



Dover District Local Plan

Regulation 18 Draft



A bold vision for **2040**

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the draft Dover District Local Plan (Regulation 18).

What is a Local Plan?

A Local Plan lies at the heart of the planning system. It provides the framework against which all planning decisions are judged. A robust Local Plan ensures growth is well planned, well designed and appropriately located. It addresses future ambitions and prevents speculative development which can harm local communities and the environment.

This new Local Plan for Dover District establishes the general scale and distribution of the new development which is required to meet Dover's needs to 2040. It provides the planning principles, including detailed 'development management' policies, to guide decisions on all planning and other applications. It clarifies in detail where new homes, workplaces and infrastructure facilities will be located through allocations of land and it helps to enrich the district's biodiversity, protect its valued landscapes and conserve and enhance the wide range of historic and natural assets that our district enjoys.

Why are we producing a new Local Plan?

The District's existing Local Plan consists of the Core Strategy 2010 and the Land Allocations Plan 2015, as well as saved policies from the 2002 Local Plan. The Government has made changes to legislation, policy and guidance since these plans were adopted, which means they need to be reviewed and updated.

In addition, the Government now requires that all local authorities have an up to date Local Plan in place by December 2023, so it is important we make progress now.

What you can do

This summary document introduces you to the Council's draft Local Plan. It is the main focus of this public consultation, which given the current restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic has to take place solely online. We would like as many residents as possible, as well as businesses and all those with an interest in the future of our district, to take part in this consultation. All responses will be read and will help to shape the next draft of the Plan.

This is your opportunity to shape the future development of Dover District.

The consultation on the draft Local Plan is open from the 20th January to the 17th March 2021. To comment on the document, find out more about the consultation, and sign up to an online event go to: www.doverdistrictlocalplan.co.uk

If you are having problems accessing or commenting on the document please telephone 01304 872 244 Monday to Thursday 10am - 12pm or email localplan@gover.gov.uk.

Vision and Objectives

The foundation of our new Local Plan is a bold new vision for Dover District in 2040 encompassing a prosperous economy, vibrant communities, thriving places and a spectacular and sustainable environment.

Overarching Vision

Dover District in 2040 will be a place of aspiration, providing outstanding opportunities for sustainable living. Through careful stewardship of its world class landscapes and wealth of historic sites, it will be a destination of choice for people of all ages to make their home, for businesses to invest in and for visitors to explore and experience. Community spirit will be strong amongst the residents of the district, with an increased sense of health and wellbeing.

Prosperous Economy

The local economy will be prosperous and diverse, harnessing the world class potential of Discovery Park and building upon key sectors of life sciences, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and logistics, as well as local entrepreneurial talent. The District will have attracted new businesses of all scales, with 21st century infrastructure, unrivalled transport connections with London and Europe, alongside home working facilities.

Dover will be a district that visitors want to spend time in, taking advantage of a diverse range of high-quality accommodation, attractions and unique experiences building upon the globally important Dover Castle and the iconic White Cliffs.

Vibrant Communities

New developments will blend seamlessly with the existing townscapes to embody the best of local distinctiveness and will have created places that are well-designed and well-built. Built to local design codes, they will respect the spectacular natural environments and rich heritage of the District. New housing will enhance towns and villages, delivering a balanced and resilient housing market, a supply of new homes that meets people's needs and where affordable and local housing is prioritised.

Residents will have access to healthy lifestyle opportunities that the district's high-quality countryside and maritime landscapes provide, including extensive and attractive public green spaces and an enhanced network of dedicated walking and cycling routes, as well as improved educational opportunities and leisure and community services.

Thriving Places

Dover town will be thriving, with a strong core of local shops and services, a flourishing port, and regenerated areas of existing housing. Sensitive restoration of elements of its rich heritage, will enhance the attractiveness of the town, while improved connections to its seafront will have been delivered by high quality design and investment in place making.

The distinctive historic environments of the towns of Deal and Sandwich will be protected and enhanced, their economies benefiting from a wide range of local businesses and services as well as investment in culture.

The rural villages of the District will continue to enrich the landscapes here, with improved community facilities and housing opportunities, enabling more young people to stay and contribute to the communities where they grew up.

