are retained and new landscaping to the boundary of no less than 5 metres in width containing indigenous hedges and native trees is established along the south eastern, north and north western boundaries to reflect the importance of the local landscape and its setting within the wider countryside;
- 7e.3 Special attention should be paid to sustainable drainage on the site especially near the entrance of the site to avoid the possibility of surface water runoff impacting the residents, the bottom of Guilton Hill and the surrounding road network;
- 7e.4 The density of development respects its location within the countryside and reflects the special character of the surrounding buildings on the edge of the Guilton Conservation Area and one of the main entrances into Ash village;
- 7e.5 Vehicular access to the site is from Guilton; and
- 7e.6 Pedestrian access to and from the site must include direct access to a public pavement on both sides of the road at a convenient point.

Section 5

Housing Conclusion

297. The plan has identified sites that will deliver the following number of dwellings:

- Brought forward two existing sites from DD Land Allocations 2015, Former Council Yard and Agri/Cowan - 100
- Plus Chequer Lane (in part, from DDLA 2015) and White Post Farm – 106
- Plus three new sites, Land north of Molland, Land south of Mill Field, and Land at Gilton (south west only) - 123
- Plus windfall - 38 = 367 **for a housing requirement of 361**

298. The Neighbourhood Plan puts these three new sites, plus White Post Farm, plus three from the previous land allocation as options for housing development to deliver the Local Housing Needs within the lifetime of this Plan 2018-2037.

299. Consultation gave the opportunity to local residents for further discussion about each development, its density, form, design, layout, dwelling mix, landscape and access to these sites.

300. The majority of the residents agreed with the allocated sites.

301. In August 2020, a further site received outline planning permission in principle for 76 units. This will bring the total number of units for Ash, over the plan period, as **323** plus **76**, plus **38** (windfall) totalling **437** for a housing requirement of 361.

5.3 Leisure & Well-being, Health Care, Education

Leisure and Well-being

Background Ash Now

302. Ash has a strong community spirit with a plethora of community groups for young and old. This is reflected by the number of groups and activities that take place within the parish for all age groups.²⁸ A number of facilities within the village support these groups. These are the Scout Hut, Ash and Westmarsh Village Halls, the public library, the sports pavilion, the Bowls Club and St Nicholas Church. There is also the Public Rights of Way network. All these facilities and amenities bring health and socio-economic well-being to the rural area.



303. The strength of the community spirit was demonstrated in 2018 by residents. When one of the two local public houses, The Chequers, was sold to a private developer to create flats, the parish council listed it as a community asset and the residents raised over £360,000 in a two-year period to purchase the pub. The Chequer Society carried out the renovation, returning it to a public house and community hub for the wider community in summer 2019.

304. Ash has a long and distinguished sporting history. There is good provision of open sports' space for cricket, rugby union and soccer (seniors and junior). Ash sports clubs are in several local leagues. There are some facility issues in the sports pavilion and these have been addressed in the plan.



305. However due to the number of clubs and organisations (14) in the village, there is a high demand for facilities. While most of these activities are currently carried out within village properties, exceptions being the Bowls Club and Scouts that have their own premises, there is a

need for some of these facilities to be improved to meet the needs of these organisations.

Community Buildings

306. Ash Parish has a number of excellent community facilities that are used for meetings and other recreational activities. The community buildings include two village halls (one in the hamlet of Westmarsh) and the other in Ash village that contains the public library and the Ash Heritage Centre. The village halls, the primary school, St Nicholas Church, the Scout Hut and the Sports Pavilion are used, or hired, for community activities. These buildings are well used, especially the Ash Village Hall. This is used, during the day and evenings nearly every day of the week, for many clubs, activities and private parties. It has often had to turn away bookings

307. The NDP group carried out a survey of the 14 organisation in 2019 to get a better understanding of their activities and requirements going forward to enable them to retain / increase membership and / or provide the right level of facilities. It is clear from the responses (Ash Leisure Survey 2019 in appendices) that the organisations are very vibrant with a total number of members being around 687 and that the overriding issue for most of them was the general condition and / or size of the facilities and their appropriateness for their organisation.

308. The areas that need investment are the Scouts Hut; the sports pavilion on the Recreation Ground that needs updated changing facilities; and general improvements to the village hall to make it more appropriate for some activities taking place i.e. smaller rooms for meetings, improved toilets and kitchen facilities and storage space for equipment.

309. Planning policies are:

NPPF Para 91-92,95,96-101, Promoting safe and healthy communities,

DD Local Plan (2002) "saved policies" - OS7 Proposals for outdoor sports and recreation facilities

DD Core Strategy (2010)

²⁸ Ash Leisure Survey 2019

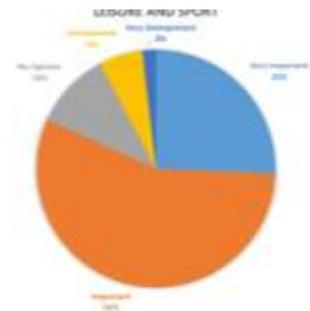
Section 5

- CP6 Infrastructure
- CP 7 Green Infrastructure network

DD Land Allocation Local Plan (2015) Section 3.5.1 - Ash and polices LA20 –LA23

Evidence

310. The feedback is from the March 2019 survey of organisations providing recreational services. There were 14 questionnaires distributed, with 12 returned. These organisations have a membership of around 687, plus many more participating (1384) in external events like bowls, cricket, soccer, rugby and tennis. Seven of the organisations have seen growth since 2013 and eight share facilities. All require some improvements to their facilities to ensure they meet their needs. (Ash Leisure Survey 2019 in evidence documents)
311. The NPPF Promoting safe and healthy communities (para's 91-101) states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places providing the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. It recognises the importance of access to high quality open spaces, opportunities for shared space and recreational activities. These spaces make an important contribution to the health and well-being of the communities. It states (para's 92-100,) that existing open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built upon unless, for example, the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity and a suitable location.
312. The NPPF seeks planning policies that promote opportunities to improve the local open space network. In addition, the NPPF states that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. The NDP Group has undertaken a survey of recreational clubs within the parish to establish their requirements moving forward. (Ash Leisure Survey 2019 in appendices).
313. There is strong support for, and local participation in, the local sport clubs that provide a wide range of sports for all ages. The main sports played upon the Recreation Ground are rugby union / mini rugby union, soccer, tennis and cricket. One of the rugby fields is floodlight allowing the teams to practice and play in the evenings. There are regular league games played for rugby, soccer and cricket, held during their respective seasons and the Sports Clubs are very successful in their respective league tables. There is a Bowls Club in the village. There are allotments with a waiting list for plots. There are two equipped children's play areas in the village, at the Ash Recreation Ground and at Collar Makers Green. The Recreation Ground has an outdoor adult gym that is well used by residents.
314. The NDP Group has undertaken a Green Spaces Assessment to identify these across the parish.
315. The NDP Survey 2016 identified that access to the countryside was very important / important to 94% of respondents, and access to leisure and sports was very important / important to 80% of respondents.
316. The NDP Survey 2016 identified that better facilities and / or improved changing rooms were important / very important to 47% of respondents, with provision for youth groups, important / very important to 65%.
317. The parish council and sports' groups understand the issues around the requirement for recreational and sports' facilities to meet modern standards, to enable a wider range of activities and to be more inclusive. Where possible these have been addressed in the polices.
318. It will be important to secure funding from new developments to improve changing facilities within the Ash Sports Pavilion on the Ash Recreation Ground.
319. Planning policy intentions and objectives are:
- To ensure that sufficient community space and leisure facilities are maintained to serve the parish including new provision in association with new developments
 - To protect and enhance open spaces used for recreational purposes, including improving the changing facilities within the existing Ash Recreation Ground sports pavilion and / or provide a new multi-sports community owned pavilion
 - To secure the future of the facilities and encourage use by the wider community
 - To secure a long-term solution to increase the rugby field capacity



Section 5

- To protect the extensive network of Public Rights of Way in Ash Parish.

320. **Planning Policies** are:

NPPF Promoting healthy and safe communities (para 91-92, 95,96-101)

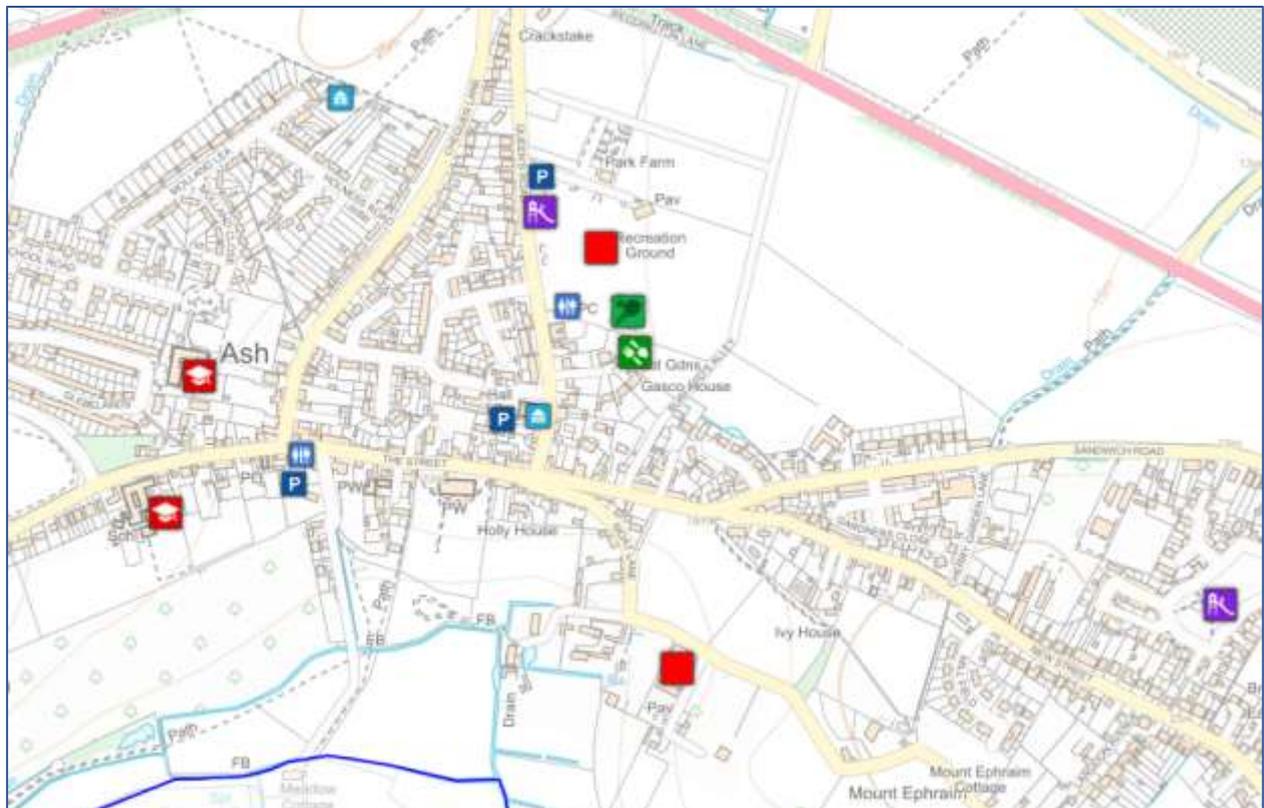
DD Local Plan “saved polices” - OS7 sports and recreation facilities

DD Core Strategy (2010) - CP6 infrastructure,

DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 – Ash and policies LA20-LA23

Facility	Address	Type
Ash Bowls Club	Moat Lane, Ash	Sports facility
Ash Heritage Centre	Ash Village Hall, Queens Road, Ash	Heritage Archive
Ash Recreation Ground	Queens Road	Allotments, Children’s Equipped Play Area, Outdoor Gym, Leisure, Public Conveniences, Sports Fields, Sports Pavilion, Tennis Courts
Ash Village Hall	Queens Road, Ash	Village Hall
Cartwright & Kelsey Aided School	School Road, Ash	Primary School
St Faiths Prep School	The Street, Ash	Primary School
Ash Scout Hut Note: this is covered in ANP7b) but is included for information	Molland Lea, Ash	Scouts and village facility

Map 17 Facilities in Ash ANP8



P12 Policy ANP8 – Retention of Community Facilities

- 8.1 Development resulting in the loss, or reduction of scope of the community facilities as listed on page 67 and shown on Map 17 will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists or that suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere.
- 8.2 Contributions from Section 106 agreements will be sought to improve existing community facilities and provide new facilities where there is evidence that the demand placed upon them from new development will lead to deficiencies in their provision.

Multi-Purpose Community Owned Building

321. The parish council, social and local sports' groups understand the limitations of the existing Ash Village Hall for those activities that some groups would like to undertake but are unable to because of the design of the building. It would like to consider opportunities to develop new, or to extend the existing, facilities to meet modern demands placed upon them. There has been no material development work undertaken to-date to produce a business case or identify land. This is one of the community projects that will be taken forward on the completion of this plan by the parish council and therefore opportunities to secure funding from new developments will be sought along with local / national grants or funding from private trusts.

Health and Social Care

Background Ash Now

322. There is a general practice in the village that provides general practitioner and district nurse services to Ash and a number of neighbouring villages that have no services. The surgery building was built in the 1990's but needs some modernisation and additional space to enable improvement in the range of services it can provide. In 2018, there were two General Practitioners (GPs), one part-time GP, two Practice Nurses, a Nurse Practitioner and District Nursing services. (As with all GP practices, the provision of GP services is rapidly changing and the practice is working hard to continue to provide health services for the community by using locums etc.).
323. The health of the Ash population is generally in-line with the profile for Dover. However, there is a higher than average number of people having long term health problems or disabilities; 19.2% of Ash residents, compared with 17.6% in the Kent.²⁹ There is a high-level of carers (nearly 12% of population³⁰) within the parish.
324. While the 2011 Census indicates that Ash is more affluent than other areas in Dover, there is a significant minority of residents in the community who are struggling. There were 170 ³¹ households claiming housing benefits. In 2013 there were 140 households in fuel poverty, although this had dropped to zero in 2015. ³² There are 3%³³ of households without central heating and 3% were overcrowded. ³⁴
325. These factors contribute to the general health issues within the parish and the plan sets out policies to help support the improvement of health facilities and the wider improvement in the well-being of the village and parish.
326. There is a chemist that includes a pharmacy in the village. This is well used by the residents of the parish and the surrounding villages that do not have such facilities. Its retention is vital to the well-being of these populations and should be safe-guarded.

²⁹ OCIS Report May 2018 Pg 39

³⁰ OCIS Report May 2018 Pg 12.

³¹ OCSI May 2018 - but if in work tax credits are included the figure has gone up. – the decrease from 222 in 2013, is in line with the decline in Kent and England.

³² OCIS Report Oct 2013 Pg 16 – 140 in fuel poverty Census 2011. OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 47 report – zero in fuel poverty based on 2015 ONS.

³³ OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 28

³⁴ OCSI Report May 2018 Pg 28

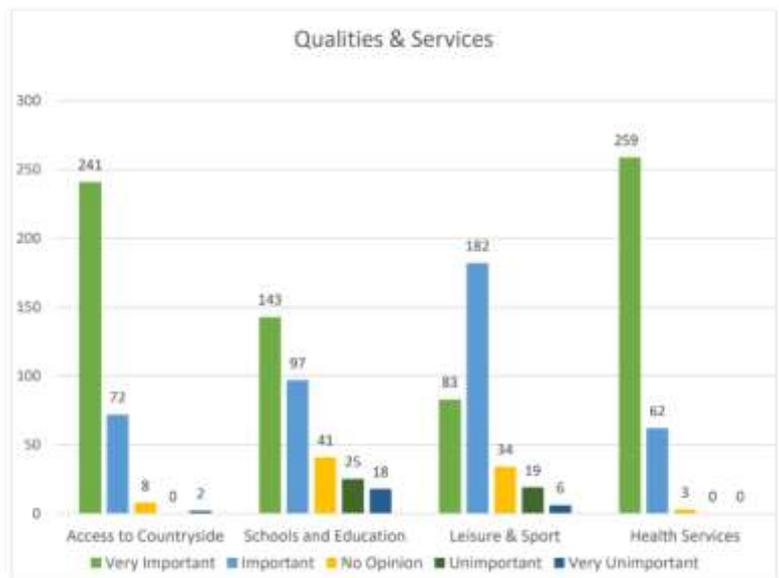
Section 5

327. There are two private Physio-therapy clinics, reflexology, chiropractor and a residential home in the village. These provide additional support to the well-being of the community.
328. There are a number of other services provided by mobile practitioners, i.e., dental, chiropody, reflexology and homeopathy, counselling services in the parish.
329. The NHS community strategy is to move more services from secondary care to primary care with wider integration with Social Services through integrated Hubs providing:
- General Practice
 - Integrated nursing and social care
 - Functional therapy services
 - Access to voluntary and community services
 - Health promotion
 - Integrated mental health services
330. In the scoping workshops, residents highlighted that healthcare and caring for the elderly was very important to ensure that the village and wider parish remained a place where people can safely live throughout their whole lives.
331. Planning Policies are:
- NPPF Promoting safe and healthy communities (par 91-92, 95,96-101)
 - DDC Local Plan “saved policies” - none
 - DD Land Strategy (2010) - CP6 Infrastructure
 - DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) sections 3.5.1. Ash and polices LA -20 LA-23

Evidence

332. The residents developed an objective for health care in the workshop in February 2017 that was:-
- to provide adequate healthcare we will protect the resources we have by upgrading the surgery and district nursing, increase accessibility to external healthcare services, educate parishioners not to abuse the services we have and making greater use of the chemist and its role.
333. The residents highlighted, as part of the workshops and as outlined in the Scoping Report, the importance of a healthy community. The Vision for Ash includes the provision for adequate medical facilities.
334. The OCIS data indicates that Ash has a generally poorer health record than Dover District and the South East, with 20% having long term health problems compared with 15.7% for South East, with 5.6% reporting bad or very bad health.
335. In the Ash NDP Survey 2016, 97% of respondents regarded access to Health Services as very important / important.
336. Access to primary care is through the local GP surgery and to secondary care through either, Margate, Canterbury or Ashford hospitals. These are located 9 to 18 miles from the village and there is very limited public transport to these hospitals.
337. Discussions with and correspondence from the Canterbury & Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group about their strategy ‘NHS Forward View 2017’ and the Kent Joint Health Well-being Strategy 2018 have been taken into consideration.

Ash NDP Survey Data Graphs Oct 2017 (Qualities and Services)



Section 5

338. The NDP Group met with the C&CCCG Strategic Estates consultant to discuss how the above would or could be delivered from the existing Ash Surgery. The outcome of this meeting was that there would be a requirement to expand the space within the surgery. This would enable more services to be delivered and to cope with the increase in patients expected from the existing and proposed developments (Chequer Lane) and surrounding villages. There are opportunities to expand / alter the existing premises that will enable it to manage the above objectives in the short to medium term of this Plan. The longer term may require additional space / services but as this is not a planning issue the parish council will work with the GPs / C&CCCG to agree a possible way forward.
339. The current GP surgery provides services to Ash as well as a number of surrounding villages. As there is proposed major development within the parish, it is proposed that Ash should become a Community Hub and planning policies have been developed to support this vision.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

340. These are:

- Improve service delivery by developing more physical capacity within the GP surgery to enable more services to be delivered locally, in line with Canterbury & Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group strategy.
- To ensure the pharmacy remains in the village by supporting changes etc. required to the premises in line with policy ANP10.
- To encourage more health services to become village based (for example, dentist, chiropodist, etc).

P13 Policy ANP9 – Health and social care

9.1 The use of the land to the north-west of the existing GP surgery to provide additional accommodation for the expansion of facilities will be supported, subject to proposals meeting the following criteria

9.1.1 Provide an appropriate level of car parking for staff and visitors; and

9.1.2 Provide suitable landscaping and screening of the new development.

The Parish Council will seek agreement with Dover District Council and the Canterbury & Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group to secure Section 106 contributions towards the expansion of the health care facilities should that be necessary to meet the needs of an increasing population arising from new developments in the Plan area.

Education

341. The parish has two primary schools, one state and one private. Both schools are active in the community and support it in a wide range of ways and are seen as key to the coherence of the community as whole.
342. The state school has capacity for 210 pupils. The nearest secondary / grammar schools are in Sandwich (4 miles), Dover (15 miles) and Canterbury (9 miles) from the village.
343. The Cartwright and Kelsey CoE Primary School (state school) has a capacity for 210 pupils. The recent Ofsted inspection (September 2019) graded the school good in all areas. It is now classified by the local authority as a good school. The Church inspection (September 2019) also graded the school as good and excellent for leadership, vision and books.
344. The NDP Group has been in discussion with KCC about the number of pupils and the new developments and they have identified at May 2019 there were 57 surplus places for pupils and their calculation for the proposed developments over the plan period would generate a need for 85 places. The additional spaces would be provided by displacing pupils from outside the parish.
345. The St Faiths School (private school) provides educational services to a wide catchment area and would be able to accept more pupils if the need was proven.
346. According to the 2011 Census 24.4% of the population have no qualifications (below DDC at 22% but above South East as whole at 19.1%); while those with level 4 qualifications and above (university degree) is 29% (higher than DDC at 22% and lower than South East at 30%).

