

*Chapter Two*

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

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## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### INTRODUCTION

**2.01** This chapter sets out the Plan's underlying philosophy. This consists of a set of Aims and Objectives, which provides a clear framework for the Plan's policies and proposals. In the light of the Aims and Objectives, and the existing situation within the District, the District Diagram indicates broadly where new development is to take place during the Plan Period.

**2.02** All Plans should generally follow national and county planning guidance, be robust enough to cope with change over the Plan Period, comprehensively cover issues affecting its area and be reasonably capable of being implemented during the Plan Period. Aims, on the other hand, are particular to each Plan and set out, in very general terms, what the Plan seeks to achieve by the end of the Plan Period. This Plan has the following three:-

**Aim 1 To move towards a more sustainable pattern and form of development**

**Aim 2 To help build a strong local economy**

**Aim 3 To help achieve greater equality of access and opportunity for all**

**2.03** Aims 1 and 3 affect all topics covered by the Plan. Although it is a topic, the importance of the local economy to the well-being of the District is considered to be so crucial that it is an Aim in its own right. As the Aims are very general statements of intent, 23 Objectives have been derived in order to set out, in more detail, what the Plan is seeking to do. The Plan's Aims and Objectives are not policies. Rather, they set an overall framework for developing policies. In addition, Objectives 1-15 are used to appraise the Plan's environmental credentials (see after every policy and Chapter 16). In order to establish a basis for assessment, the Objectives are set out in clear terms. It should also be noted that the Objectives are not all necessarily compatible with each other. In such cases, it is for the policies to indicate where priority should be given. The Plan's policies are the means of achieving the Aims and Objectives through the development control process.

### AIM 1: TO MOVE TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE PATTERN AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

**2.04** The current concern over the state of the environment and the need to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle affects everyone. Although there are many definitions of sustainable development, most, if not all, include a set of related ideas. Listed below, these ideas form the basis of the Plan's definition of sustainable development:-

- (a) **Environmental capacity.** There is a limit to the amount of development which the environment can absorb without undermining its quality or harming biodiversity and human health.
- (b) **Stewardship.** We have a duty to care for the environment and husband natural resources for the benefit of future generations. Aspects of stewardship include the use of renewable rather than finite resources, ensuring a wide variety of species and habitats, and making choices in such a way that later generations can reverse them if they so wish.
- (c) **Non-exploitation.** Development cannot be regarded as sustainable if our good environmental conditions are at the expense of others, be it from the destruction of rain forests to expecting other communities to bear the cost of another's generation of waste.
- (d) **Different consumption patterns.** There needs to be a reduction in the amount of non-renewable energy and materials used, the creation of less waste by the re-use, repair and recycling of materials, and the use of resources as close as possible to their natural form.

- (e) **Renewable energy.** Renewable sources of power, such as solar, wave, tidal, wind and biological energy, need to be used instead of fossil fuels.
- (f) **Local solutions.** By using local materials, energy and pollution costs can be reduced.
- (g) **Precautionary Principle.** When information about the effects on the environment is incomplete, the safest/least harm option should always be chosen.

**2.05** Government guidance (especially PPG1) fully supports the need for development to be planned in a sustainable way to meet economic and social needs whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment, and expects the planning system to help achieve it. However, it would be unrealistic for the Plan to promise that, by 2006, Dover District would have a totally sustainable environment and lifestyle. Such a major and complex change will take a long time, not least because:-

- (a) the existing pattern and form of development is a reality and the planning system can, by and large, only influence change at the margin;
- (b) Government policy and commitment need to be translated into action on the ground; and
- (c) while public opinion is generally positive about the need to protect the environment, the personal cost of doing so - for example, in reducing dependence on the car - is currently not acceptable to most people.

**2.06** Therefore, while the ideal of a sustainable District is a long term goal, within the Plan Period, the sustainability aim will give priority to:-

- (a) actively encouraging development which is sustainable - directing most development to the urban areas whilst allowing limited development outside them where this would help to sustain and enhance the viability of existing rural communities;
- (b) not making worse existing unsustainable patterns of development; and
- (c) wherever possible, making good existing examples of unsustainable development.

## Sustainable Objectives

### *Natural Environment - Traditional Issues*

**2.07** The District has an exceptionally important environment, nationally and internationally, in terms of the quality of its landscape, nature conservation interest and high grade agricultural land. Continual pressure for development in the countryside puts these often irreplaceable assets under threat. There are also new threats, such as those arising from the current structural changes taking place in agriculture. Protecting, managing and enhancing the countryside is a major concern of the Plan.