Spectacular and Sustainable Environment

Above all, its enviable countryside and coastal environments will define the district. The climate change emergency will have delivered increased opportunities for local food production, extensive tree planting, and the adoption of sustainable design and construction methods. From the iconic White Cliffs to the nationally valued chalk downlands of the Kent Downs AONB, habitats will have been protected and enhanced.

Air quality and biodiversity will have been improved, as the District achieves significant progress to becoming net zero carbon.

Objectives

The vision for the Dover Local Plan 2040 is supported by strategic objectives.

Prosperous Economy

- To grow and diversify the Dover District economy by making it an attractive and competitive place to start, grow and invest in a broad range of businesses, attracting more and better jobs and attracting and retaining working age people.
- To support opportunities to strengthen the role of Dover, Deal and Sandwich Town Centres through their diversification, enhancement and improvements to the public realm.
- To provide a range of high-quality tourism facilities and accommodation, which facilitate the growth of the tourism sector, and encourage longer staying visits.

Vibrant Communities

- To provide greater choice of high-quality housing to meet the needs of Dover District's growing population and changing demographic, and address affordability issues.
- To focus new development at accessible and sustainable locations which can utilise existing infrastructure, facilities and services, and to ensure development contributes to the sustainability of local communities and services, supporting regeneration and wherever possible make the best use of brownfield land.
- To ensure that new buildings and spaces are of the highest design quality, to create attractive, inclusive, healthy places which promote local distinctiveness and a sense of place.
- To provide new and improved community infrastructure and assets, including open space and sports facilities to meet the needs of the District's communities.

Spectacular and Sustainable Environment

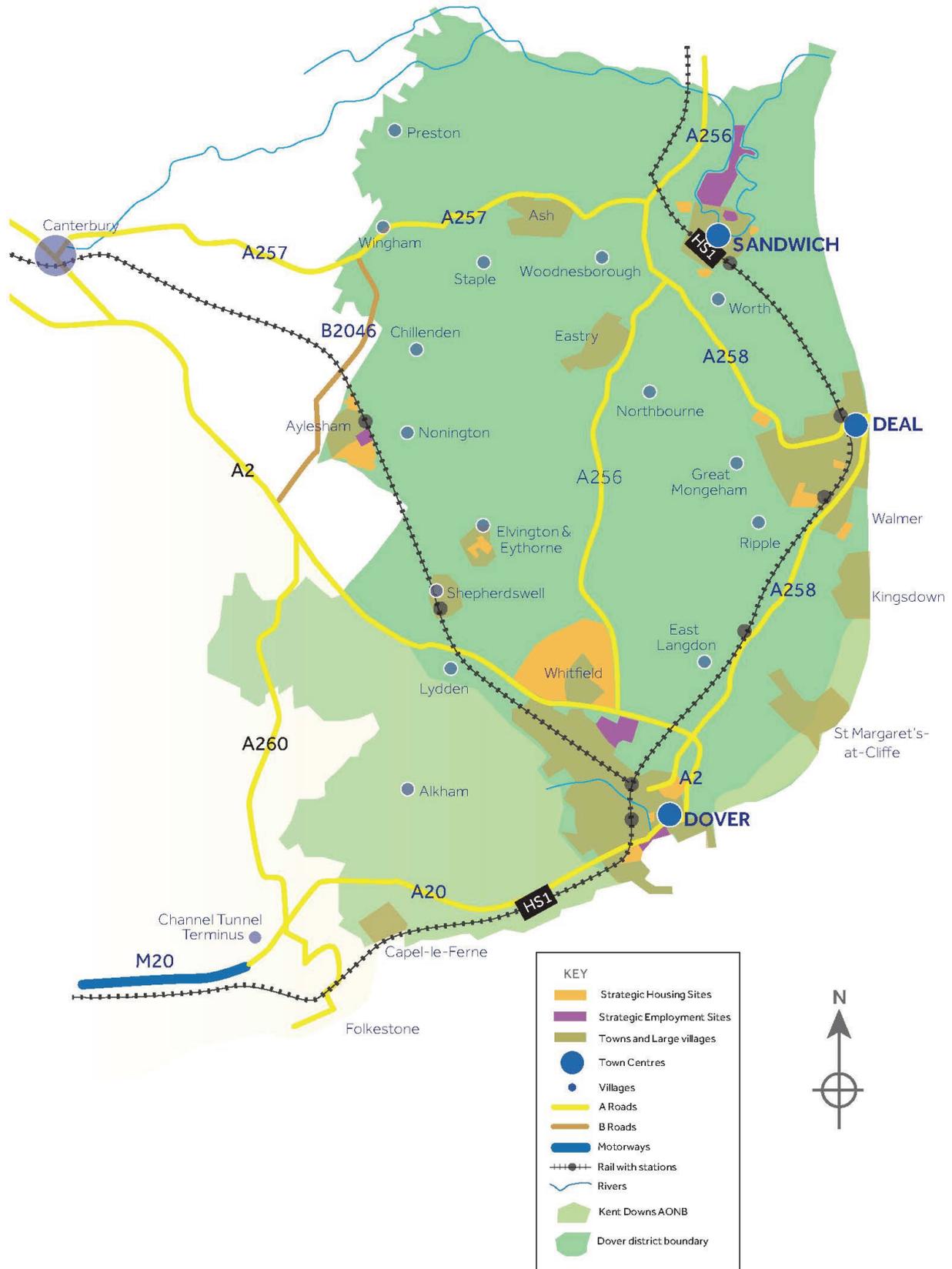
- To respond to the challenges of climate change, ensuring new development is resilient to, and mitigates against the effects of climate change, including by reducing carbon emissions, and designing development that is resilient to the effects of climate change.
- To manage flood risk sustainably in a way that ensures the safety of residents and property, and take opportunities to reduce flood risk where possible.
- To conserve or enhance the designated and undesignated heritage assets of the District in a manner appropriate to their significance, recognising their intrinsic value as a finite resource as well as their contribution to the character of the District and their positive role in regeneration of the District.