Section 5

347. Planning policies are:

NPPF Promoting safe and healthy communities (para 91-92,95,96-101)

DDC District Local plan (2002) "saved policies" - CF2 Mobile Classrooms

DD Core Strategy (2010) - CP6 Infrastructure

DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) section 3.5.1- Ash and policies LA20-LA23

Planning intentions and objectives

348. We will support:

- additional capacity within the village schools to ensure that new demands placed upon them through developments can be provided locally (i.e. within the village)
- sustainable transport for all ages and robust provisions to enable older children to access secondary schooling outside the parish in a timely and safe manner.

Evidence

349. While KCC has indicated that the demand from the proposed developments could be absorbed by the state school, the parish council is mindful that the type of housing developments i.e. more affordable housing, meaning many more young families, could impact upon the predicted number of 85.

5.4 Local Economy

Background Ash Now

350. The 2011 Census tells us that there are 1,669 people within the parish who are employed. This is 68.8% of people of working age (aged 16-64).

351. The following data is from the OCSI Local Insight Profile for Ash May 2018: There are a higher number of home-workers 5.2% compared with DDC at 3.3%. There are slightly more people working in managerial, professional occupations 43.1%, than in Kent 40.3%. There are 175 people claiming DWP benefits within the parish 9.0% (compared to England at 10.7%). There are 20 housing benefits claimants 1.1% (compared to England 1.4%) There are 120 people claiming Disability Living Allowance 3.5% (compared to 3.1% England).

352. The above provides a good insight into how the population of Ash is employed and clearly indicates that just over 46% of the population are actively employed.

353. The Dover Economic Development Needs Assessment (March 2017) identifies that Dover District is a net exporter of labour to Canterbury, Ashford, Thanet and further afield. Many residents commute out of the parish and the district.

Village Shops, Businesses, Farms and Other

354. The Ash Business Survey 2018 provided more detailed information on the number and types of business within the parish and those employed. The parish has a total of 37 business; 14 are farms/nurseries, 18 small to medium sized businesses and 5 sole traders. These businesses permanently employ 137 in agriculture, with 202 within retail healthcare, education and light industry and homeworkers (two employers did not respond to the questionnaire, so the employment figure would be slightly higher - the details of the survey are in the evidence documents). In addition, there are approximately 379 seasonal workers employed on the farms and agricultural business.

355. Most of the businesses have been established within the parish for several decades with the majority being established for over 30 years.

356. The customer base for these businesses is largely national, with international and south east, second and third. Three of these farms have local farm shops in the area. In the Business Survey, they highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed if they are to remain competitive and expand. The key ones are:

- New larger premises (mainly due to higher production)

Section 5

- Access to local workforce (recruitment issues)
- Access for HGV's with better road links
- Faster broadband / mobile telephone.

Existing business sites

357. There are a wide range of local shops and services provided in the village. They include two grocery stores, hairdresser, physiotherapy, craft pop-up shop and activity centre, two pubs (the Volunteer in Gilton and The Chequer Inn), chemist, takeaway, café, nail bar/ therapy centre, farm shop with a coffee shop / bar. Many of these have been in the village for a considerable number of years and support the local community with its daily requirements.
358. During the scoping workshop, residents highlighted the importance of the village shops in supporting the community.
359. The range of shops and the amount of trade they have indicates that there is a healthy demand for their service. Other shops and businesses are in Sandwich which is 4 miles away.
360. In common with many villages, the parish has lost a number of public houses over the years, the most recent one in the village centre in 2015. The community responded and the building was listed as a community asset until 2021. The community set up the Chequer Inn Society and raised in excess of £360,000 and purchased the premises from a private owner. It re-opened as a community pub / restaurant in summer 2019.
361. There are a number of farms, offices and workshops within the parish. Some of these are located in converted rural buildings. These include a large green-housed tomato growing business, a car repair shop, garage, agricultural repair and spares yard, garden and landscape services, organ building workshop, music school and architectural services. Some of the farms have been in present ownership for over 50 years and the majority for over 30 years or more. All these businesses provide opportunities for local employment in the parish.
- 
362. The Ash Business Survey July 2018 showed that there are 14 farms, 9 small to medium size businesses that employ in excess of 336 permanent workers, with the farms employing 379 seasonal workers.
363. The presence of these local businesses is important to retain the sustainability of the parish and a number of them have long term associations with the parish. The DDC Core Strategy Objectives states to “ensure that the local economy performs to or exceeds the country and regional averages”.
364. During scoping workshops, residents highlighted the importance of local business and the need for life / work units and the opportunity to work locally.
365. Planning policies are:
- NPPF Building a strong competitive economy para 80-84
 - NPPF Supporting high quality communications para 112-116
 - DD Core Strategy (2010)
 - CP6 Infrastructure
 - DM2 Protection of employment land and buildings
 - DM3 Commercial re-use of or conversion of rural buildings
 - DM24 Rural shops and pubs
 - DD Land Allocation Plan (2015) section 3.5.1.- Ash and policies LA-20 LA-23

Evidence

Local Economy

366. The Dover District as a whole has a poor employment record with a considerable loss of employment over the years. There is currently a job density of 0.59 compared to Kent at 0.78 (DDC Sustainability

Section 5

Scoping Report 2018). Ash has a good employment record and to ensure this is maintained and enhanced there is a need to encourage and support business.

367. The NPPF (para's 80, 81a,) states neighbourhood planning policies should promote economic growth by setting out a clear economic vision and encourage sustainable economic growth and should promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in the village, such as shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship.
368. In some cases, the shops and public houses occupy listed buildings and more generally contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Areas. These shops and public buildings are vital to the economy and support of the community, as the nearest town, Sandwich is some 4 miles away.
369. The customer base for these businesses is from the surrounding area or passing trade. In the Ash Business Survey (July 2018) they have highlighted a number of issues that could reduce their ability to expand. The key ones are:
- Need for larger premises
 - Access to workforce (recruitment issues)
 - Better broadband
 - Improved car parking for staff and customers (limited off-road parking in village centre)
370. Ash Village shops – the majority of the shops and food outlets are around the junction of Chequer Lane and The Street, with one along Sandwich Road and one at the north end of Queens Road. There is one pub in Gilton and one on Chequer Lane.
371. The contribution made to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the village by the existing shops and public houses (one having been bought and re-opened by the community) is recognised.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

372. These are:

- Support sites suitable for further intensification and regeneration for business use subject to meeting certain criteria. (Given the location of most of the sites within the countryside of the parish, any proposals will need to conserve and enhance the landscape and tranquillity of the countryside).
- Support sites within the countryside that are served by the rural road network. (This should be able to safely accommodate the type and / or amount of additional traffic that would be generated without any unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane).
- Where businesses are located in the village, (because of the narrow road widths), sufficient additional parking should be provided to stop cars spilling out on to the road network by preventing on-road parking. The sites and provision of on-site parking should be subject to careful assessment of their impact on the Conservation Areas and listed buildings.
- To support and retain the local shops and service providers within the community.

P14 Policy ANP10 – Village Shops and Public Houses

The continued provision and improvement of village shops, restaurants/cafes and public houses in the Plan area will be supported, subject to:

- 10.1 Proposals for alternative use will only be supported, where it has been demonstrated that the current use is no longer economically viable, and that there is no longer any realistic prospect of continued use, by:
- 10.1.1 Evidence that the site has been actively marketed for a minimum of 6 months at a realistic price for its current use; and
- 10.1.2 Evidence that the facility is no longer economically viable.

Tourism

Background Ash Now

- 373. There is a thriving tourism industry within the parish. This is due to its location, in close proximity to Richborough Castle and the Roman Fort at Richborough (within the parish boundary) that attracts some 14,640 visits a year. Additionally, within 14 miles of the parish there is the historic City of Canterbury (the seat of the Church of England) the Cinque Port of Sandwich (with the longest street of timber buildings in the UK), Dover, Deal and Walmer Castles.
- 374. There are the SSSI nature reserves that attract bird watchers and nature enthusiasts. There is also the Saxon Shore Way and the Stour Valley Walk and the National Cycle Route 1 that winds through the parish with access to the coastline and wetland bird reserves at Stodmarsh and Sandwich / Pegwell Bay.
- 375. Tourism helps to support local business and there are a number of B&B's, holiday lets, and caravan and camping sites.
- 376. Planning policies are:
 - NPPF Building a strong, competitive economy (para 80-84)
 - NPPF Supporting high quality communications (para 112-116)
 - DD Local Plan (2002) "saved polices"
 - LE 30 Caravan sites
 - LE31 Holiday Chalet sites
 - DD Core Strategy (2010)
 - CP6 Protection of employment land and buildings
 - DM2 Protection of employment land and buildings
 - DM3 Commercial buildings in the rural area
 - DM4 Commercial re-use of conversion of rural buildings
 - DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 Ash and polices LA20- LA23

Evidence

- 377. Within the parish there are 5 bed and breakfast accommodations, two temporary Pitch-up caravan / tent sites (35), 7 holiday homes and some AirBnB that are now becoming more popular.
- 378. There are numerous attractions within the parish - Richborough Castle and Roman Fort, access to bird sanctuaries and the local ancient towns and coastline. In addition, there are two fishing ponds in the parish, on Cooper Street and at Richborough, and a fishing lake adjacent to the parish, and two camp sites.



Planning policy intentions and objectives

- 379. These are:
 - Support and encourage tourism within the parish to provide jobs and support the patronage of local business and shops
 - Provide opportunities to use rural buildings to support the tourism businesses.

P15 Policy ANP11 - Conversion of rural buildings to business use, tourist accommodation and tourist attractions

Proposals to convert rural buildings to business use and tourist accommodation or attractions within the Plan area will be supported, where they meet all of the following criteria:

- 11.1 Any changes to existing buildings should retain the traditional rural character of the buildings and their setting in the defined Character Assessment area, and their landscape;
- 11.2 The building is of a permanent and substantial construction, and does not require complete or substantial reconstruction;
- 11.3 The local road network serving the site would be able to accommodate the type and/or amount of traffic that would be generated;
- 11.4 The amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers or the tranquillity of the countryside would not be significantly adversely affected; and
- 11.5 Sufficient on-site parking is provided for staff and delivery vehicles.

Where possible and practicable, the Public Rights of Way network around each of the proposed developments should be improved to provide access to walking and cycling routes, in liaison with Kent County Council.

Working from home

Background Ash Now

380. There are a considerable number of people who are using their home to work from within the parish (70+). These are mainly professionals, service providers and craft workers. All of these need good accommodation and good broadband speeds to enable them to maintain or expand their businesses.
381. Small scale businesses that are incidental to the enjoyment of the home do not require planning permission and this form of employment opportunity will continue to be available over the Plan period. Due to the high number of 'homeworkers' there could be some benefits in there being a community business centre within the village to allow for meetings and networking to take place on a regular basis.
382. Planning policies are:
 - NPPF Building a strong competitive economy (para 81-82)
 - NPPF Supporting high quality communications (para 112-116)
 - DD Core Strategy (2010) CP6 Infrastructure
 - DM2 Protection of employment land and buildings
 - DM3 Commercial buildings in the rural area
 - DM4 Commercial re-use or conversion of rural buildings
 - DD Land Allocations Local Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 - Ash and policies LA20-LA23

Evidence

383. The number of people working from home in the parish was 5.2% (125) compared to 3.5% for England³⁵. This is relatively high for a rural community within Dover District. In response to the 2016 ANP Housing Survey, 25% of respondents thought that room in a new house to support 'Home' business very important / important.
384. The Enterprise Zone (Discovery Park) at Sandwich, that adjoins the parish boundary and is some 4 miles away, is one of the most successful in the country with 150 business and over 2,400

³⁵ Source 2011 Census

Section 5

employees. It has had a positive impact upon the parish by either directly employing people or via homeworking.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

385. These are:

- To support the growth in homeworking by securing faster broadband for the village and rural areas.
- To ensure all new dwellings have broadband connectivity or access to it in the future, by the placement of cabinets etc. on the site and connection / ducting into each house.
- To ensure some homes in all developments make provision for homeworking accommodation, either within the main dwellings or by providing space/ accommodation in the garden.
- Develop the options to create a business centre / meeting space, by providing new facilities or using public facilities (the public library) or supporting the private sector to provide access to facilities i.e. the public houses.

P16 Policy ANP 12 - Working from home

- 12.1 Where planning permission is required for homeworking, development proposals will be supported for appropriate office and/or light industrial use, which meet the following criteria:
- 12.1.1 No significant and adverse impacts arise to nearby residents or properties from noise, fumes, odour or other nuisances associated with the homeworking, or causes traffic issues;
 - 12.1.2 Any extension or free standing building shall be designed having regard to all relevant Policies in this Plan and should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which it is subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or materials used in its construction;
 - 12.1.3 There are good, sustainable transport links with high quality walking and cycling infrastructure available linking the development to local networks.
- 12.2 Development will be supported for a community business centre within the Plan area that provides, extends and/or re-uses existing community premises, subject to:
- 12.2.1 Provision of sufficient car parking on-site to accommodate the demand; and
 - 12.2.2 The use of the premises does not lead to adverse impacts on residential amenities in the vicinity of the site.

5.5 Local Infrastructure

Traffic Management and Off-street Parking

Background Ash Now

386. The rural location and poor public transport have resulted in more inward traffic to Ash as people travel to access public transport from these areas (some local villages have lost their bus services in 2019 and travel to Ash to access bus services).
387. Traffic volume within the village is a considerable issue. The main road through Ash Village, The Street, is very congested, because of the very limited off-road parking. This is exacerbated at times by the high demand to drop-off and collect school children and to allow senior children to access public transport to go to school in Sandwich, Canterbury, Dover and Thanet. In addition, there is added pressure from people in surrounding villages traveling into the village to access public transport due to their services having been cut. The Street has been completely blocked on a number of occasions because of the high traffic volumes. This has resulted in residents and those travelling through Ash being inconvenienced for considerable periods of time.
388. The parish council commissioned a traffic report in 2017 that highlighted a number of actions that could be taken to try and reduce this congestion.
389. Access to the farms and some rural businesses in converted rural buildings are located away from the village centre. They rely upon road systems around the parish that remain practically unchanged since early settlement days. It is important that such enterprises can be safely accessed to allow for growth without the erosion of traditional lanes that are important to the landscape and character of the area.
390. The NPPF (para 102) promotes sustainable transport and suggests that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals, and take opportunities to develop transport networks, promote walking, cycling and public transport.
391. NPPF (para 105 c, d, e) Maximum parking standards should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary to manage the local road network, patterns of movement, street parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
392. There are considerable traffic issues within the village, partly due to the high levels of car ownership in the parish because of its rural location. The OICS data May 2018 indicates that 40.8% of residents own 2 cars, with 9.5% owning three. Considering the majority of the population lives within the village settlement boundary it can be seen why there are significant traffic issues in the village as there is a high reliance on car transport to travel to work, to schools, or to access facilities outside the parish.
393. The increased use of homeworking could have a positive impact upon travel while the possible lack of school accommodation could equally increase traffic issues.
394. **Planning policies are:**
- NPPF Building a strong and competitive economy (para 80-84)
 - NPPF Promoting sustainable transport (para 112-111)
 - NPPF Supporting High quality communications (para 112-116)
 - DD Local Plan (2001) saved polices - TR9 cycle routes
 - DD Core strategy (2010) CP6 Infrastructure
 - DM11 Location of development and managing travel demand
 - DM12 Road hierarchy and development
 - DM14 Roadside services
 - DD Land Allocations Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 - Ash and policies LA20-LA23

Evidence

395. The residents highlighted traffic issues as a major problem for village during the scoping workshops and highlighted five key issues. They are:

Section 5

- High car ownership and reliance on transport to travel to work or to access facilities outside the parish.
 - Safety issues accessing the A257.
 - Problems with congestion caused by parking within the village (mainly along The Street and the southern end of Sandwich Road leading into the village). There have been a number of accidents because of parked vehicles.
 - Inconsiderate parking at Pound Corner (people accessing local shops).
 - Insufficient public car parking space along The Street (very few houses have off-road parking in this area).
 - Inconsiderate parking slowing or preventing public transport to stop where allocated or being able to pass each other in The Street. (Main pinch points are at school pick up / drop off time). This has been exacerbated by the reduction of public transport in surrounding villages that has made people travel to Ash to access school / public transport to senior schools).
396. The parish council has undertaken a traffic survey and has developed a strategy (Ash Highways Improvement Plan) to manage some of the issues. The key ones being:
- Restricting car parking on some roads
 - Placing wooden bollards on some pavement sections, in the centre of The Street, to prevent cars parking on pavements (Pound Corner and on the opposite side of the road)
 - Placing double yellow lines in areas of high risk, i.e. bends and where buses have to have access
 - Traffic calming measures at the four entrances to the village
 - As the A257 is a highways matter, to try and influence signage / speed restrictions where the village roads meet the A257 (the A257 Working Group was set up by the local villages of Wingham, Preston, Littlebourne to influence the KCC road strategy. Ash joined this group).
397. The parish council understands that the demands for on-street parking will only increase with new housing developments. The increase in car numbers and the lack of off-street parking within the village centre exacerbates this demand. The parish council wishes to manage this in a number of ways, as set out in the objectives.
398. Due to these traffic problems, the plan has set a minimum car parking standard on all developments. This is to reduce the impact of new developments upon the existing road network. (Minimum standard to Kent County Council Standards (Rural Roads) and DDC Core strategy 2010).

Planning policy intentions and objectives

399. These are:
- To ensure new housing developments do not increase the parking problems by ensuring sufficient off-street parking is provided for each dwelling within the confines of each development
 - Ensure the local shops are not impacted by the reduction of local parking / access.
 - To reduce air pollution by encouraging walking, cycling and encouraging the use of electric cars
 - A community project will be taken forward on the completion of this plan by the parish council to look at the options to provide additional car parking in the village centre and to deliver the traffic calming measures identified in the traffic survey.

P17 Policy ANP13 - Off-Street Parking

Development proposal in the Plan area should:

13.1 Provide parking in accordance with the Kent County Council Standards and not less than:

- 1.5 parking spaces independently accessible for each 1 and 2 bed dwelling;
- 2 parking spaces independently accessible for each 3 and 4 bed dwelling;
- 1 parking space independently accessible for each specialist dwelling; or
- a communal car park.

The above requirements excludes garages.

13.2 Not result in a net loss of on-site parking space;

13.3 Not result in the loss of off-road public parking space through the need for cross over and / or visibility splays: and

13.4 Not lead to over-spill parking on to public areas.

Telecommunications

Background Ash Now

400. Most of the village has access to fibre broadband (i.e. the Open Reach cabinets that have fibre) but this does not mean it is available to every house. In 2018, most village households had acceptable up and download speeds for their needs. However, the wider parish and more rural areas and hamlets have no access to fibre and are unlikely to get this in the near future. This is a problem not only for households wanting to access films etc. but also for rural businesses and home workers as it has a negative impact upon their sustainability.
401. The parish council reviewed the situation with Kent County Council to see where improvements could be made, and / or access to funds that would help rural businesses, by the possible use of mobile broadband. The options are explored in more detail in sub-section 5 in this document.
402. The current provision of telecommunications within the parish is patchy, with high speed broadband available at the main exchange but not routes throughout the village (access can be improved to individual properties if requested and additional fees paid) but this is far from being a comprehensive access. Outside the village there is no access to high speed as the copper cables are unable to carry the data, so there is a large proportion of the parish without access or the likelihood of gaining access to high speed broadband other than through line of sight equipment provided by a third party. (Many rural business have to use this approach).
403. The development of sustainable communities requires the provision of a wide range of local facilities and services.
404. The economic development of the parish will become more reliant on faster phase been raised by residents and businesses and as there is a significant number of homeworkers, improvements to these methods of communication is vital if the economy of the parish is to be sustainable and able to grow.
405. The NDP group has been working closely with KCC to develop a parish IT strategy. The main aim of this is to identify each of the fibre broadband hubs within the parish; identify where there are gaps; review up / download speeds across the parish and where there are areas of poor connectivity (mainly rural businesses); explore options to improve access by line of sight links, etc. The aim is to work with KCC and Open Reach to improve connectivity and / or apply for grants to undertake this work.
406. **Planning policies are:**
- NPPF Supporting high quality communications (para 112-116)
 - NPPF Building a strong, competitive economy (para 80-84)
 - DD Core Strategy (2010) - CP6 Infrastructure

Section 5

Evidence

407. The national standard set out by OFCOM 2017 states that the average broadband upload speed is 25.24 to 45.08 Mbps for England and download speed is 4.26 to 6.05 Mbps for England should be accessible for each household.
408. Research by the NDP IT Group has highlighted that the main village has access to superfast broadband above 24 Mbps with the exception of Green Man Farm, the Lanes, top end of Chequer Lane and Coombe Lane.