**Objective 1** *The countryside will be protected from non essential development*

**Objective 2** *Habitats, species and landscapes will be managed and enhanced*

**2.08** Wildlife and green spaces are not just countryside issues. In built up areas, the importance of private and public open space far outweighs their size for recreation, air quality and wildlife reasons. Further, green areas make a positive contribution to the urban landscape and, as a consequence, the attractiveness of living in towns. In addition to protecting valuable open space, local shortfalls in provision should be made good.

**Objective 3** *Open space will be identified for protection and any shortfall in provision made good*



*White Cliffs Country*

## Natural Environment - New Concerns

**2.09** Recent Government guidance has extended the range of environmental issues which local plans must now address, including:-

- (a) protecting groundwater resources;
- (b) not allowing development where it would have an adverse effect on coastal processes;
- (c) limiting development in flood risk areas and considering whether planned retreat is needed;
- (d) developing noise exposure categories, which will be used to judge whether the impact of development proposals on people and wildlife is acceptable; and
- (e) controlling development if unacceptable air pollution results either directly from the development itself or indirectly (for example, lorry emissions from vehicles servicing the development).

**2.10** Targets for meeting these new concerns are set by a range of organisations, including the European Union and the Government. In many instances, standing still will be an achievement.

**Objective 4** *By the end of the Plan Period, pollution (air, land, light, noise, water) will be no more (and if possible less) than in 1996*

## Conserving and Re-using Finite Resources

**2.11** Energy conservation needs to be taken into account whenever new development is proposed through, for example, the orientation of buildings and construction methods. In addition, making the most of renewable energy resources (such as from the sun, wind, coppice woodland and fuel crops) helps save oil and other limited resources. This also creates less pollution than using fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and gas. However, a balance needs to be struck between, for example, wind turbine development and other objectives, such as protecting high quality landscapes. Energy conservation is mainly covered by Building Control Regulations, although planning has some influence over, for example, the orientation of buildings. Government guidance (PPG22) requires the Plan to consider how renewable energy resources can be developed in the District and to identify suitable locational criteria.

**Objective 5** *Development will be more energy efficient*

**Objective 6** *The generation of energy from renewable resources will be enabled*

**2.12** Re-using and recycling resources such as redundant land, buildings and materials can help protect the natural environment by reducing the need to take fresh land for development or to exploit new mineral resources.

**Objective 7** *The recycling of redundant resources will be undertaken before new resources are exploited*

## Cultural Heritage

**2.13** Buildings and areas of architectural, historic or archaeological interest have been created over centuries. They are an irreplaceable cultural resource, and one which can be easily destroyed. In this respect, the District contains a very rich built environment and the Plan will continue the existing commitment towards protecting and enhancing the District's cultural heritage:

**Objective 8** *Development will protect or enhance the historic environment*

## Housing Land Supply

**2.14** The Structure Plan identifies the housing required in Dover for the period 1991 to 2011. It is for this Local Plan to identify sufficient land to meet this strategic housing requirement over the Plan Period. In doing so, sites have been allocated according to the principles of sustainable development.

**Objective 9** *Sufficient housing land will be identified to meet the strategic housing requirement over the Plan Period*

## Transport and Settlement Patterns

**2.15** No settlement can ever be totally self contained as, for example, some people may choose to live in one place but work, shop or spend leisure time elsewhere. Further, some facilities, for example an ice rink or specialist hospital are only economic if they serve a very wide catchment area. However, just as a mixed development scheme will help to reduce the need to use a car, a balanced settlement (ie one in which there are sufficient dwellings, jobs, and social, community and recreational facilities to serve the resident population) is more likely to reduce external trips.

**2.16** Generally speaking, urban areas are likely (or have the potential) to be more self-contained than rural settlements. The more a settlement is balanced, the more sustainable it is. Consequently, most development should be directed to urban areas and efforts focused on making them attractive places in which to live, work, shop and relax.

**Objective 10** *Future investment will be concentrated in the urban areas*

**2.17** In the past, rural settlements were sustainable. However, since World War II, mechanisation of agriculture, increased personal mobility and a decline in rural jobs and services now make the lifestyles of the vast majority of people who live in them more inter-linked with the urban areas where most workplaces, shopping and other facilities (such as secondary schools and hospitals) are located. Given the relatively poor public transport in the rural area, the result is more reliance on the private car. Much of the countryside around rural settlements is also covered by important landscape and nature conservation designations. Therefore, whilst there will be general restraint on development in the rural area, the Plan will encourage development where this would help to sustain the economic and social life of rural communities, reduce the need to travel, and be compatible with environmental objectives.



*Local Shop in Wingham*

**Objective 11** *Development in rural settlements will be limited and consistent with their size and function*

**2.18** In villages, basic services, such as a shop and frequent public transport links to Dover and Deal, will be supported. Alternative solutions, such as mobile services, teleshopping, home working and telecottages will be encouraged.