- To conserve and enhance the district's biodiversity, including all designated wildlife sites and priority habitats and to enhance ecological connectivity between them, delivering a net gain in biodiversity.
- To conserve and enhance the District's important natural landscapes and water environments, to ensure these assets can continue to be experienced and valued by residents and visitors and are protected from inappropriate development.
- To ensure the District's natural resources are used prudently, waste is minimised, and environmental pollution is reduced or avoided.

Cross Cutting Issues

- To support improvements in the health and wellbeing of residents, improve quality of life for all and reduce health inequalities.
- To improve connectivity and movement through significantly enhancing the provision of sustainable modes of transport and delivering improvements to the local and strategic road network.
- To ensure infrastructure is delivered, in a timely manner, to support the needs of new and existing communities in the District.
- To work with the Council's partners to ensure that the social, environmental and economic impacts of new developments are mitigated, and that the benefits of new development are captured, to protect the District's people and places.

Key Diagram



Climate Change

Dover District Council declared a climate change emergency on the 4th November 2019 and the Council has an ambition to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030.

This new Local Plan supports and helps to deliver the Council's approach to the climate change emergency through a series of policies which aim to ensure that development proposals, which come forward between now and 2040, mitigate against and adapt to the effects of climate change.

In particular, policies in the Plan are proposed that address:

- **Reducing carbon emissions:** requiring new residential development to deliver a 31% reduction in carbon emissions below the target emission rate, and for commercial development to achieve Very Good in the relevant standards for addressing maximum energy efficiencies. (Policy DM1)
- **Renewable and Low Carbon Energy:** supporting installations for renewable energy developments (DM Policy 3)
- **Sustainable Travel:** requiring provision of non-car-based modes of transport in new development, as well as electric car charging points (DM Policy 4)
- **Water efficiency:** requiring water efficiency measures in new development (DM Policy 5)
- **Flood risk:** considering flood risk when determining planning applications (DM Policy 6)
- **Surface Water Management:** requiring sustainable drainage systems in new developments to accommodate surface water (DM Policy 7)
- **Coastal change:** avoiding inappropriate development within Coastal Change Management Areas (DM Policy 8)
- **Tree Planting and Protection:** requiring a minimum of 2 trees to be planted for every new home provided (DM Policy 9)
- **Sustainable Design and Construction:** requiring development to further reduce carbon emissions (DM Policy 2)

Growth Strategy

A key issue for the Local Plan is to decide where new development should be located. There are many factors to consider, including assessing the current distribution of development, transport routes and community facilities across the District, protecting the most important environments and complying with national planning policy.