Map 18 Broadband speeds. Source: KCC Broadband Team Nov 2018



Below Sandwich Road:

The majority is above Superfast speeds (over 24Mbps)
Green Man Farm is getting 19Mbps
Coombe Lane is getting 17Mbps
There are some houses near the telephone exchange getting 17Mbps

409. Outside the village:
- the hamlets of Nash and Hoaden are below with 14 Mbps and 9 Mbps which effects around 50 premises
 - Westmarsh is getting 1 Mbps (some business and private homes are receiving VFast) which effects around 80 premises
 - Paramour Street and Lower Goldstone are below superfast but because of access from different cabinets, it is not possible to verify individual speed at cabinet
 - Upper Richborough and Cooper Street are getting below superfast which effects 28 premises
 - Richborough Farm and premises to the south are receiving 2 to 49 Mbps and are fed via Sandwich exchange
 - Knell Lane is getting 16 Mbps and Cop Street to Upper Goldstone and Weddington are sub superfast, as they are fed from exchange overhead. This effects around 38 premises
 - Goss Hall is receiving superfast but this reduces at Brook Street which is receiving 13 Mbps
 - The approximate number of houses effected by not being able to access superfast board band in the rural community is 251. This is around 17% of the total housing stock.
410. Many residents and business highlighted the poor broadband speeds in their response to questionnaires. This was further reinforced in the business survey in which many respondents said that the lack of good connectivity was, or would be, holding back opportunities to expand their businesses.
411. The research undertaken by the NDP Group has identified each of the fibre cabinets and where there are gaps. It has identified the up/down speeds within the village and wider parish and identified where there are gaps. The findings are in the IT Report in the evidence documents.
412. The planning policies intentions and objectives:

Section 5

- To ensure all businesses within the parish have access to superfast broadband speeds
- Ensure all properties within the village have access to superfast broadband speeds
- Work with KCC and Open Reach to activate the above within the next five years
- Ensure all new housing developments have access to fibre via ducting to convenient points on site and each dwelling
- Ensure all rural conversions have been suitably ducted to enable line of sight equipment to be installed and run to a convenient location within the property
- Look into grant opportunities for community lead partnerships to improve connectivity via Openreach's Community Fibre Partnership Team, or commercial line of sight providers.
- This is likely to be one of the community projects that will be taken forward on the completion of this plan by the parish council. It will continue to develop a telecommunications strategy to support these objectives.

P18 Policy ANP14 - Telecommunications

- 14.1 All new and refurbished residential units and employment developments within the Ash village settlement boundary will enable 'Fibre to the Premises' (FTTP) broadband connections.
- 14.2 Before development commences, details shall be submitted (or as part of reserved matters) for the installation of fixed telecommunications infrastructure by connections to multi-point destinations or to buildings/premises which have been ducted to accommodate such technologies.
- 14.3 This shall provide sufficient capacity, including duct sizing to cater for all future phases of the development with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of existing and future residents.
- 14.4 Where the above is not possible or practicable, mitigation should be provided to ensure premises can receive broadband speeds. This should be submitted as part of the planning application or reserved matters.
- 14.5 Rural conversions should make provision for ducting within the premises to enable 'line of sight' equipment to be installed and accessible at suitable locations within the premises.
- 14.6 The requirement for masts in the countryside to enable connectivity will be supported providing that they are not located close to residential buildings, historic buildings and Conservation Areas, key views and sensitive habitats.
- 14.7 Where possible, telecommunications providers should share masts.
- 14.8 Connectivity through 'line of sight' links will be positively supported.

Public Transport

Background Ash Now

413. Transport has been highlighted by the community as important, with public transport and cycle ways through the village and to Sandwich (Discovery Park) and new parking facilities. National Cycle Route 1 goes through the parish and is regularly used by visitors cycling through the county.
414. While car ownership is high in the parish, there is still a heavy reliance upon public transport for a large section of the community. This ranges from school children accessing secondary schools, all more than 4 miles from the village, through all ages to the elderly who use the buses to access the nearest town, Sandwich, or hospitals of which the closest is 9 miles away.

Section 5

415. To ensure this public transport remains running through the village, it is important that there is easy access to the bus stops. It is important that the buses are not blocked out of the bus stop locations or accessing the village by inconsiderate parking. In 2020, the parish council started to carry out a number of traffic calming measures and will continue to explore further measures.
416. There is a need to improve access / signage to the A257 via the three existing junctions. The A257 is an unrestricted, new design road and wide for a single carriageway and so gives the impression that it is possible to speed. It bends slowly around the village making sight lines quite poor.
417. In addition to these main entrances, there are a number of access points for farm vehicles entering /exiting farm-yards and fields with little or no signage. These access points are concealed around the bend with the possibility of slow vehicles causing possible traffic conflicts. While there have been no fatalities, there have been a number of crashes at the junctions onto the A257.
418. As the volume of traffic increases from surrounding towns and villages and from within Ash, crossing and entering the A257 will become increasingly dangerous at these junctions. The parish council is working with the neighbouring towns and villages through the A257 Working Group looking into ways in which the speed can be reduced and to improve the general road use.
419. The Planning Policies are:
- NPPF Promoting sustainable transport (para 102 -111)
 - DD Core Strategy (2010) - CP6 Infrastructure
 - DM11 Location of development and managing traffic demand
 - DM12 Road Hierarchy and development
 - DM14 Roadside services
 - DD Land Allocations Plan (2015) section 3.5.1 - Ash and policies LA2-LA23

Evidence

420. While car ownership is high in the parish, 84% of respondents to the Ash NDP Survey said that good public transport was very important / important; cycle ways 31% very important / important and additional car parking very important / important.
421. The 2011 census shows that 11% of the population has no access to a car and there is no direct public transport to QEQM acute hospital (Margate) 9 miles away.
422. The NPPF (para 103 a, b, c, e, para 104 b, d) states the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure should be identified and opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects and for environmental gains. Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.

Planning policy intentions and objectives

423. These are:
- To ensure the public transport system can effectively use the road network within the village by ensuring access to bus stops and being able to travel unhindered through the village. (The Street has been blocked on a number of occasions with buses unable to enter the village).
 - To ensure that any developments within the village do not unduly impact upon safe access / egress from the A257 or impact upon the village access routes to the A257.
 - Developments have sufficient car parking within the site and do not impact upon the surrounding road network by creating over spill parking.

P19 Policy ANP15 - Transport

:Development proposals within the Plan area should include measures to minimise and make acceptable the impacts on the local road network by:

- 15.1 Demonstrating how walking and cycling opportunities have been prioritised and new connections have been made to existing routes.
- 15.2 Encouraging the use of sustainable transport, such as public transport, and including new and enhanced pedestrian/ cycle routes within the development leading to the existing public transport network and, where necessary, the provision of new bus infrastructure.
- 15.3 Ensuring that development does not lead to adverse impacts upon air quality.

Proposals that either adversely affect existing walking and cycle routes or do not encourage appropriate new walking and cycling opportunities, will not be supported.

Water and Sewerage

424. While this plan does not cover the other major national infrastructure providers, the National Grid has a 20km high voltage electricity line between Richborough and Canterbury (the Richborough Connection) to connect the Nemo Link into the UK's electricity transmission system. The line, consisting of 60 pylons, crosses over part of the Ash Levels in the north east of the parish. There is no development considered for this part of the parish in the plan.

425. The village has not had any issues with the volume or quality of water supplies. There is low water pressure in the rural areas that will require addressing if more demand is placed upon the system in the area. DDC has discussed with the provider (Southern Water) ways to ensure this situation would not be adversely affected by development.

426. The village has some sewerage issues. Since 2004, there has been a number of occasions when there have been sewerage spills into domestic gardens in the White Post Gardens area and the nearby Sandwich Road, due to serious under capacity of the main drain system. This has happened since the completion of the Collar Makers Green and Gardners Close developments in 2002/3. This indicates that the system is at, or very near, to capacity. DDC has discussed with the providers (Southern Water) the likelihood of this being a potential problem if additional development takes place in this area.

Funding new wastewater infrastructure

There are two main mechanisms for funding new wastewater infrastructure, depending on what purpose that infrastructure is intended to serve.

These two mechanisms cover:

1. **Local infrastructure – developer funded**
 - ✓ Serves individual development
 - ✓ New connection pipework (site specific charge)
 - ✓ Network reinforcement (new infrastructure charge)
2. **Strategic infrastructure – Business Plan funded**
 - ✓ Serves the wider community / catchment
 - ✓ Wastewater treatment works
 - ✓ Larger pumping stations
 - ✓ Water quality improvement schemes



Southern Water

427. In the rural areas, households are not on main drainage and have their own sewerage systems. However, if these systems are not maintained, they could impact upon ground water sources and the general ecology. (New rules for sewerage systems came into place in April 2020 which may help to alleviate this issue).

428. The Plan will ensure all new developments can be added to the water and sewerage systems without compromising existing dwellings.

P20 Policy ANP16 - Infrastructure

- 16.1 New and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community, subject to other Policies in this Plan.
- 16.2 All new developments will be expected to provide an appropriate level of infrastructure to meet the needs and demands arising from the development. Where an infrastructure need is identified for a particular development, the necessary infrastructure must be put in place to support that development as the need arises.

6 Monitoring Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan

429. It is important that this Plan is regularly monitored. This is to ensure that the objectives are being delivered; the planning policies are being applied; the outcomes of developments are measured against planning approvals and deliverables.
430. To ensure the above happens, the Ash Parish Council will annually:
- a) Review the objectives within each section and those that have been delivered
 - b) Review each planning policy against how often it has been applied and the effectiveness, against DDC approvals or refusals pattern of planning applications for the parish of Ash, for the previous year
 - c) Report on the number of housing units built on designated sites and windfalls
 - d) Review the Ash NDP when there is a major change in national or DDC local planning policies
 - e) Use the DDC Authority's Monitoring Report to collect some of the above data and inform the parish of DDC's overall performance against the deliverable outcomes effecting the parish.
431. Each year, the above will be reported to the community at the Annual Ash Parish Meeting.
432. Every five years, or before if there is a major change, the Parish Council will undertake a full review of the Plan and its policies, in line with the NPPF, the new Dover District Local Plan 2020-2040 and its planning policies and any other relevant changes affecting the Parish, to ensure that the Ash NDP remains current and reflects the community vision.

7 Appendices

Appendix I - Mitigation required re nutrient neutrality calculation

The Habitat Regulations Assessment Nov 2020 Sec 7.5 required an explanatory note to be given for the policy point (HRA Ref 7.4):

'The development will only be supported if it can achieve nutrient neutrality regarding the Stodmarsh SAC/SPA/Ramsar site.'

HRA Section References

5.29 Assuming the developer's nutrient neutrality calculation confirms that mitigation is required, it is likely that some or all of the following may need to be undertaken.

5.30 If mitigation is required, the following should be explored:

- i. Secured agreement with the wastewater treatment provider that they will maintain an increase in nitrogen/phosphorous removal at the WwTW though this will be unlikely to be successful until after the WINEP study is completed and the measures required to achieve favourable conservation status with regards to treatment works have been agreed.
- ii. Secured agreement with the wastewater treatment provider or others to provide and maintain an increase in nitrogen/phosphorous offsetting from catchment management measures (this may include mini-farm interceptor wetlands). This must take account of the restoration duties and must not hinder the ability to achieve the conservation objectives.
- iii. Provide measures that will remove nitrogen/phosphorous draining from the development site or discharged by the WwTW (such as wetland or reedbed).
- iv. Increase the size of the SANGs and Open Space provision for the development on agricultural land that removes more nitrogen/phosphorous loss from this source.
- v. Establish changes to agricultural land in the wider landholding in perpetuity that removes more nitrogen/phosphorous loss from this source.
- vi. Acquire, or support others in acquiring, agricultural land elsewhere within the river catchment area containing the development site (or the waste water treatment discharge if different), changing the land use in perpetuity (e.g. to woodland, heathland, saltmarsh, wetland or conservation grassland) to remove more nitrogen/phosphorous loss from this source and/or, if conditions are suitable, provide measures that will remove nitrogen/phosphorous on drainage pathways from land higher up the catchment (e.g. interception wetland).

Appendix II - Community Projects

While the NDP Committee has undertaken extensive research on the requirements of the parish, there are a number of issues which need more work to fully deliver the objectives set out in this plan.

Biodiversity

See Section 5.1 Environmental - Biodiversity

Biodiversity (Project 1)

To establish a group to develop an Ash biodiversity plan which undertakes the detailed study of the western end of the village to produce a report for the parish council. This will make recommendations for action to enhance and preserve the habitat. The aim will be to produce a guidance booklet for the community to improve the understanding and conservation of the parish's wildlife.

Review of community facilities

See Section 5.3 Leisure, Well-being, Health Care and Education

Review of community facilities (Project 2)

To establish a working group to review existing provision for activities within Ash Parish, identifying the need and developing options and a business case to support either extending the Ash Village Hall or the provision of new facilities within the village settlement boundary.

Car parking and traffic

See Section 5.5 Local Infrastructure

Car parking and traffic (Project 3)

To establish a working group to look at the options to provide additional car parking in the village centre and to deliver the traffic calming measures identified by the traffic survey and residents.

Telecommunications

See Section 5.5 Local Infrastructure

Telecommunications (Project 4)

To continue to develop a telecommunications strategy for Ash Parish to support business and individuals to access grants to ensure they remain sustainable and competitive.

To implement the agreed strategy within five years of the establishment of this plan, and to review annually its impacts upon the parish and community as a whole.

Appendix III – Climate Change Matrix

CLIMATE CHANGE MATRIX	
Opportunities	Challenges
Agriculture, horticulture and forestry Longer growing season providing increased yields Potential for new crops (grapes, navy beans) Reduced frost damage should increase productivity	Reduced die-off of pests and diseases due to warmer winters Decreased soil quality and increased erosion due to increased run-off from winter precipitation Need for increased irrigation in summer Possible wind / storm damage to standing crops and nursery stock
Biodiversity	
Opportunities	Challenges
Flora and fauna species with pronounced southern distribution become more widespread Integrated land management to aid nature conservation	Risk to species vulnerable to drought Risk to species requiring sub-zero period to break seed dormancy Risk to expansion of naturalised alien species Threat to saline lagoons and silting of wetlands and river estuaries Increase incidence of fire in hot dry summers
River flooding and drainage	
Opportunities	Challenges
Introduction of sustainable urban drainage systems Commercial opportunities in flood defence and flood management Opportunity to integrate estuarine and coastal flood defence	Increased risk of flooding from increased rainfall and possibly more storms Improvement and higher specification required for flood defence Improvements and higher specification required for urban drainage and rainwater disposal systems
Transport	
Opportunities	Challenges
Increased scope for walking and cycling for everyday travel Less damage to road surfaces from winter cold less salt used entering ditches Fewer ice/snow related accidents on roads and footways	Flood risks disrupting roads and rural areas River flooding affecting marshes and low lying land
Food and drink	
Opportunities	Challenges
Availability of new crops and species in region Developing new markets for local produce, especially new local varieties Increased consumption of warm weather food and drinks leading to new markets	Increased demand for cooling with associated environmental and financial costs (apple cool stores) Loss of some traditional species
Water resources and water quality	
Opportunities	Challenges
Increased supply availability in winter but needs capturing and storage Greater potential for one-season recharge of larger reservoirs and aquifers	Increased evaporative losses from water stores Increased demand for water in summer (where water is used for crops further reduction of water pressure in rural areas) Higher concentrations of pollutants in watercourse from reduced summer rainfall Increased risk of sediment and pollution run-off into watercourse caused by changes in farm management practices adopted to adapt to climate change
Built environment and housing	
Opportunities	Challenges
Reduced heating demand reducing heating costs. Increased scope for outdoor activities around buildings, especially in summer	Planning and design of new buildings in locations vulnerable to flooding (Westmarsh)

Appendices

<p>Increased potential for renewable sources of energy (e.g. passive solar) Increased need for shading (e.g. more trees in urban streets and public areas)</p>	<p>Potential overheating of interior environment in existing and new buildings will requires substantial solutions to cooling Increased subsidence and associated insurance claims due to drying out substrata Structures under construction vulnerable to storm damage</p>
<p>Utilities</p>	
<p>Reduced heating demand, especially in winter may lead to lower bills for consumers Increased potential for renewable sources of energy.</p>	

Appendices

Glossary

Affordable Housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Allocation	An area of land identified for development in a development plan. The allocation will specify the type of development that will be permitted on the land.
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). It sets best practice standards for the environmental performance of buildings through design, specification, construction and operation.
Brownfield Site	Brownfield land is another term for previously developed land.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, whose character and appearance are protected.
Density (dph)	Measurement of the number of dwellings per hectare and often in equivalent dwellings per acre.
Development	Development is defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over, or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission.
Duty to Cooperate	Local Councils now have a duty to co-operate with their neighbouring Councils and a set of prescribed bodies as defined by the Localism Act 2011 on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities
General Conformity	All planning policy documents must align with the expectations of the National Planning Policy Framework. This is known as general conformity.
Listed Building	A building or other structure of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The grades of listing are grade I, II* or II.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	The old-style portfolio or folder of Development Plan Documents and Area Action Plans which collectively set out the Spatial Planning Strategy for a Local Planning Authority area. Local Plans have now replaced the Local Development Framework.
Local Green Space	An area of green space that is demonstrably special to a local community by way of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife (see NPPF 2018 paragraph 100)
Local Plan	The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The Local Government body responsible for formulating Planning Policies in an area, controlling development through determining planning applications and taking enforcement action when necessary. This is either a District Council, Unitary Authority, Metropolitan Council or National Park Authority.

Appendices

- Material Consideration** A matter that should be taken into account in deciding on a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
The NPPF forms the national planning policies that Local Planning Authorities need to take into account when drawing up their Local Plan and other documents and making decisions on planning policies. The NPPF is published by the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- Neighbourhood Plans (NDP)**
A Plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- Open Space**
Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as 'land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground'. Open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers and lakes that offer opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)**
A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass, including; Public Footpaths, Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic.
- Protected Species**
Plants and animal species afforded protection under certain Acts of Law and Regulations
- Right of Way Improvement Plan – Kent County Council (ROWIP 1)**
A statutory policy document for Public Rights of Way, setting out a strategic approach for the protection and enhancement of Public Rights of Way.
- S106 Agreement**
A legal agreement under Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**
A SSSI is identified by Natural England as requiring protection from damaging development on account of its flora, fauna, geological and/or physiological features.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- Sustainable Development**
Meeting peoples' needs now, socially, environmentally and economically, without jeopardising the needs of future generations. There are three dimensions to sustainable development as seen in paragraph 7 of the NPPF: - economic contributing to a strong, competitive economy; - social-supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and – environmental contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Evidence Documents

All documents can be viewed on the Ash Parish Council website at

<https://ashparishcouncil.gov.uk/ash-ndp/ash-neighbourhood-development-plan-regulation-16/>

Submission Documents for Regulation 16 Consultation 28th Nov 2020

- Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan – Mr C Turner
- Basic Conditions Statement – Mr C Turner
- Consultation Statement – NDP Committee
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (AECOM Nov 2020)
- Strategic Environment Assessment (AECOM Nov 2020)

Evidence Documents

- DDC Ash Parish Council NDP SEA and HRA Screening Opinion (LUC Nov 2019)
- Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM April 2019)
- DDC report on AECOM Housing Needs Assessment (Peter Brett Associated, May 2019)
- Ash Site Assessments & Options (AECOM Aug 2018)

Assessments carried out by Ash Parish Council, NDP Steering Group and local volunteers relating to the parish of Ash

- Archaeological Report 2018 – Ms P Bernard
- Biodiversity Report 2019 – Mrs M Smith and Mrs P Thorne
- Character Assessment 2018 – Mrs A Foat
- Design Guide 2020 – Mr N Blake, Ms A Charles, Mr K Collingwood, Mr I Howard and Mrs M Smith
- Green & Open Spaces Assessment 2018 – Mrs K Lott
- Key Views – location and photos of 11 essential views – Mr K Ellis

Reports commissioned by the Ash Parish Council

- Sustainability Scoping Report 2017 (Mr J Boot)
- Ash Housing Survey 2017 (Action for Communities in Kent) – Ms T O’Sullivan
- Local Insights Ash Parish (OCIS Report 2018)
- Vixan Ash Parish Council Traffic Survey 2017 – Mr A Lague

Surveys carried out by Ash Parish Council and its Steering Group and local volunteers Ash NDP Surveys:

- Business Survey 2018 and graphs – Mr K Ellis
- Leisure Survey 2019 and graphs
- Questionnaire Sept 2016 – Ash NDP Steering Group
- Minutes and agenda of the Ash Steering Group, Ash Parish Council NDP Committee and the Ash Parish Council

External References

- Dover District Council Local Plans and Planning Policies:
<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Regeneration/Adopted-Development-Plans/Home.aspx>
- DDC Emerging Local Plan and timetable 2 December 2019 (updated May 2020):
<https://www.dover.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Regeneration/New-District-Local-Plan/Home.aspx>
- Government’s 25 year ‘Environmental Plan 2018’:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf
- Historic England List: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>
- Kent County Council Policies and Strategies: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies>
- including KCC Right of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP 1)
- Kent Nature Partnerships’ ‘Kent Biodiversity 2020 and beyond – a strategy for the natural environment 2015-2025’ (updated Feb 2020): <http://kentnature.org.uk/biodiversity-strategy.html>
- NPPF: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

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There were many residents involved in the work for this plan as well as members of the Ash Parish Council over the years that it has taken to complete.

Ash NDP Steering Group members:

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Ash NDP Committee:

Cllr Jeffrey Loffman, Cllr Chris Turner, Cllr Leanne Steed, Cllr Graham Foat, Cllr Andrew Harris-Rowley, Cllr Martin Humphries, Cllr Len Rogers, Cllr Martin Porter, Cllr John Tanner, Mrs Mary Smith, Mrs Ann Foat.

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Consultants who advised were Mr Jim Boot and Mr Lindsay Frost.

All the residents who attended the public events and responded to the questionnaires.

Subject:	FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2019/20
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 September 2021
Report of:	Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Vinson, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report:	To provide details of the financial outturn for 2019/20.
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Recommendation:	Members receive and note the report.
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1. Summary

1.1 This report has been produced to present Cabinet with the 2019/20 outturn position following the approval of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts at Governance Committee on 29th July 2021 (subject to final audit work to be completed by Grant Thornton).

