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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>EAST KENT GROWTH FRAMEWORK</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Cabinet – 4 September 2017</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Paul Watkins, Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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**Purpose of the report:** To provide an up to date East Kent Growth Framework.

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**Recommendation:** It is recommended that:

- a) The draft East Kent Growth Framework be approved; and
  - b) The Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any further changes or additions that may be required by Cabinet or which are of an editorial nature.
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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The East Kent Regeneration Board (EKRB), comprising the local authorities of Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Thanet and Shepway, along with Kent County Council (KCC), previously prepared a joint economic strategy for the area in 2013 called the East Kent Growth Plan – Open for Growth.
- 1.2 Much has happened across East Kent since 2013 with the growth agenda, allied to a number of changes to the economic landscape at national level, which continues to drive the needs for housing and jobs in an environment where delivery and funding support has become increasingly more crucial.
- 1.3 With this background, EKRB determined that the previous economic strategy needed to be refreshed and present a more robust, evidenced based foundation approach which would help to support the various ambitions for economic growth over the period 2017 to 2027.

## 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The East Kent Growth Framework (EKGF) will be used as the evidence base setting out infrastructure requirements on a coherent basis across East Kent to press the case to funding bodies including KMEP, SELEP and government departments for strategic infrastructure funding and investment in East Kent.
- 2.2 The East Kent Growth Plan – Open for Growth was prepared by the East Kent Regeneration Board through 2012 and agreed in 2013. This came at a critical time for East Kent following the decision by the American Pharmaceutical Company Pfizer to rationalise global operations and close the plant at Sandwich. The Sandwich Pfizer Task Force was instrumental in helping to secure a £40m Regional Growth Fund award for East Kent which was followed by a rigorous marketing campaign, Grow For It – East Kent, which sought to promote the area as a place to visit and invest in.

- 2.3 The East Kent Growth Plan sought to focus on what could be done in a collaborative way to further promote the opportunities in the area through a joined-up approach to support business and planned housing growth. In particular, it recognised that East Kent faced a number of barriers to growth and that more needed to be done to support enterprise, improve skills, improve infrastructure and support business development and expansion opportunities.
- 2.4 Particular emphasis was placed on four key areas, comprising a Strategy for Growth, which highlighted opportunities and challenges, Places for Growth, Support for Growth and, finally, Funding for Growth.
- 2.5 Among the challenges facing Dover district, the enduring issue of the need to upgrade the M2/A2 Corridor was recognised along with the need to increase the benefits associated with the High Speed Train Service.
- 2.6 12 Spatial Priorities across East Kent were identified, which comprised Discovery Park, Dover Port, Town Centre/Waterfront and Whitfield in Dover District. As a whole, it was estimated that the 12 Spatial Priorities had the potential to deliver up to 22,000 jobs and 19,000 additional homes over the 15 years horizon.
- 2.7 A number of major changes have occurred since 2013, both in terms of the expectations and opportunities nationally and locally, which has resulted in EKRB determining the need to refresh the Growth Plan. The changes include a growing recognition of the need for housing, with particular emphasis on delivery and plan making, along with the emerging Industrial Strategy. From a governance perspective, the bedding-in of Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) as a federated grouping of The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has placed greater need for evidenced based submissions into associated funding regimes in what has become an increasingly competitive environment.
- 2.8 The Senior Officer Grouping from Regeneration and Inward Investment from the East Kent authorities and KCC was therefore charged by EKRB to produce a new Growth Framework for the area. This has been supported by detailed technical analysis of the East Kent area, procured by Shepway and undertaken by Nathaniels.
- 2.9 A copy of the latest draft Growth Framework (as at August 2017) is attached at **Appendix 1**. This document is to be formally considered by each District through their individual processes, with a view to achieving a final agreed version in the autumn. This will then be reported to KMEP and SELEP (who are also in the process of refreshing their Strategic Economic Plan) and used as a core foundation to support the future ambitions across the area.
- 2.10 It should be noted that the following four key objectives have been defined in the Growth Framework which comprise and help to define the place which we wish East Kent and our respective districts to be:

**Unlocking development through infrastructure** – identified sites for growth need supporting transport and digital infrastructure, particularly upgrading and making better use of our road and rail networks (particularly High Speed 1) to enhance international connectivity while enabling local accessibility;

**Delivery of business space** – we want to deliver the next-generation of modern commercial space for our business start-ups, encouraging existing businesses to scale-up, and to help attract new mobile investment into the area while driving forward the development of our brownfield sites;

**Supporting productivity within business** – creating an environment for innovation in productivity improvements, supporting businesses to grow and move up the value chain, encouraging faster broadband, ensuring that businesses have the skills to grow and that our skills base continues to improve and is linked to the success of our higher education and further education sectors creating talent; and

**Place making and shaping** – East Kent is a fabulous place to live, work, holiday and invest. We want to improve the perception of people's idea of East Kent and make it a location of first choice that retains and attracts young people, families and entrepreneurs, while at the same time maximising the potential of the natural assets we hold, enhancing our town centres and ensuring a high quality built environment.

2.11 It should be also noted that the scale of ambition, potential and opportunity across East Kent, has the ability to deliver 37,400 jobs and 84,600 dwellings at a strategic and local level – a significant increase from the earlier ambition.

2.12 This opportunity will, however, only be realised if the necessary supporting infrastructure is put in place. Consequently, it has been suggested that priority should be afforded to the following three key strategic priorities which partners recognise as being crucially important for the future of East Kent and therefore prioritise these above all others:

- (1) Strategic network improvements to A2/M2 required to support the new Lower Thames Crossing, the growth of Canterbury and the Port of Dover;
- (2) M20/A20 improvements including junction 10a, the proposed lorry holding area, HGV overnight parking and access to Dover; and
- (3) Improvements to rail capacity, speeds, frequency and associated infrastructure including Ashford SPURS, Westenhanger Station enhancement, and Thanet Parkway.

### 3. Identification of Options

3.1 Option 1: Approve the draft East Kent Growth Framework as set out in this report;

3.2 Option 2: To not approve the draft East Kent Growth Framework; and

3.3 Option 3: to not approve the draft East Kent Growth Framework in the current form but seek amendments thereto.

### 4. Evaluation of Options

4.1 Option 3 is not recommended as it will delay progress and may have implications for DDC, the other adjacent local authorities and partner organisations.

4.2 Option 2 is not recommended as it would place DDC at a significant disadvantage at an East Kent level when pressing the case for inward investment, strategic infrastructure and project support across the current economic landscape comprising KMEP, SELEP and Government departments.

4.3 Option 1 is recommended because it will enable DDC's requirements and needs to be articulated through KMEP, SELEP and elsewhere at a strategic level when opportunities for funding and other levels of support arise.

### 5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The work to date has been jointly funded with each District, along with KCC, making a financial contribution of £3,146.50 each towards the total project costs.
- 5.2 No further direct financial resources are required for the preparation of the East Kent Growth Framework. It is, however, possible that resources may be required to enable and assist individual projects identified in the document to be developed in greater detail and delivered. This would need to be reported in due course on an individual project basis and no doubt considered in the context of the relevant financial plan and governance framework at the time.

## 6. **Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: The Director of Finance, Housing and Communities has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no additional comments (MD).
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: The report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications, however in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>
- 6.4 Other Officers (as appropriate):

## 7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft East Kent Growth Framework, dated August 2017.

## 8. **Background Papers**

Draft East Kent Growth Framework, dated August 2017.

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