As part of a pro-active approach to embracing growth, five reasonable options for the pattern of growth in Dover District over the period to 2040 were identified:

- **Spatial Option A:** Distributing growth to the District's suitable and potentially suitable housing and employment site options as informed by the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and the Employment Land Review (ELR).
- **Spatial Option B:** Distributing growth proportionately amongst the District's existing settlements based on their population.

- **Spatial Option C:** Distributing growth proportionately amongst the District's existing settlements based on the District's defined settlement hierarchy (informed by the Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper).
- **Spatial Option D:** Distributing growth in the same way as the adopted Local Plan, focussing most growth in and around Dover.
- **Spatial Option E:** Distributing growth more equally across the District's settlements: Dover, Deal, Sandwich and Aylesham, as well as the rural villages.

All these options were rigorously examined through the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Our background work has concluded that the distribution of housing growth in the new Plan would best comprise a combination of Options A, C and D. The Plan therefore proposes that the distribution of housing growth in the District will primarily be based on the settlement hierarchy, and influenced by site availability, environmental constraints and factors of delivery.

Housing

The Local Plan sets out the housing strategy for the District.

How many new homes must we plan for?

In accordance with national policy, the Plan must seek to meet the District's identified housing need based upon the government approved calculation methodology. This work concluded that the new Plan needs to deliver **11,920 new homes across the plan period (596 a year)**. The preferred option for housing growth is to meet this need in full.

The Local Plan proposes that this housing requirement is met through existing planning permissions, suitable windfall sites and site allocations.

Where is new housing proposed?

New homes are proposed to be located across the District with approximately:

3,592 in and around Dover Town, the majority of which will be delivered by the urban extension at Whitfield (Development at Whitfield will also continue after 2040)

2,044 across the three settlements of Deal, Aylesham and Sandwich

1,875 at rural villages, taking into account community facilities available and environmental constraints. As part of the strategy for the rural area, it is proposed to grow the villages of Eythorne and Elvington to create a new local centre in the District.

Residential windfall development (these are sites, usually small in scale, which come forward for development, but which have not been allocated in the Plan) is expected to contribute to the supply of housing over the plan period. The preferred option is to allow, in principle, windfall development in and adjoining the towns and larger villages within the District, with the smaller villages and hamlets allowing development within existing settlement boundaries only. Draft Strategic Policy 3 sets out the criteria which would need to be satisfied to ensure such proposals do not cause unacceptable harm. These include consideration of the scale of the proposals in relation to the size of the settlement and the services which are available within it.

What kind of houses are needed?

The Plan proposes a requirement for 30% affordable housing on new development, with the exception of the existing Dover Urban Area where viability work has concluded that it is not viable to provide affordable housing.

A need for 42 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the District over the Plan period has been identified. Known pitch turnover and intensification of existing sites, the extension of an existing site in Alkham, and an allocation as part of the strategic allocation at Aylesham, are proposed to meet the needs of the travelling community. Further sites are still required so, a call for sites is being carried out as part of the consultation.

Policies to guide planning applications for new housing are proposed. These address:

- Housing mix and type (DM Policy 11)
- Houses in multiple occupation (DM Policy 17)
- Self and custom build housing (DM Policy 15)
- Rural local needs housing (DM Policy 13)
- Gypsy and traveller windfall accommodation (DM Policy 14)
- Residential extensions and annexes (DM Policy 16)

Design

Delivering development that achieves design excellence, that is of the right type, and in the right location, and that adds to the District's existing high quality, natural and built environments is a key priority for the Council.