2. Background

2.1 The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's resources and therefore the 2019/20 accounts should be considered in the context of the financial pressures in 2020/21 and 2021/22. These are summarised below.

2.2 2020/21 required a revised budget to be presented to Council in October 2020 forecasting a deficit in year of £120k. This recognised the pressures on the Council from additional expenditure associated with the pandemic response and reductions in major income streams, offset by government support and reductions in planned contributions to reserves.

2.3 In March 2021 the 2021/22 budget was approved by Council and recognised the on-going levels of uncertainty surrounding the range of uncertainties due to the pandemic, the exit from the EU and the role DDC will play as host to a Border Control Point. The forecasts contained a wide margin of uncertainty and, for the General Fund, a budget strategy was developed for 2021/22 which will rely on the use of reserves, if required, in order to avoid making undue service and staff reductions in circumstances where the Council's financial position when business returns to normal is not yet clear.

2.4 The 2021/22 budget also incorporated a revised outturn forecast for 2020/21 of a £7k. The detailed year end work for the 2020/21 accounts and year end position is currently underway and will be reported to Cabinet in the coming months.

3. 2019/20 Statement of Accounts

3.1 The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic resulted in delays in the Statement of Accounts production process. Additional to this, the pandemic has created delays for the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, with lengthened audit timescales not just for Dover, but across the country. Therefore, this is the first opportunity for the audited 2019/20 Statement of Accounts to be presented to the committee.

3.2 This report is the delayed 2019/20 outturn report and has been written as at Autumn 2020 and is produced in context with that period.

3.3 The report has been produced in order to provide Members with:

- An explanation of the 2019/20 outturn and the financial standing of the Council;

- Details of changes to the accounts; and
 - A condensed version of the information included in the accounts.
- 3.4 The report was presented to Governance Committee on 29th July, alongside the Statement of Accounts and the Audit Findings report from Grant Thornton. Governance Committee resolved to approve the Statement of the Accounts, subject to the final audit work to be completed by Grant Thornton not identifying any material issues.
- 3.5 The key points in the 2019/20 financial outturn for the year are:

General Fund

- The General Fund outturn delivered an underspend against the original budget of c.£2.2m mainly due to:
 - £1.3m Savings from PWLB borrowing not yet undertaken for property purchases and leisure centre. This saving has been transferred to the Periodic Operations Reserve to support future income volatility and repairs and maintenance to the assets if required. We hope to continue this practice for as long as the Council's cash flow permits.
 - £700k improvement in Business Rates income retained, mainly due to higher Enterprise Zone reliefs retained in 2018/19 but recognised in 2019/20. This has been transferred to the Business Rates & Council Tax Reserve to smooth future volatility in income streams. Enterprise Zone reliefs are diminishing as the number of qualifying businesses reduces. They will end completely in 2023. This is not a continuing source of funding.
 - Increase in staff recharges to the HRA and capital projects, partially transferred to the Special Projects & Events reserve to support the Open Golf Tournament.
 - See the table at paragraph 5.3 for further details of variances to the original budget.
- The net result of the items set out above and the transfers to reserves resulted in an in-year surplus of £26k and retained a year-end General Fund balance of £2.5m.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- £591k was transferred to the Housing Initiatives Reserve to provide investment for housing developments in the district;
- The resulting Housing Revenue Account outturn was a deficit of £6k;
- The HRA retained a working balance of £1m.

Projects

- The Council invested £20.7m in major projects in 2019/20, the most significant of which were:
 - £14m on Housing Revenue Account projects,
 - £1,485k on the Parks for People – Kearsney project,
 - £1,217k on Disabled Facility Grants,
 - £345k on Deal Pier Refurbishment Works,
 - £559k on Street Lighting Capital Works,
 - £538k on Restoration of Maison Dieu,
 - £276k on CCTV Upgrade/Town Centre WiFi.
 - Overall, the capital programme is funded and within budget.

Treasury Management

- The total interest received for the year was c.£1.7m. This was due to the Council investing a total of £50m into pooled investment funds which generate a higher rate of interest than call accounts and fixed term deposits.
- No new long-term borrowing was undertaken. Short term borrowing was undertaken for strategic treasury management purposes.

- The Council has remained within its Treasury Management guidelines and complied with the Prudential Code during the year.

3.6 When considering this report, and the Statement of Accounts, Members are reminded that the final accounts, budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) should not be considered in isolation. Together they form a continuous process of financial management, and so the outturn will feed into budget monitoring and the next MTFP.

4. Purpose of the Accounts

4.1 The accounts are a statutory requirement and have a role in providing information to stakeholders and interested parties on the stewardship and management of public monies.

4.2 However, the accounts are a long and complex document which may not be easily accessible to Members, the public and other stakeholders. Therefore, in order to further promote accountability, this outturn report is also produced.

5. General Fund Revenue Outturn

5.1 The starting point for considering the financial outturn is the 2019/20 Original budget which is shown, together with the 2019/20 Projected Outturn and the 2019/20 Outturn, at Appendix 1.

5.2 In March 2019 the Council approved the 2019/20 budget, forecasting a surplus of £28k. During the year the forecast budget surplus was increased to £110k. Overall the year-end position resulted in a £26k surplus for the year, which is £84k less than the forecast position.

5.3 The main variances during the year are as follows:

	Movement £000	Reserves £000	Total £000
Original Budget Surplus	(28)	0	(28)
Business Rates Income - additional Enterprise Zone relief from 2018/19, transferred to reserves to offset expected volatility around Business Rates income	(556)	556	0
Increased staff recharges to HRA and projects	(323)		(323)
Transfer to Major Events Reserve to provide additional funding for Open Golf Tournament	0	150	150
Interest Receivable reduced due to reassessment of proposed investment options	148		148
NNDR for the old Dover Leisure Centre, to be removed from rating on demolition	88		88
Interest Payable - reduced interest following redemption of LOBO loan	(79)		(79)
Reduction in fees for Civica / East Kent Services shared services	(54)		(54)
Miscellaneous other variances (net)	(12)		(12)
Revised Budget Surplus	(816)	706	(110)
Additional Business Rates Income, transferred to reserves to offset expected volatility around Business Rates income	(150)	150	0
Savings from PWLB borrowing not yet undertaken for property purchases and leisure centre, transferred to reserves for future projects	(1,365)	1,365	0
Reduction in parking income mainly due to impact of the extension of free parking hours at St.James' Development and the closure of a car park in Deal	97		97
Reduced sundry debtors bad provision based on year end position	(82)		(82)
Net increase in cost of Homelessness accommodation	43		43
Miscellaneous other variances (net)	26		26
Actual Budget Surplus	(2,247)	2,221	(26)

6. General Fund Reserves and Balances

- 6.1 The Council maintains both general and earmarked reserves. General reserves are to meet general future expenditure and earmarked reserves are for identified purposes.
- 6.2 General Balances are held at a prudent level in order that the Council can cope with unanticipated variations in spend. Earmarked General Reserves are funds set aside for planned purposes. The protocols for the application of these reserves is set out in the MTFP, and their anticipated use is generally included in the revenue or capital budgets.
- 6.3 As reported above, the 2019/20 Outturn was a surplus of £26k. This was after transfers made to earmarked reserves and the use of those reserves for agreed purposes.

Movement in General Fund Balances	£000
Balance at start of the year	2,539
Surplus for 2019/20	26
Balance at the end of the year	2,565

- 6.4 The Opening Balance of £2,539k and the year-end balance of £2,565k can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 6.5 Contributions to and from the Earmarked Reserves have been managed in order to ensure there are sufficient reserves to meet anticipated commitments. The reserves held are:
- Special Projects & Events Reserve – This reserve is set aside to continue to fund one-off General Fund projects as they arise and to support major events in the district. It is used for both revenue and capital projects.
 - Periodic Operations Reserve - This reserve is to cover costs of cyclical / periodic events such as elections, “carry forward requests” and to hold grants or other income streams for specific purposes, such as the Homelessness grant and On-Street parking surpluses.
 - Urgent Works Reserve - This reserve is set aside to fund urgent works on corporate assets and for other urgent business requirements, for example for future restructures to meet likely on-going grant reductions. The need for this reserve is greater than ever due to the ageing nature of our assets and the reduced levels of investment in them as reflected in the reduced revenue budget.
 - Regeneration Reserve - In order to support the Local Development Framework process and associated regeneration projects a Regeneration Reserve has been established.
 - ICT Equipment & Servers Reserve – The current ICT Equipment & Servers reserve is held in order to support the requirements of the current and future ICT Strategies.
 - Business Rates & Council Tax Support Reserve – This reserve has been established to allow for the risk of unforeseen pressures from the Redistribution of Business Rates and the new Council Tax Support scheme and future changes for Universal Credit.
 - District Regeneration & Economic Development Reserve - This reserve is to be applied to support the Council’s regeneration plans. An element of the reserve has been allocated to fund new Leisure Centre provision and improvements to Dover Town Hall.

- 6.6 In considering the earmarked reserves and general balances, Members are reminded that there is an “opportunity cost” of maintaining these reserves and balances when the resources could be applied to meet service or capital investment requirements. At the same time, maintaining cash backed reserves generates additional income from interest on cash balances, which is used as an additional

income stream. However, the key judgement is to ensure that the reserves are set at levels that facilitate the prudent financial management of the authority, provide sufficient resources to meet anticipated future demands, and to provide for a margin for unanticipated variation.

6.7 It is the view of the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) (Section 151 officer) that the estimated General Fund balances and reserves are adequate for the Council's current spending plans. However, these remain under regular review due to the ongoing changes to Local Government finance and the uncertain economic climate.

7. **Housing Revenue Account Outturn**

7.1 In 2019/20 the HRA outturn was a deficit balance of £6k compared to the original budget forecast of a surplus of £2k, an adverse variance of £8k. The main variations in year were:

- Reduction in dwelling rent income - £100k
- Reduced expenditure on capital works offset by reduced contributions from reserves – £154k
- Increase in internal recharges - £90k
- Reduction in pension contributions – (£175k)
- Reduction in contribution to Major Repairs Reserve - (£77k)

7.2 In 2019/20 the Housing Initiatives Reserve was decreased by £531k (£3,060k contribution from the HRA offset by £3,591k in-year project costs) to provide investment for housing initiatives in the district. The working balance on the HRA was maintained at £1m.

7.3 With effect from 1 April 2012 Housing Finance Reform brought the housing subsidy system to an end and replaced it with a self-financing system. This change required a one-off payment to Central Government of £90,473k on 28 March 2012. To fund this payment the Council borrowed the same sum from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) on a 30-year repayment basis at a fixed interest rate. £2,543k was paid off the PWLB loan principal sum during 2019/20.

8. **Collection Fund Outturn**

8.1 This account reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund, which shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) and Council Tax, and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to precepting authorities and the General Fund. These are explained in more detail in the Collection Fund section of the Statement of Accounts. The surpluses and deficits on the collection account are shared between the major preceptors (KCC, Police, Fire and DDC for Council Tax; KCC, Fire, DDC and Central Govt. for NDR) in their respective proportions, and so are not borne totally by DDC and do not have a direct or immediate impact on DDC's finances.

8.2 The Collection Fund shows a total surplus of £813k at 31 March 2020. This is split between Council Tax (a surplus of £1,216k) and NDR (a deficit of £403k). Any surplus balance on the fund is distributed to the precepting authorities in proportion to their respective precept amounts (for Council Tax) and statutorily defined shares (for NDR). However, surpluses are on an accruals basis and are not fully cash backed and calculations for distribution of any surpluses form part of the following year's budget, initially based on an earlier estimate of the distributable balance expected at 31 March 2020. Separately, deficits have to be contributed back to the fund by preceptors, also based on an earlier estimate of the expected deficit at 31 March 2020.

8.3 The Council Tax surplus of £1.216m will be distributed to preceptors during future years, of which £605k will be distributed in 2020/21 based on the amount estimated in January 2020, as required under legislation (DDC's share £84k or 13.9%). The remaining undistributed amount of £611k, which was not represented fully by

available cash at that time, will form part of the surplus estimate calculated in January 2021 for distribution in 2021/22 and subsequent years.

- 8.4 Non-domestic rates are set on a national basis, but the Council is responsible for collecting rates due from the ratepayers in its area. The Government specifies an amount or 'rate poundage' of 49.3p (47.9p) for large businesses or 48.0p (46.6p) for small businesses in 2019/20 (2018/19) and, subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by that amount.
- 8.5 The calculation and forecasting of NDR income, and the accounting treatment for it, have to reflect the legislative and other government requirements, which are complex.
- 8.6 The Council was part of the Kent pilot scheme for 100% Business Rates Retention for 2018/19. Kent was not successful in its Pilot scheme bid for 2019/20 and reverted to a 'pooling' arrangement for business rates with the other Kent authorities. While this does not generate as much income, it *does* mean that more growth is retained due to a reduction in the levy payable on growth from 50% on an individual authority basis to less than 5%, typically, on a pooling basis.
- 8.7 The original total budget for NDR retained income for 2019/20 (based on the NNDR1 form) was £6.84m, this was revised to £7.37m in year and the final overrun was £7.515m. The main cause of the movement in the outturn was the recognition of additional Enterprise Zone Relief granted in 2018/19, but not recognised until 2019/20 in accordance with the accounting requirements.

9. Capital Investment

- 9.1 The Council invested £20.7m in major projects in 2019/20, the most significant of which were:
- £14m on Housing Revenue Account projects including:
 - £6.3m on the redevelopment of William Muge and Snelgrove site;
 - £2.82m on Housing Stock projects;
 - £2.29m on the purchase of property for social housing;
 - £1.67m on the Norman Tailyour sheltered upgrade.
 - £1,485k on the Parks for People – Kearsney project;
 - £1,217k on disabled facility grants;
 - £345k on Deal Pier refurbishment works;
 - £559k on Street Lighting capital works;
 - £538k on Restoration of Maison Dieu;
 - £276k on CCTV upgrade/Town Centre WIFI;
 - Numerous other smaller projects.

The main sources of capital financing applied in the year were:

- £10.50m from the Housing Revenue Account (revenue financing);
 - £4.08m in grants from external bodies including KCC Better Care Fund, Homes England, and the Environment Agency;
 - £779k from the Major Repairs Reserve;
 - £958k from earmarked reserves;
 - £4.06m from capital receipts, including Private Sector Housing loan receipts and excess right to buy receipts.
- 9.2 Right-to-buy sales also continued at high levels. In 2019/20 23 sales were completed.
- 9.3 Overall, the capital programme is funded and within budget.

10. Special Projects Outturn

- 10.1 The Special Projects reserve is mainly used to finance major one-off revenue projects, because, as revenue projects, they cannot be financed from the various

capital financing sources listed in the section above. It is also used to provide a source of additional financing for a small number of capital projects.

- 10.2 The expenditure on Special Projects in the year was £775k. The major projects were:
- £119k on Contribution to Open Golf 2020 event;
 - £70k on East Kent Waste new contract;
 - £84k on Property Renovation Grant Scheme.
- 10.3 The Special Projects programme is dynamic and is adjusted as new projects are approved. These changes are reported to Members during the year, however, “in year” variations in spend against approved budget for individual projects are mainly due to timing changes. There are no material variations to individual projects’ total budget, and the whole programme is fully financed.
- 10.4 The main sources of financing for the programme in the year were as follows:
- £425k – Special Project Reserve;
 - £200k – other DDC reserves;
 - £150k – other contributions.

11. Treasury Management

- 11.1 The Council adopted the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management in November 2009.
- 11.2 At 31 March 2020 the Council had investment balances and day-to-day cash balances managed in-house of approximately £56.1m.
- 11.3 The Council’s in-house investments outperformed their benchmark (LIBID) and achieved an average return of 2.97% for the year.
- 11.4 The total interest received for the year was approximately £1,710k. This was lower than the original budget of £1,824k, which is an unfavourable variance of £114k, this is mainly due postponing the additional investment in pooled investment funds until December 2019.
- 11.5 The Council has invested a total of £50m into pooled investment funds which generate a higher rate of interest than call accounts and fixed term deposits. These investments are classed as long term as it is anticipated they will be held for a minimum of five years.
- 11.6 The Council has just under £78m of borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board.
- 11.7 During 19/20 the Council employed the services of Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers.

12. Assets and Liabilities

- 12.1 At the end of each year a Balance Sheet is drawn up that represents how much the Council's land and buildings are worth, how much is owed to others, how much others owe the Council and the amount of cash the Council has:

As at 31 March	2019	2020
	£000	£000
Value of land, property and other assets	342,896	353,385
Investments held and cash at bank	51,487	55,071
Money owed to DDC for goods and services	12,408	11,298
Loans owed to DDC (short and long term)	2,196	2,343
Money owed by DDC for goods and services	(19,241)	(22,147)
Loans owed by DDC (short and long term)	(103,988)	(107,492)
Grants for assets received but not yet used	(929)	(1,389)
Share of pension scheme liabilities owed by DDC	(76,157)	(77,201)
Total Assets less Total Liabilities	208,672	213,867

Financed by:		
Usable reserves ¹	69,798	71,562
Unusable reserves ²	138,874	142,306
Net Worth of Council	208,672	213,867

¹ Usable reserves are made up of:

Capital receipts and grants	21,644	21,058
Revenue balances	3,572	3,561
Earmarked reserves	44,582	46,943
	69,798	71,562

² Unusable reserves mainly comprise revaluations of assets from their original purchase value and the Pensions Reserve.

12.2 The main points to note against the prior year comparative are:

- Value of land, property and other assets

The main changes in the values are due to:

- Disposals – council house and other sales.
- Revaluations –
 - Council has a policy of revaluing its property assets on a rolling programme, such that the intervals between valuations do not exceed 5 years as detailed in the accounting policies. From 1 April 2014 assets valued at over £1m will be revalued on an annual basis.
 - All properties held for investment are revalued annually. The basis for valuation is the Fair Value as there is sufficient evidence of market transactions. Housing stock is valued using existing use value – social housing.
- Impairments – events and changes in circumstances include:
 - A significant decline in market value during the period;
 - Evidence of obsolescence or physical damage;
 - A significant adverse change in the statutory or other regulatory environment in which the Council operates; and
 - A commitment by the Council to undertake a significant reorganisation.

There were no significant impairments in the year.

- Investments held and cash at bank

- The decrease in investments and cash at bank reflects a net decrease in cash, mainly due a decrease in liquid funds available for cash flow purposes.

- Money Owed to DDC for Goods and Services

- The net decrease in debtors incorporates:
 - An increase in rent arrears due to Universal Credit,
 - An increase in Central Government debtors (General Fund) relating to housing benefit subsidy due from DWP,
 - A decrease in local authority debtors is due to DDC no longer collecting debts for the Business Rates Pilot scheme,
 - An increase in Other General Fund debtors,
 - There is also a decrease in the Collection Fund debts relating Transitional Payment Protection for NDR from Central Government and arrears from previous pilot scheme debtors, offset by an increase in council tax arrears.

- Money owed by DDC for Goods and Services

- The net increase in creditors includes:
 - An increase in government department creditors due to an advance S.31 Grant payment,
 - An increase in the NDR levy payable to central government,

- A decrease in amount owed to DWP for Housing Benefit subsidy,
 - Increases in Housing Rents and sundry revenue creditors (mainly 'goods receipted' but not invoiced)
 - Increases in sundry capital creditors for programmed capital works.
 - A decrease in the levy payable to Maidstone B.C. for 2018/19 NDR pilot scheme pooling arrangements,
- Loans owed by DDC (short and long term)
 - The net increase relates to the principal repaid on the PWLB loan for "HRA self-financing" (£2.2m), offset by temporary short term borrowing for strategic treasury management purposes (£29m).
- Pension Scheme Liabilities
 - The Pension Scheme has been assessed by Barnett Waddingham, an independent firm of actuaries, on behalf of Kent County Council based upon the full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2019. The Council's annual contribution to the scheme is in line with the levels recommended by the actuaries.
 - The net liability at 31 March 2020 was £77.2m (£76.1m at 31 March 2019).
 - The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Authority has in the long run to pay post-employment (retirement) benefits.
 - The total liability has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Authority as recorded in the Balance Sheet. However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Authority remains healthy.
- Usable Reserves
 - The main reason for the increase in usable reserves in 2019/20 relates to the increase in General Fund Earmarked Reserves. The main reasons for this increase are:
 - Surplus Property Investment income allocated to Periodic Operations Reserve;
 - Grants received in year for future projects allocated to Periodic Operations Reserve;
 - Additional allocations made to the Special Revenue and ICT Equipment & Servers reserves to support future projects;
 - Transfers to the Housing Initiatives Reserve from the HRA to provide investment for housing initiatives in the district.
 - See Appendix 2 for further details of General Fund Earmarked Reserves.

13. **Production of the Accounts**

- 13.1 Governance Committee requires assurance that the accounts are robust and that they can place reliance upon them. The Council's auditors, Grant Thornton, are responsible for reviewing the Council's procedures which ensure that money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. In addition, a summary of the controls operated by the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources is provided at Appendix 3.

14. **The Future**

- 14.1 The Council, in common with others, will need to continue to make progress on, or give consideration to the on-going impacts of:
- The impact of Coronavirus on the local economy and the council's finances;
 - The economic climate and the impact of the EU Transition;
 - Development and regeneration of the local economy;
 - The ongoing impact of the Government's budget deficit reduction programme on the Council's finances;

- Welfare Reform and cessation of the administration of housing benefits for working age claimants;
- The sustainability of the New Homes Bonus scheme;
- The ongoing impact of the localisation of council tax support;
- The ongoing impact of the Business Rates Retention scheme; and
- Developing partnership arrangements with others in order to achieve cost efficiencies.