**Objective 12** *Provision of basic services in the villages will be maintained and, if possible, enhanced*

## Transport and the Location of New Development

**2.19** The location and nature of new development can affect the need to travel, journey length and method of travel. For example, the location of major offices, retail and business parks, etc. on the outskirts of urban areas and away from residential areas means the option to walk or cycle becomes less possible, while often also being less well served by public transport. Not only does this increase the need to use the car but it also disadvantages those without access to one. Government guidance (especially PPG12 and PPG13) requires that the planning system must now take this relationship into account when considering proposals for development.

**Objective 13** *Major development will be located so as to minimise the need for travel*

## Sustainable Transport

**2.20** In recent years, road traffic in the District and in Kent has been growing faster than the national average. This trend is forecast to continue but the road network cannot grow indefinitely. Indeed, the current level of dependence on the motor car is unsustainable because, among other things:-

- (a) it uses a finite energy resource;
- (b) it is a major source of air pollution;
- (c) in rural areas, road construction runs counter to landscape and other countryside objectives;
- (d) in urban areas, the noise, fumes, congestion, tarmac and parking facilities undermine attempts to create an attractive and safe environment to live in; and
- (e) it deters the use of safer and more environmentally-friendly alternatives, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

**2.21** Major generators of freight (such as major distribution, warehousing and manufacturing) should be encouraged to transport goods by rail or water, where possible. In addition, people's dependence on the motor car needs to be reduced by encouraging walking, cycling and using public transport. However, car owners value the freedom that this brings and, if car journeys are to be limited, then alternatives must be made attractive.

**2.22** Hand-in-hand with a much greater emphasis and level of investment in sustainable forms of transport, must be measures to reduce the dominance, speed and amenity impact of the motor car through traffic calming and other forms of management (for example, using commuted parking payments to fund better provision for public transport, walking and cycling). As urban areas will benefit most from such investment, the Plan should give priority to schemes in Dover and Deal. In the rural areas, traffic calming measures may be acceptable as part of after treatment works associated with village bypass schemes.

**Objective 14** Provision will be made and support given to make public transport, walking and cycling safe and attractive alternatives to using the motor car

**Objective 15** Major generators of freight and heavy goods movements will be located so as to enable the use of rail or water

## AIM 2: TO HELP BUILD A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY

**2.23** In the past, the District's prosperity and employment opportunities rested on three key industrial sectors - agriculture, coal mining and the Port of Dover. Today, the agricultural sector faces uncertainty and is characterised by a decline in farm incomes and the continued shedding of permanent labour. The coalfield has closed, and the Channel Tunnel and Single European Market have resulted in the loss of about 5,500 port and port-related jobs.



*Development at Pfizer Ltd*

**2.24** It is clear that a major effort is needed to provide long term job opportunities for local people. The Council has already helped widen the economic base of the area through, for example, its initiatives in the field of tourism and the identification of employment

sites in the Dover area. It is also working closely with employers, the Government and special agencies, such as the East Kent Initiative, to support existing firms and to continue the process of diversification.

**2.25** The District is an Intermediate Area within the Assisted Area scheme, while 13 rural wards and part of Mongeham Ward also lie within the Kent Rural Development Area. Commensurate with Aims 1 and 3, the Plan will actively support measures to restructure the local economy.

## Local Economy Objectives

### ***Employment Land Provision***

2.26 The Local Plan needs to identify sufficient land to meet the floorspace guidelines set by the Structure Plan.

***Objective 16 Structure Plan employment quantities will be met***

### **Site Substitution**

2.27 The Plan needs to assess the existing supply of employment sites and, where desirable, substitute them. This may be because of market conditions or as a result of changes in planning circumstances and/or policy.

2.28 Site substitution may not always be acceptable. For example, not only can this contribute to a loss of employment land (and potential jobs), but it may also result in or reinforce an imbalanced settlement pattern. The loss of employment sites to other uses, particularly housing and retail, should be resisted.

***Objective 17 New employment sites will meet market requirements***

***Objective 18 Employment sites will be protected from other development***

***Objective 19 To improve the relationship between economically active residents and the location of employment opportunities***

***Objective 20 To re-use the redundant colliery sites***

### ***Diversifying the Local Economy***

2.29 The Council has a long established commitment to help diversify the local economy by promoting tourism initiatives. Such initiatives help to create jobs, enhance the attractiveness of the area for investors and improve the quality of life for residents. While, in principle, support should be given to tourism developments, it must be qualified by a need to ensure that major attractions, in particular, are appropriate to their location in East Kent and do not damage the environment. In the main, tourism development should be directed to Dover, Deal and Sandwich. However, 'green tourism' initiatives, which by their very nature are low key, small in scale and sustainable, will be encouraged in the rural areas.