The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good quality, inclusive design is essential in creating and maintaining places across this District where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

The existing Dover Core Strategy does not contain any design policies and planning officers rely instead on national government advice. This new Local Plan seeks to remedy this. Three design policies are proposed:

- **Place-making:** setting out a series of clear design expectations that all development that comes forward in the District over the period to 2040 should achieve. Key design principles are established to inform all development from the earliest stages of the design process. These relate to context, continuity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses and lifespan. (Strategic Policy 15)
- **Achieving High Quality Design:** providing detailed design guidance as well as proposing that where significant design implications are identified on major proposals these will be referred to a Design Review Panel. (DM Policy 36)
- **Quality of Residential Accommodation:** setting out a number of criteria that new housing developments should meet to ensure the delivery of high quality residential accommodation across the District, including meeting the national space standards, and accessible and wheelchair friendly home requirements. (DM Policy 37)

To support these policies it is proposed that a Local Design Guide for the District will be produced. The purpose of this Design Guide is to clarify what constitutes acceptable design quality across the District, providing greater certainty for developers and the local community.

Local Economy

This new Local Plan has a crucial role to play in delivering high levels of economic growth for our District over the next 20 years. The strategic objective of growing and diversifying the Dover District economy lies, therefore, at the heart of this Plan. Policies are proposed to help make the District an attractive and competitive place to start, grow and invest in a broad range of businesses, attracting more and better jobs and attracting and retaining people of working age. As with housing growth, the new Plan will provide a firm foundation for meeting our future employment needs for the period up to 2040.

While a new Economic Strategy is currently being developed, the Plan proposes to roll forward the existing employment site allocations which have yet to be built out. However, given the uncertainties around the future use of White Cliffs Business Park, and the potential growth opportunities in the District, there is likely to be a need for further land, and therefore a call for new employment sites is proposed to be carried out as part of this consultation.

To meet our ambitious objectives for the Local Economy, policies in the Plan address:

- New employment development (DM Policy 18)
- Retention of existing employment Sites (DM Policy 19)
- Loss or redevelopment of existing employment premises (DM Policy 20)
- Home - working (DM Policy 21)
- The rural economy (DM Policies 22 and 23)
- Tourism and visitor accommodation (DM Policy 24)

Retail and Town Centres

This new Local Plan also proposes policies to encourage the regeneration of our town centres and other retail areas. In particular, the Plan includes a dedicated strategy for the regeneration of Dover town centre, with the aim of creating an attractive, high quality environment encompassing a wider range of uses, and delivering better connections between the centre and other areas, including the seafront.

To meet our ambitious objectives for Retail and Town Centres, policies in the Plan address:

- Primary Shopping Areas (DM Policy 25)
- Sequential Test and Impact Assessment (DM Policy 26)
- Local Centres (DM Policy 27)
- Shopfronts (DM Policy 28)

Natural Environment

Dover District enjoys spectacular landscapes and coastlines including coastal chalk cliffs, salt marshes and mud flats, rolling chalk downs, ancient woodlands and expansive arable farmland. It is home to environments that are valued and protected at local, regional, national

and international level. These landscapes are rich in biodiversity, priority habitats and protected species and, importantly, provide significant environmental, social, and economic benefits for our district and residents.

A key issue for the Local Plan is therefore how best to embrace growth in a way which respects and enhances our important landscapes and countryside, while also recognising that some forms of development are necessary to support the rural economy and maintain the vibrancy of rural communities.

One of the main objectives of this Plan is to conserve and enhance the rich natural environment of the District. To do so, policies are proposed that

- Conserve and enhance the District's rich green infrastructure, biodiversity and diverse natural landscape, including the five international sites within the district, the Kent Downs AONB, five SSSIs, two National Nature Reserves, two stretches of Heritage Coasts and two Marine Conservation Zones. (Strategic Policies 16 and 17)
- Deliver a net gain in biodiversity in the District over the plan period (DM Policy 38)
- Protect and enhance the landscape character and distinctiveness of the District's countryside and coastline, including irreplaceable habitats, the areas of the Kent Downs AONB that fall within the boundary of the District and regionally important geological sites. (DM Policy 39)
- Ensure against a harmful impact on the integrity of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (DM Policy 40)
- Deliver improvements in air quality over the Plan period (DM Policy 41)
- Deliver efficiency and quality in water supply (DM Policies 42 and 43)