15. **Corporate Implications**

- 15.1 Comment from the Head of Finance & Investment: No further comments to add.
- 15.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 15.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

16. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – General Fund Budget Summary

Appendix 2 – General Fund Earmarked Reserves Summary

Appendix 3 - Summary of the Main Controls Applied in Production of the Accounts

17. **Background Papers**

Governance Agenda 29th July 2021

- Item 6 – Audit Findings Report ([Audit Findings Report Pack 290721.pdf \(dover.gov.uk\)](#))
- Item 9 – Statement of Accounts 2019/20 ([Subject: \(dover.gov.uk\)](#))

Contact Officer: Helen Lamb, extension 42063

General Fund Summary – 2019/20 Outturn

<u>2018/19</u> <u>Actual</u> £000		<u>2019/20</u> <u>Original</u> <u>Budget</u> £000	<u>2019/20</u> <u>Revised</u> <u>Budget</u> £000	<u>2019/20</u> <u>Actual</u> £000
	<u>Directorate</u>			
676	Chief Executive	1,118	581	618
2,955	Operations & Commercial Services	4,370	4,457	4,186
10,364	Corporate Resources	11,525	11,467	11,061
160	Non-distributed costs	175	186	194
729	Special Revenue Projects	1,290	1,644	561
0	Vacancy Allowance	(150)	(23)	0
14,884	Directorate Service Costs	18,328	18,312	16,620
71	River Stour Drainage Board	74	74	74
0	Council Tax Support Funding to Towns & Parishes	0	0	0
0	Property Investment Strategy Target	(100)	(82)	0
(1,203)	Recharge Income from HRA & Capital Projects	(1,295)	(1,313)	(1,329)
0	Contingency	120	100	0
	<u>Contribution to/(from) Reserves:</u>			
2,523	- Special Projects & Events Reserve	(538)	(836)	401
1,830	- Periodic Operations Reserve	(427)	(37)	2,357
1,382	- Dover Regeneration Reserve	439	328	302
0	- District Regeneration & Economic Development Reserve	0	0	0
182	- IT Equipment Reserve	115	51	16
(598)	- Business Rates & Council Tax Reserve	(258)	238	376
19,071	Net Service Expenditure	16,458	16,835	18,817
	<u>Financing Adjustments</u>			
(1,138)	Interest Receivable	(1,806)	(1,658)	(1,692)
136	Interest Payable	354	275	282
560	Loan Principal Repayments/ Borrowing Allowance	1,959	1,959	594
(1,180)	Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute	(1,042)	(1,042)	(1,389)
17,449	Total Budget Requirement	15,923	16,369	16,612
	Financed by:			
8,277	Non-Domestic Rates	6,838	7,366	7,515
568	Revenue Support Grant	56	56	56
6,922	Council Tax	7,216	7,216	7,216
141	Council Tax - Collection Fund Surplus	112	112	112
8	Council Tax – Other S31 Grants	0	0	9
1,515	New Homes Bonus	1,729	1,729	1,729
30	New Burdens & Other Grants	0	0	1
17,461	Total Financing	15,951	16,479	16,638
(12)	General Fund Deficit/(Surplus) for the Year	(28)	(110)	(26)
(2,527)	General Fund Balance at Start of Year	(2,777)	(2,539)	(2,539)
(2,539)	Leaving Year End Balances of	(2,805)	(2,649)	(2,565)

Earmarked General Reserves (2019/20 Year End Position)

	Opening Balance £000	Receipts in year £000	Applied in year £000	Closing Balance £000
Special Projects & Events	5,731	960	(750)	5,941
Periodic Operations	7,452	3,549	(1,390)	9,611
Regeneration	3,268	535	(273)	3,530
ICT Equipment & Servers	917	175	(387)	705
Business Rates & Council Tax	1,206	734	(358)	1,582
District Regeneration & Economic Development	12,039	0	(173)	11,866
Total	30,613	5,953	(3,331)	33,235

Housing Revenue Account Earmarked Reserves

	Opening Balance £000	Receipts in year £000	Applied in year £000	Closing Balance £000
Housing Initiatives	13,969	3,060	(3,591)	13,438
Major Repairs Reserve ¹	0	0	(31)	(31)
Total	13,969	3,060	(3,591)	13,407

¹ The Major Repairs Reserve is a technical accounting reserve and does not hold balances usable for projects, etc.

Summary of the Main Controls Applied in Production of the Accounts

Production of the accounts in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting requires a large number of tasks to be undertaken, and controls to be applied.

These include:

- Preparation of a closedown plan, communication with budget managers as appropriate and monitoring progress.
- Staff preparing the accounts have attended seminars / briefings with CIPFA and with the auditors.
- Staff preparing the accounts have access to the Code Practitioners Guidance Notes.
- The Council's financial feeder systems have been reconciled to the General Ledger.
- The General Ledger has been balanced.
- The value of fixed assets in the accounts has been reconciled to the asset register.
- The cash balance in the General Ledger has been reconciled to the Council's bank accounts.
- Significant variances have been explained in the Outturn Report.
- Service expenditure in the Outturn report has been reconciled to the Income and Expenditure Account.
- The entries on the Collection Fund have been reconciled to the Council Tax set by the Council and the other precepting authorities.
- The cash movement on the balance sheet is reconciled.
- The balances on reserves reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement has been reconciled to the balance sheet.
- An analytical review has been undertaken and major variances have been explained.

Subject:	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2020/21
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 September 2021 Governance Committee – 30 September 2021
Report of:	Louise May, Head of Governance
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Vinson, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To approve the Annual Governance Assurance Statement 2020/21.

Recommendation:

- (1) Cabinet approves the Annual Governance Assurance Statement and requests that the Leader of the Council and the Head of Paid Service sign this statement on behalf of the Council.
- (2) Governance Committee is asked to accept the Annual Governance Assurance Statement alongside the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Annually, the Council is required to conduct a review of the effectiveness of our system of internal control and also report on the extent to which we comply with our own Local Code of Corporate Governance. This must be conducted in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition and is reported as the Annual Governance Assurance Statement. Cabinet are asked to accept the Annual Governance Assurance Statement for 2020/21, as recommended by the Corporate Management Team and request that the Leader and the Head of Paid Service sign this statement on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The Governance Committee is asked to accept the Annual Governance Assurance Statement alongside the 2020/21 Accounts.
- 1.3 Usually, the statement of accounts are required to be approved 31 July each year. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Regulations have been amended and the statement of accounts is now required to be approved by 30 September 2021, hence the delay in presenting the AGAS this year.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, require that the Council conducts at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and also report on the extent to which we comply with our own Local Code of Corporate Governance. The Council's Annual Governance Assurance Statement is prepared to meet these requirements and will be provided alongside the published Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

- 2.2 The statement is to be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, having paid due regard to any matters raised by the Head of Governance and the Monitoring Officer. In particular, they should have particular regard to the opinion of the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.
- 2.3 The Annual Governance Assurance Statement for 2020/21 is attached and has been agreed by the Corporate Management Team in August 2021. The statement has been prepared taking into account the following information:
- A detailed review of the Council's performance measured against the Core and Sub Principles as detailed in the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition.
 - The service review work performed by Internal Audit during the year.
 - Internal Audit's review of Corporate Governance arrangements.
 - Assurance Statements produced by individual Directors of Service.
 - The information gathered as a result of risk assessment and management.
 - The annual reports of the Scrutiny and Governance Committees.
- 2.4 The Action plan will be monitored during the year and progress reported to Governance Committee.

3. **Identification of Options**

- 3.1 Option 1: Agree the Annual Governance Assurance Statement including the key actions identified, for signature by the Leader and the Head of Paid Service and then for inclusion in the 2020/21 Accounts
- 3.2 Option 2: Do not agree the Annual Governance Assurance Statement and require further analysis and clarification.

4. **Evaluation of Options**

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option, as in preparing the Annual Governance Assurance Statement this fully meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016 Edition) states:

"The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016) would fulfil the statutory requirements across the United Kingdom for a local authority to conduct a review at least once in each financial year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to include a statement reporting on the review with its Statement of Accounts. In England the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 stipulate that the Annual Governance Statement must be "prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts". Therefore a local authority in England shall provide this statement in accordance with Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)".

5. **Resource Implications**

None.

6. **Climate Change Implications**

The approval of the Annual Governance Assurance Statement does not in itself have any particular CC or Environmental Implications as these are included in the Council's Corporate Plan, Strategies and Policies.

7. **Corporate Implications**

7.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment. (JS)

7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make.

7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Assurance Statement

Appendix 2 – Action Plan – Backward Looking

Appendix 3 – Action Plan – Forward Looking

9. **Background Papers**

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition

Contact Officer: Louise May, Head of Governance

Dover District Council

Annual Governance Assurance Statement

1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

1. WHAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

We are responsible for ensuring that our business is conducted in line with the law and proper accounting standards, and for using public money economically, efficiently and effectively. We have a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to continually review and improve the way we work and at the same time have regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to meet our responsibility we have in place proper arrangements for overseeing what we do and this is called Governance. These arrangements make sure that we do the right things in the right way, that our services reach the right people and that we are open, honest and accountable in the way that we deliver those services. This all contributes to our sound system of governance

We have approved and adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance and a copy of this is available on our website at <http://www.dover.gov.uk/Corporate-Information/CorporateGovernance.aspx>.

2. THE AIM OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Governance Framework details the systems, processes, culture and values that we are controlled by and which we are answerable to. It also shows what we get involved with and how we engage with the community. It also shows how we monitor what we are achieving so that we can deliver services that are appropriate and value for money.

The system of internal control is an important part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot remove all risk of failure to achieve policies and aims and can only provide reasonable protection. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise anything that could prevent us from achieving our policies and aims
- Assess how likely it is that identified risks might happen and what the result would be if they did
- Manage those risks efficiently, effectively and economically

The Governance Framework describes what has been in place at Dover District Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the Council's accounts.

3. OUR GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Our Governance Framework is underpinned by seven core principles and supported by our Corporate Plan as well as many systems, policies, procedures and operations, which together ensure that the intended outcomes for our community and stakeholders are defined and achieved. Good governance is dynamic, and Dover District Council is committed to improving governance on a continuing basis through a process of evaluation and review.

The key features are:

(a) **Our Core and Supporting Principles**

The seven core principles are taken from the International Framework: *Good Governance in the Public Sector* and help this Council demonstrate good governance. Each of these principles translates into a range of specific requirements and they are also reflected in this Corporate Governance Local Code:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

(b) **Our Corporate Plan**

This is our main strategic document providing a framework for the delivery of our services and providing context for all the other strategies and plans that we have. The Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 is published and is available on the Council's website. The Council approved a new Corporate Plan in February 2020 which continues with the overall direction of travel as the previous version.

The following strategic priorities have been identified in the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan:

- Regeneration - Tourism & Inward Investment
- Housing & Community
- Climate Change, Environment & Assets – a cleaner sustainable environment
- Working Smartly & Delivering Services

(c) **Business Plans**

The Business Plan is one of the central mechanisms for each Head of Service managing their own area of activity and therefore sits at the centre of the Corporate Governance process. The business plans support the aims of the Corporate Plan which include performance indicators that are used to measure our achievements.

(d) **Our Constitution**

Our Constitution details how we operate, how decisions are made and the procedures, which are to be followed. It also ensures that we work in an efficient and transparent way and that we are accountable to local people. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for keeping the Constitution under review.

(e) **The Executive**

The Executive are responsible for most decisions and is made up of the Leader and a Cabinet. Major decisions to be taken are published in advance in the Executive's Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions, and will generally be discussed in a meeting open to the public. All decisions must be in line with our overall policies and budget. Any decisions the Executive wishes to take outside the budget or policy framework must be referred to Council as a whole to decide.

(f) **Corporate Management Team**

The Corporate Management Team comprises the Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service); Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) (and Section 151 Officer) and Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial).

Members of Corporate Management Team have a responsibility for the day to day running of each Directorate of the Council. They must regularly assess their Directorate's assurance arrangements and provide the Council with the opportunity to keep check on the adequacy of its overall arrangements.

(g) **Governance Committee**

The seven appointed members of the Council provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment together with independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment. The Committee oversees the financial reporting process by considering the final Statement of Accounts. The Committee promotes high standards of conduct amongst the 32 members of Dover District Council and (up to) 317 members of Town and Parish Councils in the District. Complaints of service maladministration are investigated and reported to the Committee. Lessons learned from these complaints are reviewed and acted on.

The Chairman provides an Annual Report of the Governance Committee to the Annual Council Meeting

(h) **Overview and Scrutiny**

In July 2019, and as a result of the reduction in elected members, the Council voted to reduce to one overview and scrutiny committee who support and monitor the work of the Executive. A "call-in" procedure or addition to the work programme allows scrutiny to review Executive decisions before they are implemented, thus presenting challenge and the opportunity for a decision to be reconsidered. The Monitoring Officer provides an Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees to the Annual Council Meeting.

(i) **Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer is charged by law with the responsibility for identifying and reporting on any acts or omissions of the Council which he considers to be contrary to law. He is also responsible for considering allegations of Members breaches of the

codes of conduct. In January 2021, the Council agreed that this role could be undertaken on a part time basis with effect from 1 April 2021. The Deputy Monitoring Officer continues to work full time.

(j) **Our Solicitor**

The Solicitor to the Council provides his opinion on our compliance with our legal obligations. As from 1 January 2019 the same officer fulfils the role of Monitoring officer and Solicitor to the Council.

(k) **Data Protection Officer**

We have appointed a Data Protection Officer in accordance with Article 37 of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016. We support the Data Protection Officer by providing resources to undertake tasks and access to personal data and process and operations and to maintain expert knowledge. The Data Protection Officer his duties in an independent manner and we may not give the Data Protection Officer instruction on exercising his role. The Data Protection Officer is currently the Solicitor to the Council.

(l) **Financial procedures and Contract Standing Orders**

We have to ensure that we act in accordance with the law as well as various other regulations. We have developed policies and procedures for our officers to ensure that, as far as are possible, they understand their responsibilities both to the Council and to the public. Two key documents are the Financial Procedure Rules and the Contract Standing Orders, which are available to all officers via the Council's Intranet, as well as available to the public as part of the Constitution.

(m) **Financial Management**

Our financial management arrangements conform with the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. In addition to the Financial and Contractual procedure rules contained within the constitution, in order to maintain its financial management the Council operates budgetary control procedures which are used in conjunction with a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained rests with the Section 151 Officer. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected quickly.

Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability. On-going development and maintenance of the various processes may be the responsibility of other managers.

In particular, the process includes:

- The setting of annual budgets;
- Producing the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Monitoring of actual income and expenditure against the annual budget;
- A mid-year review of the annual budget;

- Setting of financial and performance targets, including the use of the prudential code and associated indicators;
- Quarterly reporting of the Council's financial position to Members;
- Clearly defined capital expenditure guidelines;
- Treasury Management Strategy
- The monitoring of finances against a Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Managing risk in key financial service areas.
- A continuous and effective internal audit.

Through our budget monitoring processes we are able to ensure that financial resources are being used to their best advantage, this includes quarterly management reporting to the Corporate Management Team and Members.

Financial planning is underpinned by business planning. Increased expenditure in any service area has to be justified to the Corporate Management Team, and where necessary approved by the Executive. Corporate Management Team is tasked with prioritising resources to ensure that the objectives within Corporate Plan are supported by the individual business plans, and that improvements are in line with corporate objectives.

(n) **Policies**

Corporate policies on a range of topics such as Equality, Information Governance and Data Protection are all subject to internal review. We keep all staff aware of changes in policy, or documentation through internal communications. The corporate training needs are identified each year and appropriate training for all or key members of staff is provided.

(o) **Risk**

The risk management strategy, which forms part of the Corporate Governance Local Code, shows the role both Members and Officers have in the identification and minimisation of risk. Risks are recorded in a Corporate Risk Register and are then subject to regular review.

(p) **Service Assurance**

A Service Assurance Statement is produced annually by all Directors of this Council and of Shared Services detailing their assessment of their services. They are required to give assurance that risks have been identified, that sound business arrangements operate in their service areas, and that the service is subject to monitoring and review in order to assess performance.

(q) **Performance Management Framework**

Progress towards the achievement of our objectives is monitored through our Performance Management Framework. A quarterly Performance Report is produced and reviewed by Corporate Management Team, by Cabinet and by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

(r) **Internal Audit**

The East Kent Audit Partnership Internal Audit Team reports to the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources). They operate under a Charter, which defines their relationship with our officers, and the Governance Committee. Their main

responsibility is to provide assurance and advice on our internal control systems to the Corporate Management Team and Members. Internal Audit reviews the adequacy, reliability and effectiveness of internal control and recommends improvements where appropriate. It also supports the development of systems, providing advice on risk and control. Effective internal controls are an important part of the Corporate Governance process. Through their audit assurance work, internal audit provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the systems of internal control.

As part of the annual review of governance arrangements and in particular the System of Internal Control, we undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit.

(s) **External Audit**

The work is currently undertaken by Grant Thornton, who are required to deliver their audit work in line with Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2015.

(t) **Core Strategy and Local Plan**

The Core Strategy is the overarching statutory planning document for the District and was adopted by the Council in February 2010. The Core Strategy identifies the overall economic, social and environmental objectives for the District and the amount, type and broad location of development that is needed to fulfil those objectives. The Land Allocations Local Plan, which was adopted in 2015, identifies and allocates specific sites that are suitable for development in order to meet the Core Strategy's requirements.

Work is well underway in the development of a new District Local Plan which will replace the policies and proposals in the Council's Adopted Core Strategy, Land Allocations Local Plan and 'saved' policies from the 2002 Local Plan. Statutory consultation under Regulation 18 of The Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 in respect of revised Local Plan took place between 20 January and 17 March 2021. Further details of the progress to adopt the new Local Plan can be found at the dedicated website [here](#).

(u) **State of the District Report**

This report is a backward look at the state of the district, highlighting key information under the headings of: District Overview, Population Profile; Housing; Economy, Business and Employment; Finance; Education and Skills; Regeneration Delivery; Health and Wellbeing; Deprivation and Poverty; Community Safety and Quality of Life.

Not all information is collected and reported annually, as it is collated from a wide range of sources that is sporadically updated. In addition, periodically the process of capturing information is changed, this in turn makes year-on-year comparisons and trends difficult to assess. The report is published on our website and there will be regular updates as new data is published, with members informed in a timely manner of any significant changes.

(v) **Communication and Consultation**

Strategies are in place. We have active Twitter and Facebook accounts, enabling the Council to communicate effectively with our communities and also enabling members

of the public to communicate their views on a wide range of matters. In 2015 the Council launched its 'Keep Me Posted' email alert service which enables members of the public to subscribe to email messages from the Council on a wide range of topics.

(w) **Equality**

As part of our equalities responsibilities, we publish our equality objectives and progress against the targets to ensure that all groups in our community have a voice, can be heard and know how we make our decisions. A revised equality policy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2016.

(x) **Whistleblowing**

A confidential reporting hotline is in place to enable internal and external whistle blowing. Informants are requested to be open in their disclosure, but it is recognised that on occasions informants will wish to remain anonymous. There are also processes in place for staff to report through their line managers, Corporate Management Team or East Kent Audit Partnership.

(y) **Employment Management**

The Employment Management Group considers all requests to fill staff vacancies. The group is chaired by the Head of Regulatory Services and supported by the Head of Community and Digital Services, the Head of Governance, the Head of Finance and Investment and the EK Human Resources Business Partner. Their recommendations are considered by the Head of Paid Service who provides the final decision as to which posts can be filled.

(z) **Partnerships**

Partnership evaluation criteria have been established to help ensure that all key governance criteria are incorporated into new and existing partnerships.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

We have a responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of our governance framework including the system of internal control. This review is informed by the ongoing monitoring and review by the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources), EK Internal Audit Partnership and the Head of the Audit Partnership's Annual Report, the work of our Directors and Heads of Services and their managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment. This review is also informed by the findings and reports of our external auditors together with any other review agencies or inspectorates.

(a) **The Monitoring Officer has responsibility for:**

- Monitoring the Constitution and keeping it up to date
- Identifying and reporting on any acts or omissions of the Council which he considers to be contrary to law
- Ensuring ethical standards and conduct are met

(b) **The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) has responsibility for:**

- Publishing financial information and statements accurately and reliably.
- Confirmation that resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
- Overseeing and monitoring the Corporate Governance Local Code
- Maintaining and updating the code if required by best practice
- Reporting annually to members on performance and compliance with the code
- The overall review of the internal control opinion and framework evidence, including service assurance statements, the audit review of Corporate Governance, Performance reporting, Risk management arrangements and the individual audit and risk management assessments.
- Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit.
- The External Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, service assessments and other associated reviews and ensuring that they are acted upon.

(c) **All Directors have responsibility via a Service Assurance Statement to ensure that:**

- Risks have been identified. They are recorded and monitored in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.
- Staff are fully aware of the requirements of their job, and have access to the appropriate Council rules and policies to assist them.
- Internal and External Audit reports and recommendations have been acted on.
- Reports from other review agencies have been acted on.
- Business arrangements are conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards.
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- The service has in place appropriate management and reporting arrangements to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to Corporate Governance is both adequate and effective.
- A statement of assurance that improvement plans exist to rectify any acknowledged deficiency.