2.30 Apart from tourism, particular support needs to be given to:-

- (a) meeting the expansion or relocation needs of major employers, so as to protect existing jobs;
- (b) retaining jobs in the agricultural sector;
- (c) attracting new jobs in manufacturing and business services;
- (d) attracting firms which match the skill needs of the unemployed; and
- (e) providing facilities to retrain the workforce.

***Objective 21 Development will widen the economic base of the District***

### **AIM 3: TO HELP ACHIEVE GREATER EQUALITY OF ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL**

2.31 Given the many issues and characteristics which unite the District, it can be easy to overlook the fact that its community also includes individuals and groups with a variety of special needs and aspirations. For example, to people with disabilities, such simple activities as visiting a shop or even a neighbour cannot be taken for granted. Similarly, many women, elderly and unemployed residents are not able to take full advantage of all facilities in the District because they have no access to a car. This needs to be taken into account in the location of development. Finally, residents experience a variety of built environments, not all to the highest standard of design or comfort. Whereas there is a limit to what can be

done with existing development, it is important that all new development should be built to the highest design and amenity standards.

2.32 Government guidance now allows (and in some cases requires) local plans to consider social needs, including provision for the disabled. However, as with the other two aims, if the Plan is to be realistic, it must be restricted to what can reasonably be realised within the Plan Period.

## **Access and Opportunity Objectives**

### ***The Disabled***

2.33 The disabled include people who:-

- (a) lack stamina, have poor co-ordination or poor grip;
- (b) use mobility aids such as a wheelchair, stick or crutch; or
- (c) have a sensory impairment, for example, the partially sighted, blind, hard of hearing or deaf.

2.34 Many of these disabilities mean that people are unable to play a full and independent role in society because of the inaccessibility of land, buildings, transport, recreation and other facilities in the environment. This affects the growing elderly population disproportionately as disability tends to increase with age. Some of the mobility problems encountered by the disabled also apply to those with infants in pushchairs or toddlers.



*Parking and drop kerb to doctor's surgery for disabled people*

### **Low Income Groups**

2.35 The market often fails the unemployed and those on low income to gain access to some facilities. This was recognised in the Dover and Western Parishes Local Plan in relation to, for example, low cost housing in rural areas. In addition to meeting the needs of rural areas, such concern needs to be extended to housing in urban areas and to access issues such as meeting the needs of the no car household.

***Objective 22 Development will be accessible to everyone***

### **Quality Built Environment**

2.36 The wealth of historic buildings and areas in the District has led to great care being required when new development is proposed which might affect them. However, this does not mean that care is not needed elsewhere. Indeed, everyone should have a right to enjoy living and working in a quality environment, where design and amenity considerations are given a high priority. In new development and redevelopment proposals, the Plan should seek to create a quality environment for all. The Council will also undertake schemes of improvement in existing development, as funds permit.

***Objective 23 Development will create a quality environment, in terms of design and amenity.***

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DISTRICT**

2.37 While all three Aims and their Objectives are central to formulating policies in the Plan, Aim 1 is particularly influential in framing those policies dealing with the question of where new development should go. For example, the relationship between transport and land use patterns emphasises the need to direct new development to Dover and Deal, where two-thirds of the population live, and to apply general restraint to the rural areas.

2.38 Taking the District as a whole, policies are needed to restrain and, if possible, reduce any over-supply of housing sites and the leakage of retail spending outside the District, particularly to Canterbury. Such policies will help make the District move towards a more sustainable pattern of development.



**2.39** Environmental improvements to the urban areas and making provision for alternatives to the car should help make Dover and Deal attractive alternatives to living in the rural areas. Of the two, Deal currently has the more unsustainable characteristics, with some 8,200 fewer jobs than resident workforce. This imbalance, which has led to net out-commuting, is mainly the result of employment sites being lost to housing in the town. North and Middle Deal wards are also unemployment blackspots. An emphasis of the Plan will be to encourage employment development, while limiting new housing at Deal. The exception to this strategy will be at the RMSM sites where housing will be allowed as a means of preserving the historic buildings and features on the sites.

**2.40** In the rural areas the approach of the Plan will be to generally restrain development whilst providing for small scale business development, development requiring a rural location or development which is justified by local employment, community or housing needs and would help sustain rural communities. However, there are four main exceptions to this, namely:-

- (a) at Aylesham, where the Council is carrying forward its longstanding commitment to significantly expand the village, in line with Structure Plan policy;
- (b) north of Sandwich, where land has been identified for the expansion of Pfizer despite the major imbalance of jobs to resident workforce;
- (c) in Sandwich, where tourism development, appropriate to its historic importance, will be encouraged; and
- (d) redevelopment of the redundant colliery sites for employment and low key recreation uses.

## **REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup>*Based on Dover District Local Plan Strategy; Dover District Council; 1993*