Historic Environment

Dover District benefits from a particularly significant archaeological and historical heritage, in part due to its strategic location as a gateway to Britain. This wealth of heritage assets includes those of national and international importance, such as the Roman lighthouse and Norman Castle at Dover, the medieval town of Sandwich, the Tudor castles at Deal and Walmer and the defensive, anti-invasion structures from the Napoleonic and World War periods above Dover at Western Heights and Fort Burgoyne and along the coastline. Inland, the district is rich in historic villages of agricultural origins, many with flint and brick churches dating from the Anglo Saxon and Norman periods, while the surviving buildings of the East Kent coalfields and the planned settlements built to serve them largely between 1920s and the 1950s, still survive in northern and western areas of the district.

The district is home to almost 2,000 listed buildings, 48 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 57 Conservation Areas, 21 historic parks and gardens, one protected wreck site and 12 museums.

The current development plan for the District includes only one historic environment policy (for applications affecting Historic Parks and Gardens), and a strategic site policy for Dover Western Heights.

Such an approach is at odds with current government advice which requires that local planning authorities set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage that is most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

This Local Plan therefore includes a clear and positive strategy for the conservation, enjoyment and enhancement of our historic environment. It proposes the following policies to address issues in relation the historic environment:

- Protecting the district's historic environment (Strategic Policy 18)
- Designated and non-designated heritage assets (DM Policy 44)
- Conservation Areas (DM Policy 45)
- Archaeology (DM Policy 46)
- Dover Western Heights fortifications Scheduled Monument and Conservation Area (DM Policy 47)
- Historic Parks and Gardens (DM Policy 48)

Infrastructure and Transport

Ensuring that the right infrastructure is provided in the right place, at the right time, in order to support the scale of growth identified in the Plan, will be integral to its successful delivery. The Local Plan will therefore be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will identify specific infrastructure needs.

As part of drafting the Plan early engagement has taken place with infrastructure providers. However, work is still ongoing to identify the specific infrastructure requirements needed to support the development as proposed in the Plan. This will take place through this current consultation and will continue to inform the next version the Plan. It is proposed that specific requirements will be set out in site policies, where these are known.

Alongside site-specific requirements, the new Plan proposes policies in relation to transport and infrastructure considerations:

- Infrastructure and Developer Contributions (Strategic Policy 13)
- Strategic transport infrastructure supporting improvement to the A2 through the Dover Access Strategy (Strategic Policy 14)
- The highway network and highway safety by establishing requirements for transport assessment, travel plans and mitigation (DM Policy 29)
- Parking provision in new development (DM Policy 30)
- Providing open space in new development (DM Policy 31)
- Requirements for playing pitch provision to support new development (DM Policy 32)
- Protection of open space (DM Policy 33)
- Community facilities (DM Policy 34)
- Digital Technology focusing on requiring all new development to be provided with the infrastructure to support high speed broadband (DM Policy 35)

Next Steps

Your feedback, together with background evidence and research, is needed to help in shaping our new Local Plan.

The draft Local Plan consultation document, supporting evidence, story maps for each area of the District and a virtual exhibition can be viewed at the Council's dedicated Local Plan website www.doverdistrictlocalplan.co.uk This will be the main access point to all of the consultation material and the main way to submit comments.

Following the close of the consultation, all comments will be reviewed and considered, and changes will be made to the Plan to address comments received. A consultation statement will be produced to explain how comments have been taken into account, and where it has not been possible to make changes, will provide explanation as to why.

Work will continue on ensuring the Plan has an up to date evidence base, and a Final Draft (known as a Regulation 19 Submission version) of the Plan will then be produced. This will be subject to a further consultation in late 2021, before the Plan is submitted to the government for examination

The Plan will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector who will report on whether the document meets with legal requirements. There will be an opportunity to make modifications to the Plan at this stage if they are deemed necessary. If the Plan is legally compliant and sound, the Council will then formally adopt it, and it will then become the statutory development plan for Dover District for the period to 2040.