(d) **Solicitor to the Council has responsibility:**

- Via his annual statement to give his opinion on the Council's compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and its legal obligations and requirements

(e) **Cabinet has responsibility for:**

- All Executive Decisions in respect of functions delegated to it by the Leader of the Council
- Setting robust and challenging targets and
- Monitoring the achievement of key priorities

(f) **Council has responsibility for:**

- Agreeing or amending the Policy Framework
- Agreeing or amending the budget, including the borrowing or capital expenditure strategy and setting the Council Tax

(g) **Overview & Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for:**

- Scrutiny of budgets and major policies
- Monitoring the achievement of key priorities
- Scrutiny co-ordination

(h) **The Governance Committee has a responsibility for:**

- Ensuring effective internal audit and internal control arrangements
- Receiving the annual Internal Audit Programme of work
- Receiving quarterly updates from the Head of the Audit Partnership on the assurance which can be placed against various systems and processes during the year
- Reviewing the annual assessment at the year end.
- Receiving the annual review of internal control
- Receiving the annual constitutional review
- Reviewing risk management arrangements
- Receiving Quarterly Treasury Management Reports
- Receiving the Annual Statement of Accounts
- Ethical standards of members and complaints against members

(i) **Internal Audit has responsibility to:**

- Provide an independent annual statement on the systems of internal control, highlighting areas of concern
- Report on the level of assurance in respect of the Council's internal control systems
- Provide an overall Assurance Statement from the Head of the Audit Partnership. This is compiled from the Internal Audit work programme and a review of this Council's Corporate Governance arrangements.

5. **THIS YEAR'S REVIEW**

(a) **Council**

Article 15 of the Council's Constitution makes provision for the regular review of the Constitution by the Monitoring Officer. The key focus of the review in 2020/21 was reviewing the scheme of delegations, improving transparency and accessibility reflecting changes to the Council's organisational structure, in particular the and the collation of changes made by decision making bodies such as Cabinet or Council during the course of the previous year. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the review for 19/20 was delayed and the report which was due to be considered by Governance Committee in March 2020 was considered by the Governance Committee in June 2020 who then recommended the changes for approval by full Council, which they did in July 2020. This has had a knock on effect for 2020/21 and Governance Committee will consider a further review in September 2021.

(b) **Cabinet**

Key Executive decisions were considered by the Cabinet, in particular relating to the budget and medium term financial plan, and the delivery of key regeneration priorities.

The Council's Quarterly Performance Report was received and reviewed quarterly. This examines our performance against agreed performance targets and our key priorities.

(c) **Scrutiny**

The Council's key priorities and Performance Indicators were reviewed regularly and challenged if necessary.

The Annual Report of the work of the Scrutiny Committees for 2020/21 was presented to the Annual Council Meeting on 19 May 2021. This identified sound governance arrangements, including an effective scrutiny process, which underpins the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.

(d) **Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee received quarterly updates from the Head of East Kent Audit Partnership on the assurance which can be placed against various systems and processes during the year, including reviews of internal controls, along with the annual assessment. The Committee kept a check on those areas that have not achieved expected levels of audit assurance.

This Committee also reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) and the Monitoring Officer are responsible for ensuring that the Constitution is reviewed regularly. It is not practical to undertake a review of the whole Constitution each year, so specific areas are selected each year. During 2020/21, the key focus of the review was reviewing the scheme of delegations, improving transparency and accessibility reflecting changes to the Council's organisational structure and the collation of changes made by decision making bodies such as Cabinet or Council during the course of the previous year. The Governance Committee recommended the changes for approval by the Council. All are documented on our website.

The Annual Report of the work of the Governance Committee for 2020/21 was presented to the Annual Council Meeting on 19 May 2021. This gave a positive opinion on the system of internal control. The Governance Committee continued to be assured of the integrity and reliability of data held in financial statements. The work undertaken by Internal and External Audit provided detailed assurance on those areas of the Council's work which were the subject of reports.

The assurances from the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) and the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) and the work of Internal and External Audit together supported the Committee in forming their opinion of the financial statements, enabling them to agree to sign the 2019/20 accounts. For this year, the process will be delayed again but the committee will be provided with the necessary assurances to approve the 2020/21 accounts at its January 2022 meeting. The deadline for the final accounts to be approved has been changed by legislation owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The submission of this Annual Report continues to enhance the effective communication of our governance processes.

The Governance Committee received annual reports on the progress of formal service complaints against the Council and lessons learned from those complaints.

The Local Government Ombudsman received 13 complaints and enquiries against the Council during the 2019/20 municipal year and none were upheld. Data relating to the municipal year 2020/21 will be available from the Local Government Ombudsman in due course and will be reported to the Governance Committee.

Changes adopted by Council in January 2014, included a provision which allows Members to declare non-financial interests. The Kent Model Code of Conduct continues to be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. The ability to declare a non-financial interest has been welcomed by Members and has been utilised on several occasions to ensure transparency in decision-making.

(f) **Review of Internal Audit**

The effectiveness of internal audit is monitored by the Section 151 Officer through:

- Quarterly review meetings with the Head of Internal Audit
- Sign off of the Audit Plan
- Review of the internal audit annual report
- Attendance at Governance Committee
- Review of individual audit reports
- Meetings with the S151 officers of the other partners

(g) **The Work of Internal Audit**

The overall opinion of the System of Internal Controls in operation throughout 2020/21 based on the work of the East Kent Audit Partnership during 2019/20 was presented in their annual report to the Governance Committee in July.

- The internal auditors are independent to the management of the Council and have direct access to the Chair of the Governance Committee if required. They provide a regular update to the Committee at each of the quarterly meetings, and attend any special meetings that may be convened during the year.
- As at 31 March 2021 the Internal Auditors completed 226.22 days of review equating to 72.56% of planned completion. This is compared to the adjusted target of 75% planned completion, having lost quarter one (April, May and June 2020) to the staff having been redeployed.
- The East Kent Audit Partnership (EKAP) undertake a regular schedule of follow up audits to ensure that management have implemented the action plans arising from each audit. Members can see full details within the Internal Audit Annual Report that was presented to the Governance Committee in July 2021.
- The EKAP have met as a team and considered the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Checklist for compliance. The results of this self-assessment showed that internal audit is currently working towards full compliance and has agreed an action plan to achieve this. The lack of an External Quality Assessment (EQA) against the PSIAS is hereby disclosed as non-conformance in this Annual Governance Statement. The four s.151 Officers, acting as the EKAP Client Officer Group, continue to be content to rely on the self-assessment process for the PSIAS and not commission an EQA.

- As part of EKAP's quality monitoring arrangements Members should be aware that following the completion of each audit, a satisfaction questionnaire is completed by the managers of the service that has been audited enabling the officers involved to comment on the conduct and outcome of the audit. This information is used, in part, to inform the self-assessment.

(h) **External Reviews**

There were no external reviews held this year.

(i) **Training**

Comprehensive Training is provided at the outset for the new Council and this is refreshed during the four year term, to ensure that the councillors have the skills and expertise to make sound and effective decisions.

The officer performance appraisal includes a personal Improvement plan, where training and development needs are discussed and agreed. These are provided annually to the Head of Governance to help inform the training needs of the organisation, some of which will be delivered corporately via the Corporate Training Plan. In 2020/21 a number of Managers and Team Leaders continued to work towards an Institute of Learning and Management qualification (level 3 or level 5), which helps enhance their skills and knowledge as leaders in the organisation.

(j) **Members Code of Conduct**

During 2020/21 the Monitoring Officer received twenty two complaints relating to members at ten authorities. The Governance Committee Hearing Panel did not meet during 2020/21.

During the municipal year 2020/21 there were no requests for dispensations.

6. **SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES DURING THE YEAR**

- (a) The Annual Reports of the Scrutiny and Governance Committees provide a positive statement and opinion regarding the governance arrangements and the effectiveness of the internal control environment operating across this Council.
- (b) There were 13 cases reviewed by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2019/20, no maladministration was found.
- (c) The Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions continues to publish key decisions to be taken by the Cabinet. Cabinet Reports are considered by Finance, Legal and Equalities Officers and then by CMT to ensure that outcomes are consistent with the Council's corporate direction.
- (d) A suite of performance indicator targets were approved by Cabinet at the start of the 2020/21 financial year and were then measured via the quarterly performance reports.
- (e) The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force in May 2018 and an internal GDPR Project Team was established to support the review of retention schedules, the identification of information asset owners and the development of privacy notices for services across the Council. All members of staff undertook online GDPR training and briefings sessions have been provided for all Members to

attend. Updated Information Governance training and Guidance from the Data Protection Officer was delivered to all staff in 2020/21.

- (f) During 2019, significant concerns arose over the performance of East Kent Housing (EKH), mainly in relation to compliance, procurement, contract management and delivery of the capital programme. The four councils agreed that tenants should be consulted on whether housing management should become an in-house service. Following the outcome of that consultation, it was agreed on 12 February 2020 to bring the management of the Council's housing stock back in house. The management of the Council's housing stock transferred back in house with effect from 1 October 2020 and since that time, Cabinet have been kept regularly up to date with the progress.
- (g) In March 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic started to escalate and the UK government imposed a nationwide lockdown meaning the majority of the Council's workforce was required to work from home. On 26 March 2020, special arrangements were made by the Leader of the Council in that the Chief Executive and each of the Directors were authorised to exercise any function which by virtue of the Local Government 2000 and regulations made under it is a function of the executive. This was a temporary measure to ensure executive decisions could be made promptly in a dynamic situation. These arrangements were formally revoked on 5 June 2020.
- (h) The Covid 19 pandemic continued throughout the entire period of the 2020/21 financial year and staff continued to be required to work from home. During the majority of this time, remote meetings were permitted, meaning that decision making could continue as normal.
- (i) Discussions relating to the continuation of the provision of a shared HR service were commenced in February 2021. EKHR is a service shared between Dover, Canterbury and Thanet Councils. Due to changing priorities across the authorities, all three Council's subsequently agreed to dissolve the shared service to bring the service in house with effect from 1 September 2021.

7. **IMPROVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR**

- (a) The Council continues to work with the Cabinet Office to obtain continued Public Sector Network (PSN) Compliance. This included IT Equipment, systems and software upgrades to ensure PSN compliance and to ensure that staff and members can work safely and securely from any location.
- (b) The East Kent Corporate Information Governance Group continues to meet on a regular basis with the suite of Information Governance Policies (16 in total) being kept under regular review by the group. A full review of the policies was undertaken and approved by the General Purposes Committee in December 2020. The Head of Governance remains appointed as the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) with the Digital Services Manager as the Deputy SIRO.
- (b) The officer Conditions of Service Working Group continues to oversee the employee terms and conditions and ensures that they remain up to date and relevant.
- (c) The 2020/21 Pay Policy Statement was delivered and adopted at the Council Meeting in February 2021.
- (e) A forward looking action plan has been prepared for 2020/21 and this will be kept under regular review by the Head of Governance and reviewed by the Governance Committee at its January 2022 meeting.

8. **OPINION OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE**

I can confirm that the governance arrangements provide and continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework and will ensure that that the implementation is monitored as part of the next annual review.

Signature:: _____ Date: _____
Louise May
Head of Governance

9. **STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

We have reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and noted the opinion and commitment of the Head of Governance. We sign this Annual Governance Assurance Statement on behalf of the Council.

Signature:: _____ Date: _____
Councillor Trevor Bartlett
Leader of the Council

Signature:: _____ Date: _____
Nadeem Aziz
Chief Executive

Governance Assurance Statement Action Plan – Backward Looking

Action Description	Evidenced by	Due
The corporate plan to be been kept up to date and any necessary update is published	Corporate plan is up to date and published on the website	31/03/21
The Constitution and Code of Conduct are subject to an annual review and updated where applicable	The constitution has been reviewed and changes and amendments are agreed by the Governance Committee and Council	31/03/21
Business Plans prepared and published for each division	Business plans for the forthcoming year completed and returned to Corporate Services.	31/03/21
Quarterly performance reports all reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny.	Performance reports published on the website.	31/03/21
	Performance reports reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny as per minutes published on the Website.	31/03/21
Audit reports reviewed quarterly by Governance Committee and follow up reviews undertaken where the audit review show the expected levels of assurance had not been achieved.	Agreed high risk recommendations following audit reviews are followed up in a timely manner by management	31/03/19
	Quarterly audit reports covering audit reviews and follow up reviews are received by Governance Committee	31/03/21
Governance Committee have received reports on the progress of formal service complaints against the Council and lessons learned from those complaints.	Governance committee review progress on all formal service complaints at least annually. Reports published on website.	31/03/21
Alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct by District, Town and Parish Councillors are considered by the Monitoring Officer in a timely manner.	Breaches of the Member Code of Conduct have been considered by the Monitoring Officer throughout the year.	31/03/21
Audit undertake their annual review of the effectiveness of systems of internal control.	Audit have completed their annual review of the system of internal control and the results are built in to their annual report	31/03/21
Governance Framework reviewed and any amendments approved.	No changes during 20/21. All further amendments approved by the Governance Committee and Council.	31/03/21
The provision for clawback of MMI insurance claims is reviewed and is adequate.	MMI provision is as per the MMI annual statement	31/03/21
Officer Training Plan Developed	Corporate Training Needs agreed and training plan delivered. Induction Training for new starters review is pending the return of an in house Human Resources team.	31/03/21

Action Description	Evidenced by	Due
Corporate Information Governance	Periodic review of the corporate information and security governance framework and policies for East Kent.	31/03/21
Apprenticeship Levy	Compliance with the Government requirements, including procurement of appropriate training for new apprentices.	31/03/21
Complete the transfer of the management of the Council's Housing stock back in house and secure regulatory compliance	Transfer completed 1 October 2020. Quarterly audit reports received by the Governance Committee. Regular updates to Cabinet.	31/03/21
Stabilisation of the Council's finances following the Covid-19 pandemic	The presentation of a balanced budget to Council for approval.	31/03/21

Governance Assurance Statement Action Plan – Forward Looking

Action Description	Evidenced by	Due
The corporate plan to be been kept up to date and any necessary update is published	Corporate plan is up to date and published on the website	31/03/22
The Constitution and Code of Conduct are subject to an annual review and updated where applicable	The constitution has been reviewed and changes and amendments are agreed by the Governance Committee and Council	31/03/22
Business Plans prepared and published for each division	Business plans for the forthcoming year completed and returned to Corporate Services.	31/03/22
Quarterly performance reports all reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny.	Performance reports published on the website.	31/03/22
	Performance reports reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny as per minutes published on the Website.	31/03/22
Audit reports reviewed quarterly by Governance Committee and follow up reviews undertaken where the audit review show the expected levels of assurance had not been achieved.	Agreed high risk recommendations following audit reviews are followed up in a timely manner by management	31/03/22
	Quarterly audit reports covering audit reviews and follow up reviews are received by Governance Committee	31/03/22
Governance Committee have received reports on the progress of formal service complaints against the Council and lessons learned from those complaints.	Governance committee review progress on all formal service complaints at least annually. Reports published on website.	31/03/22
Alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct by District, Town and Parish Councillors are considered by the Monitoring Officer in a timely manner.	Breaches of the Member Code of Conduct have been considered by the Monitoring Officer throughout the year.	31/03/22
Audit undertake their annual review of the effectiveness of systems of internal control.	Audit have completed their annual review of the system of internal control and the results are built in to their annual report	31/03/22
Governance Framework reviewed and any amendments approved.	All amendments approved by the Governance Committee and Council.	31/03/22
The provision for clawback of MMI insurance claims is reviewed and is adequate.	MMI provision is as per the MMI annual statement	31/03/22
Officer Training Plan Developed	Corporate Training Needs agreed and training plan delivered.	31/03/22
	Induction Training for new starters reviewed by the in house HR team	
Corporate Information Governance	Periodic review of the corporate information and security governance	31/03/22

Action Description	Evidenced by	Due
	framework and policies for East Kent.	
Apprenticeship Levy	Compliance with the Government requirements, including procurement of appropriate training for new apprentices.	31/03/22
Stabilisation of the Council's finances following the Covid-19 pandemic	The presentation of a balanced budget to Council for approval	31/03/22

Subject:	YOUR LEISURE COVID-19 SUPPORT FUNDING
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 September 2021
Report of:	Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Oliver Richardson, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property
Decision Type:	Non-Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To provide an update to Cabinet on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Your Leisure’s business recovery following central government’s requirement to temporarily close leisure centres, and to seek agreement to the allocation of COVID support funding in respect of operations at the Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre.

Recommendation: To agree:

1. To note and welcome the business recovery measures undertaken by Your Leisure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To confirm agreement to the allocation of £80,000 COVID-19 support funding for the Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Your Leisure (YL) manages Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre in Deal under a lease agreement with Dover District Council. The lease at Tides was extended to 31 March 2025 under the terms of which YL surrendered the lease of Dover Leisure Centre some three years ago. YL receives an annual grant from the Council that has reduced in recent years but currently stands at £100,350 for the year ending 31 March 2022.
- 1.2 Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre was forced to close to the public on 21 March 2020 following Central Government legislation that was aimed at dealing with the COVID 19 outbreak. Leisure Centres were permitted to re-open from 25 July 2020. However, there were two further temporary lockdowns since that time and the centre more recently re-opened on 19 April 2021 in line with government guidance.
- 1.3 Due to extended periods of closure since March 2020, like all leisure operators, there was limited income for the leisure sector, yet considerable on-going premises costs and a financial crisis faced the industry. Your Leisure has undertaken several measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, but it has not received any additional financial assistance directly from the Council’s resources.
- 1.4 While some funding support has been obtained through National Lottery Recovery Fund NLRF and welcomed, it is not sufficient to cover the combined effect of three lockdowns and restricted re-opening. This report seeks Cabinet agreement to the allocation of £80,000 Covid support funding to meet the expected budget deficit trading position of Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis centre for the year ending 2021/22.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Your Leisure (YL) is a not-for-profit charitable organisation providing leisure, hospitality, entertainment and community services in the Dover and Thanet districts. YL manages Tides Leisure and Tennis Centre (Tides/Tennis) under a lease arrangement, recently extended until 31 March 2025, with Dover District Council (DDC). A separate Funding Agreement exists providing an annual grant, which has reduced in recent years, and now stands at £100,350 plus VAT for the year ending March 2022.

2.2 Prior to the opening of the new Dover Leisure Centre, YL were trading at a surplus at Tides Leisure & Tennis Centre. Since February 2019 (2018/19 year) income levels have been affected, initially, as a result of the new competition arising from the new Dover District Leisure Centre, and then substantially following the coronavirus outbreak (end of 2019/20 & 2020/21). The table below summarises income, surplus/(loss) and the level of DDC funding for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 and for the first three months of 2021/22.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (Apr - June)
Tides/Tennis Income	£1,418,382	£1,415,383	£1,362,869	£1,303,382	£472,051	£122,175
Tides/Tennis Surplus/(Loss)	£69,862	£67,559	£2,302	(£31,106)	(£327,890)	(£68,874)
DDC Funding (excluding VAT)	£132,500	£132,500	£132,500	£111,500	£100,350	£25,087

2.3 Much of the income is from leisure centre memberships paid either annually or monthly. A stark illustration of the pandemic impact is the overall reduction in Tides/Tennis memberships from 2260 in February 2020 to 1186 in July 2021. A decrease of 48%.

2.4 Operating in the leisure, hospitality and entertainment sector YL has faced considerable challenges as it has attempted to reduce cost and raise funding to absorb substantial loss of income from these services which have been subject to partial or complete lockdown for up to 15 months. The financial impact for the year ending March 2021 was a company-wide trading loss of £464,772 and for the period April to June 2021 a loss of £39,174.

3. Mitigating the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic

3.1 YL has taken a range of actions, and continues to do so, in order to try and mitigate the impact of the pandemic and not be overly reliant on key public sector partners. These being:

3.2 Actions Completed:

- (1) £1,674,510 claimed back through the Govt Job Retention Scheme (Furlough). Of this £328,030 relates to Tides/Tennis. Staff on furlough only paid at 80% and required to take annual leave to minimise cost, particularly upon re-opening facilities.

- (2) Successful application to the National Cultural Recovery Fund securing £332,000 to support Margate Winter Gardens & Theatre Royal. In addition, joined a Theatre Trust national initiative to 'Save Our Theatres' and established a crowd-funding page raising a total of £17,000.
- (3) From the National Leisure Recovery Fund £341,970 secured for Hartsdown Leisure Centre and Ramsgate Leisure Centre in the Thanet district and £66,600 for Tides/ Tennis in the Dover district.
- (4) Completion of a redundancy programme across hospitality and entertainment and indoor leisure, based on reduced demand, revised programming and new ways of working has significantly reduced future established labour costs.
- (5) Advanced funding received from both Local Authority partners and an extra £160,000 of new funding secured from Thanet District Council (TDC) for year ending March 2021.
- (6) Successfully obtained short-term financial support from Lloyds Bank through an £800,000 Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan (CBIL).
- (7) Agreement from TDC Cabinet to have access to a loan of up to £1.5M. This has not been called upon as yet.
- (8) Secured £522,066 in grants for facilities from the various Coronavirus grant funds administered through Local Authorities. £40,928 related to Tides/Tennis.
- (9) Surrendered early the lease at Dover Town Hall using the £85,000 compensation to support cashflow.
- (10) Took advantage of the deferral of VAT liability with rescheduled payments on track for being back up to date by March 2022.
- (11) Negotiated payment holidays on rent, loan and utility liabilities. These are now all paid up to date.
- (12) Secured a range of smaller grants (including from Tesco & DDC) to part cover the cost of PPE equipment, social distancing signage and sanitizer stations.
- (13) In preparation for re-opening at the end of each lockdown promoted a range of new leisure centre memberships, including a virtual workout option, intended to attract new members and increase income. Also joined Kent County Council's Reconnect programme to encourage 5 – 16-year-olds to visit Tides Leisure Centre and secured £4,160 of funding to provide free swimming lessons over the summer period.
- (14) Although unsuccessful, funding applications were also submitted to the Architectural Heritage Fund, Charities Aid Foundation and National Cultural Recovery Fund (round two)

3.3 Actions in Progress:

- (1) In advanced discussions with Lloyds Bank to refinance existing leisure centre loans to facilitate a lower cost of borrowing over the remaining term.

- (2) Considering relinquishing the lease for Dover Sea Sports Centre to remove future financial risk.
- (3) Applied for Local Authority Coronavirus Extension grants in the Dover district totalling £5,668.
- (4) Continuing to access the Furlough scheme until it ends in September 2021.

4. Update on Your Leisure Financial Position

- 4.1 Despite these actions the severe financial impact of the pandemic has required Your Leisure to seek additional support to meet the expected deficit trading position of certain facilities within its portfolio. In respect of the management of Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis centre, the projected budget deficit for the year ending March 2022 is £76,399. (see Appendix 1)
- 4.2 This budget was finalised in April 2021 and at the time factored in an expected Government Restart Grant of £18,000 and a balance of £34,131 from the National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF) which had not been previously allocated to year ending March 2021. Both these amounts have now been received.
- 4.3 Whilst the NLRF has been welcomed the £66,500 to support Tides leisure & Indoor Tennis centre is not sufficient to cover the combined effect of lockdown and restricted opening. There continues to be much lobbying for the Government to provide a new funding round to mirror the two rounds of the National Cultural Recovery Fund which have been provided.
- 4.4 It has been identified that further support is required to address the following challenges:
 - i) The return of customers since reopening on a restricted basis from 12 April 2021 has been gradual and customer confidence is expected to take time to be rebuilt. Based on analysis by Sport England through the Moving Communities research platform leisure centre attendances in the South-East for the period 17 May – 20 June are at 67.1% compared with same period in 2019.
 - ii) Operating costs continue to escalate particularly energy prices and labour, as a result of National Living/Minimum Wage increases. In addition, there is cost pressure created through operating in accordance with Covid compliant guidelines.
 - iii) Leisure delivery providers operate on razor tight margins with limited ability to pass the above costs on to the end user through increased prices.
 - iv) The potential for further Covid restrictions, as a result of infections rising and the possibility of staff needing to self-isolate impacting on the ability to safely deliver services.
- 4.5 YL has been in regular and transparent dialogue with its bankers (Lloyds), auditors (McCabe Ford Williams) and Local Authority funding partners. Through the support secured or available the company is confident it remains a viable going concern as recorded in the audited accounts for year ending March 2020. The audited accounts for year ending March 2021 are scheduled to be approved by the YL Board on the 7 September and adopted at the AGM on the 14 September 2021.

- 4.6 The actions, both completed and in progress, combined with the additional funding requested from DDC and an expectation that customer visits and memberships will return to pre-pandemic levels soon will place YL in a stronger financial position going forward. YL's cashflow position is beginning to recover with the existing and forecast illustrated in the table below.

Cash position at 3 August 2021	Access to loan facility from TDC (Dec 21)	Projected balance at 31 March 2022	Projected balance at 31 March 2023
	(As stated in actions completed vii)	(including £80,000 requested from DDC)	Assuming operations run at breakeven and annual repayment of TDC loan (15 yrs)
£1,025,289	£1,500,000	£780,000	£680,000

- 4.7 Whilst it is too early to project a budget for 18 months ahead it is anticipated that Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre will move to at least a breakeven trading position for the year ending March 2023. The steps already taken throughout the pandemic including a relaunch of memberships and reduced labour provision, make this a realistic expectation.
- 4.8 Supporting YL to recover from the pandemic enables the continued delivery of social, economic and health outcomes whilst also facilitating the continued provision of affordable and accessible services at Tides/Tennis. Providing YL with additional funding also assists in maintaining their range of funded community programmes in the Dover district including Bikeability, Legacy, Aspire, Thriving Communities, You vs Train and Deal e-bikes.

5. Identification and Evaluation of Options

- 5.1 Option 1: To welcome the business recovery measures undertaken by YL in response to the COVID 19 pandemic and confirm agreement to the allocation of £80,000 covid support funding for Tides Leisure Centre.

This is the preferred option because YL has exhausted all channels for exploring external financial support and has made commendable progress in obtaining government grants and loans to mitigate the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. The additional covid support of £80,000 will allow YL meet the continued challenges as set out at para 4.4 of this report and potentially reach a trading break even financial position by March 2023 at Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis Centre.

- 5.2 Option 2: To note the business recovery measures undertaken by YL in response to the COVID 19 pandemic and not to confirm agreement to the allocation of £80,000 covid support funding for Tides Leisure Centre.

This is not the preferred option because although YL has exhausted all channels for obtaining external financial support, it is unable to sustain the financial pressures that have arisen from COVID 19 Pandemic and cannot absorb the projected financial deficit for year end 2021/22. The accumulating financial pressure could risk YL failing to maintain continuity of services at Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis centre leading to potential closure of the facility in advance of the lease agreement expiry date.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1 Council officers has been having regular open and transparent meetings with Your Leisure and the financial team have been kept informed of regular updates, accounts and discussions. The £80,000 can be resourced from the Council's revenue budget.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1 Tides Leisure & Indoor Tennis has had significant capital investment across the closure period of the COVID 19 pandemic to undertake essential maintenance issues. Works to address the on-going challenges with controlling atmosphere and pool heating temperatures will help to improve the energy efficiency of the old building and reduce energy consumption.

8. Corporate Implications

- 8.1 Comment from the Head of Finance & Investment: Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will want to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money. (DL)
- 8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council. The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make".
- 8.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer. This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Tides Leisure/Tennis Centre Budget: 2021/22.

10. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Laura Corby Extn 42448

Appendix 1

Tides Leisure/Tennis Centre Budget: 2021/22					
Accounting Period: April 21 - March 22	Base Budget for 2020/21 (set in Feb 2020)		Forecast Budget for 2021/22		Notes
	TIDES LEISURE CENTRE	TENNIS CENTRE	TIDES LEISURE CENTRE	TENNIS CENTRE	
					Sales based on re-opening 12 April 21 with restrictions in place until 21 June 21
					Unless stated otherwise 2% uplift in expenditure applied based on 20/21 Budget
Catering and bars	129,638	0	64,819		
Vending	20,020	0	10,010		
FOOD AND BEVERAGE SALES	149,658	0	74,829	0	
Entertainment	0	0	0	0	
Hirings	1,695	0	0	0	
Rent	0	0	0	0	
ENTERTAINMENT SALES	1,695	0	0	0	
Wetside activities	398,440	0	328,322	0	Utilising previous budget but based on 9 months full trading with social distancing
Dryside activities	32,542	38,261	28,500	52,000	Increased based on partnership arrangements with Walmer Lawn Tennis Club
Swim school	214,600	0	194,010	0	100% capacity of re-opening programme plus expansion
Other coaching	2,595	67,896	2,000	61,236	Based on current course set up post c-19 at 70% saturation
Fitness room	391,776	0	306,720	0	Based on current live membership @ approx 502 (£180,720) increasing to 1000 by 100 per month
Games Centres	0	0	0	0	
Recreation grounds	0	0	0	0	
SPORTING SALES	1,039,954	106,158	859,552	113,236	
Soft play/creche	1,255	0	0	0	
SOFT PLAY/ CRECHE	1,255	0	0	0	
Sale of Consumables	36,374	167	36,500	0	
Other income	3,718	70	3,000	0	
Passport to Leisure	4,455	0	0	0	
KCC grant	0	0	0	0	
Other funding	0	200	17,004	500	Includes anticipated reclaim from JRS up until Sept 2021
Arts Council funding	0	0	0	0	
OTHER INCOME	44,547	437	56,504	500	
TOTAL INCOME	1,237,109	106,594	990,885	113,736	
Direct Labour	516,677	22,092	490,483	10,500	Accommodates revised establishment and an increase in NLW
Casual Labour	149,283	34,032	134,085	32,000	As above
TOTAL LABOUR	665,960	56,124	624,568	42,500	
Provisions and beverages	47,533	0	48,484	0	
Vending expenditure	9,797	0	9,993	0	
Event costs	480	0	490	0	

Tides Leisure/Tennis Centre Budget: 2021/22					
Accounting Period: April 21 - March 22	Base Budget for 2020/21 (set in Feb 2020)		Forecast Budget for 2021/22		Notes
Beauty products	0	0	0	0	
Day to day maintenance	30,593	4,455	31,205	4,544	
Maintenance contracts	29,229	273	29,813	278	
Equipment hire	2,679	0	2,733	0	
Facility rentals	0	0	0	0	
Marketing and promotion	1,795	181	1,831	185	
Advertising and printing	2,651	173	2,704	176	
Chemicals and cleaning	21,570	0	22,001	0	
Goods for resale	23,609	0	24,081	0	
Spa materials	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL DIRECT OVERHEADS	169,936	5,082	173,334	5,184	
Utilities	249,518	19,167	254,509	19,551	Contract for gas/electric expires Oct & Nov 2021. 2% uplift on 20/21 budget assumed
Company vehicle costs	0	0	0	0	
Premise hire and rental	0	0	0	0	
Insurance	24,611	2,678	25,103	2,731	
Telephone	3,376	0	3,443	0	
Stationery	6,024	0	6,144	0	
Postage	34	0	35	0	
Travel, subsistence and meeting	1,063	0	1,084	0	
Uniforms & laundry	1,131	0	1,154	0	
Disposables	13,119	0	13,381	0	
Bad Debts	0	0	0	0	
Other	9,280	878	9,466	895	
Licences	14,648	0	14,941	0	
Bank Charges and Interest	6,117	0	6,239	0	
IT Costs	20,527	630	20,937	643	
Booking fees	0	0	0	0	
Equipment replacement	5,999	548	6,119	558	
Training and other staff costs	5,646	241	5,759	245	
TOTAL INDIRECT OVERHEADS	361,092	24,141	368,313	24,624	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,196,987	85,347	1,166,216	72,307	
Contribution	40,122	21,247	-175,331	41,429	
Deficit funding/management fee	100,000	0	100,000	0	
Central Support Charges (5% of income)	61,855	5,330	49,544	5,687	
VAT write off	65,674	0	66,988	0	
Depreciation	27,098	0	27,640	0	
Total adjustments	-54,628	-5,330	-44,172	-5,687	

Tides Leisure/Tennis Centre Budget: 2021/22

Accounting Period: April 21 - March 22	Base Budget for 2020/21 (set in Feb 2020)		Forecast Budget for 2021/22		Notes
SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)	-14,506	15,917	-219,503	35,742	
COMBINED SURPLUS/ DEFICIT	2020 - 21	1,411	2021 - 22	-183,761	
	Less:	Central Support Charges	£ 55,231		
	Plus:	Govt Restart Grant	£ 18,000		
	Plus:	Balance of NLRF £66.5k	£ 34,131		
			£ 107,362		
			Overall Deficit	-£ 76,399	

Tides/Tennis Budget

Appendix 1

Accounting Period : April 21 - March 22	Base Budget for 2020/21 (set in Feb 2020)		Forecast Budget for 2021/22		Notes
	TIDES LEISURE CENTRE	TENNIS CENTRE	TIDES LEISURE CENTRE	TENNIS CENTRE	
					Sales based on re-opening 12 April 21 with restrictions in place until 21 June 21 Unless stated otherwise 2% uplift in expenditure applied based on 20/21 Budget
Catering and bars	129,638	0	64,819		
Vending	20,020	0	10,010		
FOOD AND BEVERAGE SALES	149,658	0	74,829	0	
Entertainment	0	0	0	0	
Hirings	1,695	0	0	0	
Rent	0	0	0	0	
ENTERTAINMENT SALES	1,695	0	0	0	
Wetside activities	398,440	0	328,322	0	Utilising previous budget but based on 9 months full trading with social distancing
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Other coaching	2,595	67,896	2,000	61,236	Based on current course set up post c-19 at 70% saturation
Fitness room	391,776	0	306,720	0	Based on current live membership @ approx 502 (£180,720) increasing to 1000 by 100 per month
Games Centres	0	0	0	0	
Recreation grounds	0	0	0	0	
SPORTING SALES	1,039,954	106,158	859,552	113,236	
Spa	0	0	0	0	
Toning	0	0	0	0	
SPA AND TONING INCOME	0	0	0	0	
Soft play/creche	1,255	0	0	0	
Soft play/creche	1,255	0	0	0	
Chalets and beach huts	0	0	0	0	
FORESHORE SALES	0	0	0	0	
Sale of Consumables	36,374	167	36,500	0	
Other income	3,718	70	3,000	0	
Passport to Leisure	4,455	0	0	0	
KCC grant	0	0	0	0	
Other funding	0	200	17,004	500	Includes anticipated reclaim from JRS up until Sept 2021
Arts Council funding	0	0	0	0	
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TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,196,987	85,347	1,166,216	72,307
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VAT write off	65,674	0	66,988	0
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Total adjustments	-54,628	-5,330	-44,172	-5,687
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-14,506	15,917	-219,503	35,742

Contract for gas/electric expires Oct & Nov 2021. 2% uplift on 20/21 budget assumed

COMBINED SURPLUS/DEFICIT	2020 - 21	1,411	2021 - 22	-183,761
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Less: Central Support Charges	£	55,231
Plus: Govt Restart Grant	£	18,000
Plus: Balance of NLRG £66.5k	£	34,131
	£	107,362

Overall Deficit	-£	76,399
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Subject:	PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 1 2021/22
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 September 2021 Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 September 2021
Report of:	Michelle Farrow, Head of Leadership Support
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Chris Vinson, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change
Decision Type:	Non-Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To monitor performance against key objectives.

Recommendation: To note the Council's Performance Report and Actions for Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June 2021).

1. Summary

The Council's Performance Report for the Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June 2021) reports on performance against key performance targets throughout the Council and East Kent Shared Services during the period. It incorporates comments from each Director on performance within their directorate plus any key initiatives and concerns they may have.

This is a revised version of the existing performance report, taking into account the new Housing indicators. A new Strategic Performance Dashboard is in development and will be consulted upon shortly.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Monitoring of performance against key targets is key to the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. The Performance Report provides a summary of the Council's key performance figures for the Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June 2021).
- 2.2 The Performance Report contains information relating to the performance of the Council against key corporate indicators and considers the performance of a range of indicators against previous year's performance.
- 2.3 The Performance Report identifies areas where performance is on track throughout the first quarter of 2021/22, whilst recognising the need for further improvements in some areas. Each Director provides additional commentary focussing on areas of high or low performance.
- 2.4 A section is included to show performance within the Shared Services against key indicators. A more comprehensive set of indicators for EK Services, including Civica, are monitored through the monitoring structures established by the Agreements under which those services are delivered, with any areas of significant concern being capable of escalation into this quarterly monitoring report, if required.
- 2.5 Following the return of the housing service to direct control of Dover District Council from East Kent Housing, the Key Performance Indicators have been revised to provide a better and more transparent overview of how the service is performing. Currently,

Property Services is focussing on Compliance. Once the service returns to a 'steady state' later in the year additional performance indicators will be agreed.

3. Identification of Options

3.1 Not applicable.

4. Evaluation of Options

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 None.

6. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

6.1 None.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer (linked to the MTFP): The Head of Finance & Investment has been consulted on this report and has no further comments to add.

7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate):

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Performance Report for Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June 2021).

9. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Michelle Farrow, Head of Leadership Support



Dover District Council Performance Report for Quarter 1 2021/22 (April to June)

Summary of Performance Indicators Year to Date

Status	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Direction of Travel to previous Qtr
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Green	24	70.6							▲
Amber	03	8.8							▼
Red	07	20.6							▼
Total	34	100							

KEY:	
▲	Improved performance
▶	Maintained performance
▼	Decline in performance

CONTENTS

EK Services & DDC Digital.....	2
Civica.....	3
Joint Housing Services (Housing Management and Property Services)	6
Corporate Resources	11
Operations and Commercial.....	14
Staff numbers.....	19

EK Services & DDC Digital

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel Previous Qtr	RAG Status
ACC011	Percentage of on-line payments to cash & cheque	93.75%	Data for information only	96.0%				96.0%	50,267	▲	N/A
EKS001	Percentage of incidents resolved within agreed target response time - ICT	96%	95%	97.5%				97.5%	632	▲	Green
EKS002	Percentage of incidents resolved within 1 working day	63%	60%	62.0%				62.0%	401	▼	Green
EKS003	Percentage of incidents resolved within 3 working days	82.75%	80%	83.5%				83.5%	542	▼	Green
EKS004	Percentage availability of email service	100%	97.50%	100.0%				100.0%	N/A	▶	Green
PLA005	Percentage of electronic planning applications received	88.01%	80%	93.11%				93.11%	494	▼	Green
WEB001	Percentage availability of the corporate website (DDC responsibility)	99.98%	99.50%	99.99%				99.99%	N/A	▼	Green
WEB002	Number of Keep me Posted subscriptions	36,601	Data for information only	53,934				53,934	N/A	▲	N/A
WEB003	Facebook subscribers	8,640	Data for information only	9,808				9,808	N/A	▲	N/A

EKS Director's Comments

Performance: All of the performance indicators met the targets for Q1.

Key Initiatives/Outcomes: Nothing to report for Q1

Concerns/Risks: No concerns or risks to report for Q1

Civica

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (To Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
Benefits											
KPI01	Pay benefit quickly	5.75 days	8.5 days	5.00 days				5.00	N/A	▼	Green
KPI02	Percentage of correct Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit decisions	97.60%	96%	96.35%				96.35	N/A	▼	Green
Council Tax											
KPI03	The percentage of council taxes due for the financial year which were received in year by the authority.	96.87%	96.84%	28.61%				28.61	N/A	▲ To Q1 2020/21	Green
Business Rates											
KPI04	Percentage of Business Rates collected	97.13%	98.20%	23.03%				23.03	N/A	▼ To Q1 2020/21	Red
Customer Services											
KPI06	Average call waiting time in seconds	146 seconds	233 seconds	352 seconds				352	N/A	▼	Red
Council Tax Reduction Scheme											
KPI07a	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Caseload - Working Age	5,828	Data for information only	5,759				5,759	N/A	N/A	N/A

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (To Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
KP107b	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Caseload - Pension Age	3,425	Data for information only	3,397				3,397	N/A	N/A	N/A
KP107c	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Caseload - Total	9,253	Data for information only	9,156				9,156	N/A	N/A	N/A
Open Portal											
KP108	Open Portal Take Up (live 11 January 2021)	1,387	Data for information only	2,231				2,231	N/A	▲	N/A

Civica Comments

Performance:

Speed of processing: Exceeded target

Accuracy: Exceeded target

Revenues – Council Tax: Exceeded profile based on last year's actual (28.61% against a target of 28.11%)

Revenues – Business Rates: Missed profile. A new profile will be needed following June's rebilling exercise as the percentages are based on the higher debt amount.

Call Answering: Worse than profile. Although achieved June monthly target, the legacy impact of DDC waste issues has pushed the YTD outside of target.

Excused performance has been requested and agreed. Further information is detailed below.

Key Initiatives/Outcomes:

Open Portal went live on 11 January 2021. 2,231 customers have now signed up as of June 2021 (up from 1,387 as of March 2021). This service enables customers to access to view all their Revenues and Benefits information online (such as Benefit claims, Council Tax accounts, Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Accounts, Sundry Debtor accounts and landlord accounts).

Concerns/Risks:

Customer service has remained under exceptional pressure since early April following the introduction of a new household waste service at Dover. This has led to increased call volumes, repeat avoidable contact and resulting in increased handling times. At its peak in April 2021, Civica experienced significant operational challenges that resulted in overwhelming levels of contact; the main drivers for contact being changed and missed collections, unclear information and reduced online reporting. The Waste and Recycling line saw a 241.4% (4,037) increase in calls compared to the baseline from last 3-years. Total emails /

'Contact Us' forms received increased by 523.3% (2,156) compared to the baseline from last 3-years. The additional work generated in April 2021 would require an additional 19 FTE than the usual volume for this service. By June 2021, customer contact for Dover had improved but remained at double the expected levels (with 1,673 more calls) and three times the expected email contact (855 more emails). There is an ongoing action plan to mitigate the impact of this and Civica continues to work with DDC to resolve these issues as quickly as possible. Excused performance for the Key Performance Indicators has been agreed. Business Rates continues to be exceptionally challenging this year as the legacy impact of Covid-19 continues to be felt by businesses, combined with a lack of court dates being made available to process debt. Dover missed profile by 5.29% (as of June 2021). The profile will require further adjustment after the June billing to reflect the new charges to collect from retail and leisure businesses. This rebilling will add significant further challenge to collection rates.

Joint Housing Services (Housing Management and Property Services)

Following the return of the housing service to direct control of Dover District Council from East Kent Housing, the Key Performance Indicators have been revised to provide a better and more transparent overview of how the service is performing. Currently, Property Services is focussing on Compliance. Once the service returns to a 'steady state' later in the year additional performance indicators will be agreed.

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
HOUSING MANAGEMENT											
Income Collection											
HOM001	Total current tenant arrears as % of annual rental income	3.79%	4.55%	3.40%				3.40%	N/A	▲	Green
HOM002	Total current tenant arrears (including court costs)	£747,907	N/A	£677,601				£677,601	N/A	▲	N/A
HOM003	Average current tenant arrears per rented unit	£157	N/A	£137				£137	N/A	▲	N/A
HOM004	Current tenant arrears (non-UC) as % of annual rental income	1.33%	1.25%	1.05%				1.05%	N/A	▲	Green
HOM005	Current tenant arrears (UC only) as a % of annual rental income	2.46%	3.30%	2.34%				2.34%	N/A	▲	Green
HOM006	Total number of UC cases	1,302	N/A	1,363				1,363	N/A	N/A	N/A
HOM007	Total garage arrears at end of quarter	£274	N/A	£678				£678	N/A	▼	N/A
HOM008	Total garage arrears as a % of annual rental income (GF)	0.07%	0.33%	0.15%				0.15%	N/A	▼	Green
HOM009	Former tenant arrears as % of annual rental income	2.17%	0.50%	2.37%				2.37%	N/A	▼	Red
HOM010	Total former tenant arrears (including court costs)	£428,393	N/A	£472,938				£472,938	N/A	▼	N/A

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
HOM011	The amount of former tenant arrears (including court costs) written off	£263	N/A	£0.00				£0.00	N/A	-	N/A
Housing Options											
HOM12	Number of homeless households approaching the Council in the quarter	492	N/A	140				140	N/A	Q4 113	N/A
HOM13	Number of open homeless cases being managed at the end of the quarter	Snapshot at the end of a quarter	N/A	275				275	N/A	Not available	N/A
HOM14	Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented in the quarter	181	N/A	30				30	N/A	Q4 37	N/A
HOM15	Number of homeless households in all types of temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter	Snapshot at the end of a quarter	N/A	141				141	N/A	Q4 166	N/A
HOM16	Number of households with children or 16-to-17-year-old in B&B at the end of the quarter.	0	N/A	1				1	N/A	Q4 0	N/A
HOM17	Number of homeless families living outside of the area at the end of the quarter	Snapshot at the end of a quarter	N/A	0				0	N/A	Q4 19	N/A
Lettings											
HOM18	Average days to re-let empty properties (from tenancy termination to new tenancy start date) including time spent on major works	59.25 days	TBC	57.55 days				57.55 days	N/A	▲ Q4 61.72	N/A

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
HOM19	Average days to re-let empty properties (from tenancy termination to new tenancy start date) excluding time spent on major works	41.91 days	TBC	25.82 days				25.82 days	N/A	▲ Q4 30.23	N/A
HOM20	Number of properties becoming void in the quarter	236	TBC	73				73	N/A	Q4 82	N/A
HOM21	Number of properties let in the quarter	194	TBC	74				74	N/A	▲ Q4 58	N/A
HOM22	% of properties let in the quarter and requiring major work.	Not available	TBC	56.76%				56.76%	N/A	Q4 51.72%	N/A
HOM23	Average days to re-let properties (from tenancy termination to new tenancy start date) requiring major work	Not available	TBC	76.42				76.42	N/A	▼ Q4 73.37	N/A
PROPERTY SERVICES											
ASS01	Percentage of properties with gas appliances that have current LGSR. (Landlords Gas Safety Record)	99.88%	100%	99.88%				99.88%		▶	Amber
ASS02	Percentage of properties that have current EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report)	68.63%	100%	81.55%				81.55%		▲	Amber
ASS03	Percentage of Blocks that have current Fire Risk Assessment.	100%	100%	100%				100%		▶	Green
ASS04	Percentage of Blocks with communal lifts that have current LOLER (Lift	100%	100%	100%				100%		▶	Green

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
	Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations).										
ASS05	Percentage of Blocks with relevant installations that have legionella risk assessment.	100%	100%	87%				87%		▼	Red
ASS06	Percentage of communal assets that have satisfactory asbestos risk assessment.	100%	100%	100%				100%		▶	Green
ASS07	Number of current on-going actions, flowing from flowing from Fire Risk Assessments	833	N/A	389				389	N/A	▲	N/A
ASS08	Total number of overdue actions, flowing from Fire Risk Assessments - broken down into:	363	N/A	242				242	N/A	▲	N/A
	a) Intolerable ratings	0	N/A	0				0	N/A	▶	N/A
	b) Severe ratings	0	N/A	0				0	N/A	▶	N/A
	c) Moderate ratings	363	N/A	242				242	N/A	▲	N/A
	d) Tolerable ratings	0	N/A	0				0	N/A	▶	N/A
	e) Trivial ratings	0	N/A	0				0	N/A	▶	N/A
ASS09	Number of overdue actions, flowing from Legionella Risk Assessments – broken down into:	190	N/A	143				143	N/A	▲	N/A
	a) High	26	N/A	25				25	N/A	▲	N/A
	b) Medium	140	N/A	108				108	N/A	▲	N/A

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
	c) Low	24	N/A	10				10	N/A	▲	N/A

Joint Housing Service Comments

Performance:

- The number of households living in temporary accommodation including B&B has reduced this quarter with increased numbers of households helped to secure a more permanent housing solution. Snapshot performance figures for the end of the quarter capture a single applicant placed into B&B for the night out of hours who was moved quickly in working hours to more suitable temporary accommodation. Performance remains strong for the housing management income recovery team and our money and benefit advisors continue to work with families facing financial difficulty to help them maximize their income (Head of Housing).
- The time and effort expended in addressing the compliance issues throughout quarter one brought about a continual improvement, which in some cases is marked, and culminated in an internal audit of compliance, undertaken by East Kent Audit Partnership in June – the results of which will inform the decision of the regulator about the timings for relinquishing oversight of the service. The need to take action to address an increase in the number of void properties becoming available and the contingent elongation of the average void time became apparent towards the end of the quarter. Covid and resource issues meant that Mears were struggling to undertake works and a contract to carry out a limited number void works was put together for tender in July. The aim was both to reduce the pressure on Mears to carry out void works quickly and to test whether there is benefit in tendering void works in discreet packages in future (Head of Assets and Building Control).

Concerns/Risks:

- The average number of days being taken to relet empty council homes is improving but there are still considerable challenges as a consequence of shortages with contractor labour and materials. Additional contractor resource is currently being procured to help reduce the overall number of empty homes and deal with larger than average numbers of properties being returned and requiring major work before they can be relet. (Head of Housing).
- The combined impacts of Covid, Brexit and other macro-economic issues has led to strained/broken supply chains, materials shortages. long lead times impeding delivery. Post Covid the demand for construction has increased and this has lead to skills shortages both for contractors and DDC recruiting staff with the requisite skills, both of which are hampering all aspects of the maintenance service (Head of Assets and Building Control).

Corporate Resources

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
Finance											
ACC004	Percentage of invoices paid on time	83.28%	91.50%	84.73%				84.73%	3,046	▲	Amber
Community Safety											
CSU001	Percentage of ASB cases resolved within 30 days	100%	98%	77.2%				77.2%	92	▼	Red
Regulatory Services											
ENH005	Percentage of complaints regarding nuisance responded to within 5 working days	98.30%	95%	98%				98%	291	▶	Green
ENH012	Number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for litter	28	N/A	7				7	N/A	N/A	N/A
ENH013	Percentage of stray dog enquiries responded to within target time.	100%	95%	100%				100%	28	▶	Green
ENH015	Number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for dog fouling	1	N/A	0				0	N/A	N/A	N/A
ENH016	Number of Envirocrime prosecutions completed	6	N/A	5				5	N/A	N/A	N/A
LIC005	Percentage of licensed premises inspections completed by target date	45%	80%	100%				100%	0	▲	Green
LIC006	Percentage of unopposed licensing and permit applications processed within 5 working days	99.5%	75%	97%				97%	278	▼	Green

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
PSH007	Number of DFG applications completed (for information only)	57	N/A	15				15	15	▼	N/A
PSH008	Percentage of completed DFG applications approved within 10 working days from receipt of application	85%	N/A	100				100	N/A	▶	N/A
Governance											
GOV001	Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence per FTE	4.80 days	N/A	1.66				1.66	N/A	▲	N/A
GOV002	Number of working days/shifts lost due to long term sickness absence over 10 days per FTE	3.55 days	N/A	1.16				1.16	N/A	▲	N/A
GOV003	The number of second stage complaints referred to the Council's Complaints Officer	51	N/A	21				21	N/A	N/A	N/A
GOV004	The number of FOI requests received	1,019	N/A	260				260	N/A	N/A	N/A

Community Safety: RED

Figures for 2020/21 were affected by various stages of lockdown with fewer reports received. In Q1 2021/22, following releasing of COVID-19 restrictions, we have seen an upsurge in reports with no additional resource to investigate (92 cases in Q1 2021/22, compared with 69 in Q4 2020/21).

With regards the 30-day time period, some cases being reported to the Community Safety Unit cannot simply be resolved within 30 days (for example, complex neighbour disputes). These have been made worse with the 'Covid factor' where people are less tolerant. We now leave cases open to gather information and intelligence, before making a decision whether to make use of relatively new 'Community Protection Warnings' that are now at our disposal. Some complex cases can continue for months at a time and this is not a reflection on our own performance.

We have also introduced a new automated system for logging ASB complaints, which ensures that all reports are captured in a timely manner. The new system means every report submitted via an online report now automatically generates a worksheet. Whereas previously sometimes a worksheet may not have been required and each report received would have to be added to our reporting system manually. This change allows us to be more open and honest about reports received, which is why we fully expect the number of cases to go up as a record is automatically created.

Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) comments

Performance:

The main points to note are:

- Business Rates (BR) collection is below profile. There are a number of distorting factors in BR performance as a result of Covid-19. In addition to the pressures the pandemic has placed on the teams themselves, the challenges faced by businesses, the impact of BR relief and grants in 2020/21 and the start of an economic recovery make 2021/22 a challenging year. The BR profile will be reviewed and BR will remain under focus to maximise collection over the rest of 2021/22.
- Call handling performance has been impaired by the volume and nature of calls arising from the issues with waste collection, however the service has benefited from the greater scale and resilience of operating jointly with Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council.
- Housing shows a reduced level of use of B&B and a high level of safety compliance in DDC's own housing stock.
- The 2021/22 budget & MTFP recognised the significant uncertainties facing the Council's budget including the on-going impacts of the pandemic and potential further lockdown periods, the EU transition, future Port Health responsibilities and future Government funding streams. Early indications on the main Covid related pressures included in the 2021/22 budget are that there may be a quicker return to recovery than estimated at budget setting time. This is likely to have a positive effect, especially in income generating areas including:
 - Parking income performing at c.15% below budget compared to 25% reduction forecast in the budget;
 - Management income from Dover District Leisure centre expected to restart mid-year.
- The status of the Port Health Service is not currently a focus in the quarterly performance report to Members, and the major changes that will follow Brexit and not generally live yet. However, because of the scale of coming Port Health changes, the following points have been noted to provide Members with an overview of progress:
 - a) Dover Port Health Authority (DPHA) will have responsibility of control of the import of Products of Animal Origin (PAO).
 - b) DEFRA have recently directed DPHA to prepare for a total imported consignment volume of 266,000 consignments per annum of Products of Animal Origin at the port.
 - c) The bulk of the work on PAO is the checking of documentation for all 266,000 consignments. Of these circa 1.5% will also be physically inspected.
 - d) As a result of the significant recent increase in DEFRA's forecast of volumes, DDC staff recruitment targets have recently been increased, by DEFRA from 102 to 242. This is a very substantial increase in the overall staffing levels of DDC.
 - e) In view of the scale of recruitment we will appoint recruitment consultants, the costs of which will be part of the funding from DEFRA.
 - f) DEFRA are close to signing the lease on a new inspection site in the Whitfield, which will provide DPHA with the facilities to conduct the required inspections.
 - g) Overall, the service is designed to be self-funding, with income generated from the fees paid by importers.

Concerns/Risks:

The main concerns are:

- The uncertainty of the speed and depth of the economic recovery and the impact on Business Rates and the General Fund budget.
- Possible increases in inflation placing pressure on the costs of services and especially construction based projects.
- Government funding for the greatly expanded Port Health function and early clarity over the guidance from DEFRA for the transfer to the full Brexit Port Health inspection and documentation regime.

Operations and Commercial

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
Tourism											
MUS002	The number of visits to the museum in person per 1,000 population	3.67	200	14.7				14.7	N/A	▲	Red
Parking Services											
PKG003	Number of PCNS issued	10,238	N/A	5,144				5,144	N/A	N/A	N/A
Planning											
PLA001	Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (exc. section 106 agreements) or within an agreed extension of time or Planning Performance Agreement	90.97%	65%	87.5%				87.5%	8	▼	Green
PLA002	Percentage of non-major planning applications determined in 8 weeks (exc. Section 106 agreements)	90.23%	75%	91.25%				91.25%	240	▲	Green
PLA003	The percentage of decisions for major applications overturned at appeal (+)	0%	<10%	0%				0%	0	▶	Green
PLA004	The percentage of decisions for non-major applications overturned at appeal (+)	0.65%	<10%	1.7%				1.7%	4	▲	Green
PLA007	Number of new houses completed.	513 (53,799)	N/A	56 (53,855)				56 (53,855)	N/A	N/A	N/A

PI	Description	Outturn 2020/21	DDC Target 2021/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Current Cumulative figure	Absolute Number of Cases this Qtr	Direction of Travel (Previous Qtr)	RAG Status
PLA008	Growth in Business Rates base (number of registered businesses)	50 (4,174)	N/A	38 (4,212)				38 (4,212)	N/A	N/A	N/A
PLA009	% of appeals upheld by the Planning Inspectorate as a % of those submitted	18.75%	N/A	33%				33%	4	N/A	N/A
Waste Services											
WAS003	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste.	Awaiting	15	Awaiting					N/A		Red
WAS010	Residual household waste per household	Awaiting	350kg	Awaiting					N/A		
WAS011	Household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	Awaiting	50%	Awaiting					N/A		
WAS012	Environmental cleanliness: Percentage of streets containing litter	Awaiting	5%	Awaiting					N/A	N/A	N/A
WAS013	Environmental cleanliness: Percentage of street containing detritus	Awaiting	10%	Awaiting					N/A	N/A	N/A

Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial) comments:

Summary

Performance within most service areas across the Directorate remains very strong, with project work progressing well and staff coping well with the continuation of hybrid working due to the pandemic. However, clearly this has been a very challenging few months for the Waste Services team, with the performance issues that arose following the route optimisation changes introduced by Veolia on 12th April 2021, compounded by the impact on the service more recently of self-isolating regulations and the national shortage of HGV drivers. As a consequence of the need to focus staff resources on the response to customers, we are not able to provide performance data for Waste Services for either Q1 or to complete the 2020-21 year-end figures at this time. I am confident that data on WAS010

and WAS012, once available will be broadly on target although we may see a small dip in the recycling percentage as a consequence of the disruption to collections. Similarly, the street cleansing performance, measured by WAS012 and WAS013 remains generally strong although staff resources have been depleted at times as Veolia seek to support the collections services. However as regards WAS003, performance is clearly be unacceptably poor, with or without the availability of precise data. We continue to work with Veolia to try to find solutions to the challenges being faced as quickly as we can.

Performance, Key Initiatives & Outcomes:

A summary of service performance and key initiatives/ outcomes within the specific service areas across the Directorate is set out below:

Planning & Regeneration

There was a slight dip in performance for major planning applications for the quarter, although this remains substantially above target. The figure for appeals is reflective of the very low number of planning appeals being submitted, with no major appeals, and only 1.7% of all non-major appeals being overturned. This is an indication both that the decisions being taken are sound and also that there is a very high approval rate. Overall application numbers remain well above those anticipated and fee income is strong as a consequence.

Commercial Services

Parks & Open Spaces:

The in-house Grounds Maintenance team have been carrying out their spring maintenance duties and preparing for the coming season. The burial service continues to be busy and above the normal levels; this is due to the increased death rate during the second wave of Covid-19. The team have been working on preparations for The 149th Open, around Sandwich especially recognising the importance of ensuring that the District is looking it's best at this time.

The Kearsney Parks Project:

There is ongoing works with the final accounts for both the landscaping and building contracts with minor defects being rectified on both contracts in accordance with the contract terms. The formal opening of the Project is now planned for Autumn 2021. Both sites were open for the Easter weekend.

Kearsney Café:

The café opening has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 restrictions and is now scheduled for early Summer 2021.

Natural Environments:

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) team have been unable to complete many of their tasks as they involve the use of volunteers to help undertake work within the natural environment. These will now be dealt with later or when volunteering numbers are high enough to deal with these works. The team are now working with partner agencies to plan for the expected high footfall during the coming spring and summer 2021, due mostly around staycation and no international travel.

Transport & Parking Services:

Clare Connellan was appointed as Transport and Parking Services Manager, earlier this year and has now joined the Council. The service is expected to achieve around 100% of its 2021/22 budget and claims to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for lost income will continue to be made until the end of June 2021. The installation of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points across the District is progressing well.

Waste services:

As noted above, this service area has been significantly impacted by the route changes since April.

Inward Investment & Tourism:

The Tourism & Inward Investment Department have continued with their support to the district's businesses, industry and town centres providing information, updates and advise, as well as Covid-19 grants, Town Centre and Green Energy Business Grants and associated funding. Promotion of the District and its businesses also continued at pace. Tourism and Economic Development representation and collaboration at a national, regional, country and local level has also continued throughout, including contributing to inquiries at all levels and monitoring. The quarter also saw the 'Destination White Cliffs Country' Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy officially launched by the Minister for Tourism & Sport, Nigel Huddleston MP, during his visit to Dover District and Kent as part of English Tourism Week, as well as via Francigena 'Road to Rome' Ceremonies in Canterbury and Dover (working with the Green Pilgrimage Project, Kent Downs AONB and the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome).

The District secured £3.2 million Future High Streets Funding, as department project work also continued on Dover's Market Square, Cable Car, Maison Dieu, Parking Review, Rapid Bus Plans, Purple Flag and other projects. Work also continued at speed on the Interreg Experience Project (working with both Visit Kent and the Kent Downs AONB), with 16 district businesses accepted into the programme at launch. Research, brand, website, guide and video developments also continued and the quarter also witnessed Dover District Council's submission to the Levelling-Up Fund.

Preparations continued for The 149th Open in July 2021 – including regular Tourism, Transport, COVID, Marketing & Communication and Business & Community meetings, as well as the distribution of information, updates and advise. Notable related works also included a 'Claret Jug Tour of White Cliffs Country' promotional video, business toolkit and Kent's Golf Coast Guide.

Asset & Building Control:

A summary of work on particular projects of note is as follows;

Sea defences: All the rock for the 4 groynes and beach management operations at both the Kingsdown and Sandown Castle sites has now been delivered

Maison Dieu: further progress has been made on plans for decanting the building and enabling works to refurbish and recover the lead roofs are underway.

Museum store: tender documents were completed, and the contract advertised at the end of June.

Street lighting: Project completed except for submission of final accounts from contractor and the 270 approx. pole mounted lights where there is an on-going issue about the suitability of the isolators that serve the lights. Officers are working to resolve this with UK Power Solutions.

Deal Pier Lower deck: Work started in June on the repairs to storm damage.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme: The project is progressing at speed following the appointment of the designer. Detailed design work highlighted that the electrical capacity at Whitfield offices needed to be increased requiring an additional sub-station. We continue to work to meet the tight delivery dates dictated by the Salix funding.

Victoria Park – The refurbishment of the tennis hard court has been completed.

Toilets: Connaught Park toilets have been redecorated internally as well as externally. Marke Wood toilets were also redecorated internally.

Hamilton Road chapel, works involving repairs to timber and internal redecorations have completed – work to adjacent office building on-going.

Astor Theatre Chimney repairs: Chimney works complete and under budget – remaining monies used to effect repair on Stanhope Road elevation. Astor Theatre then redecorating paintwork themselves

Museum

In accordance with the guidance set out in the Covid-19 roadmap, the shop and Visitor Information Centre reopened to the public on 12th April 2021, and the Museum on 17th May 2021. To limit numbers to a safe level and maintain social distancing the museum introduced a booking system that was accessible both from an app and online either remotely or in person from the reception desk. The booking system worked well.

All interactive displays were removed, a one-way system reintroduced, and sanitizer stations reinstalled at the entrance and on all floors. The screens from the previous winter remained in place. The Dunkirk temporary exhibition was retained as it had been erected just prior to the pandemic and as a result had had limited exposure.

Concerns/Risks:

Loss of income and high footfall continues to be a major concern for Commercial services. Future working practices and long-term impacts of Covid are still a cause for concern.

Staff numbers

Directorate	Headcount at 1 April 2021	Full Time Equivalent Headcount at 1 April 2021	Headcount at 30 June 2021	Full Time Equivalent Headcount at 30 June 2021
Chief Executive	25	23.5	22	20.91
Corporate Resources	177	163.21	195	181.72
Operations and Commercial	209	167.7	217	174.04
EK Human Resources	28	24.68	27	23.01
Total Staff	439	379.09	461	399.68

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

NON-KEY DECISION

EXECUTIVE

CABINET – 6 SEPTEMBER 2021

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Recommendation

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act set out below:

<u>Item Report</u>	<u>Paragraph Exempt</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Purchase of New Affordable Housing at St Richard's Road, Deal	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Sandwich Guildhall Forecourt – Highway Works	3	
Award of Six-Year Contract for External Decoration and Associated Repairs to Council Dwellings	3	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item No 13

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