

Dover District Council

Authority Monitoring Report





Economic Growth



In this Section:

- *Economic Growth Strategy*
- *Progress in Delivery of Local Plan Employment Allocations and Sites*
- *Employment Development Gains and Losses*
- *Tourism Accommodation and Attractions*

Economic Growth

This chapter reports on the monitoring indicators for the following Local Plan Economic Growth Policies:

- **SP6 – Economic Growth**
- **E1 – New Employment Development**
- **E2 – Loss or Redeployment of Employment Sites and Premises**
- **E3 – Businesses operating from a residential property**
- **E4 – Tourist Accommodation and Attractions**

Policy SP6

Economic growth will be supported in the district, in line with the 2021 Economic Growth Strategy as set out in Local Plan Strategic Policy SP6, as follows:

1. The delivery of a minimum of 117,290sqm of new employment floorspace ([Use Classes](#) E(g)i-iii, B2 and B8) (31.1ha in land terms) over the Plan period. This will be achieved through the following strategy:
 - *The allocation of the following sites for business and employment purposes:*
 - i) White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield (Site Allocation SAP2)
 - ii) Dover Waterfront (SAP3)
 - iii) Aylesham Development Area (SAP25)
 - iv) Statenborough Farm, Eastry (SAP31)

- *Supporting the ongoing redevelopment at Discovery Park, Sandwich*
- *Promoting new urban and rural employment opportunities in accordance with Policy E1*

2. The allocation of Fort Burgoyne (Policy SAP5) for a mix of uses, and supporting the redevelopment and reuse of the following heritage regeneration opportunity sites to secure their future:
 - *The former Snowdown Colliery, Aylesham (Policy HRS2)*
 - *Western Heights, Dover (Policy HRS1)*
3. The retention of existing industrial/ commercial/ business land, premises and estates, in accordance with Policy E2.
4. The maximisation of town centre employment opportunities in accordance with the strategic approach to the Town Centres set out in Local Plan Strategic Policies SP7, SP8, SP9 and SP10.
5. Supporting the expansion of port facilities at Dover's Western Docks through the Harbour Revision Order.
6. Supporting tourism development to extend or upgrade the range of tourist facilities, particularly those that attract the staying visitor, increase the attraction of tourists to the area and extend the season in accordance with Policy E4.

Employment Development Statistics for 2024/25

Employment floorspace changes by Use Class

Policy E1 supports new employment proposals in suitable and sustainable locations. Policy E2 protects the most sustainable employment sites so sufficient land is retained to meet employment needs and allow existing businesses to change and grow.

Based on the Council's monitoring of commercial planning applications, 23,183sqm (gross) of new employment floorspace was completed between April 2020 and March 2023.

Table 1 shows that 3,103 sqm (net) of employment floorspace was completed in 2024/2025, bringing the total completed during the first 4 years of the plan period to 26,286sqm.

Table 1 – Employment Floorspace (sqm) granted, completed or extant in 2024/25 by use class

Key Employment Growth Data

- ✓ Most employment floorspace completed during 2024/2025 was for industrial storage (Use Class B8). This is in line with employment need requirements, set out in the explanatory text to Policy SP6.
- ✓ The largest single increase in employment floorspace was 1,950 sqm of B8 storage completed in Ash (application 21/01779)
- ✓ The largest single loss of employment floorspace came from 760 sqm of storage space in Dover (22/00830), though this will generate 167sqm of Sui Generis use as a drive-thru coffee shop
- ✓ Although there have been lower completions in employment space this year, the extant supply remains high at over 37,000 sqm across the four floorspace use classes.
- ✓ The district is on track to deliver 117,290sqm of new employment floorspace by 2040.

Use Class	Granted in 24/25			Completed in 24/25			Extant at 31 March 2025		
	Gain	Loss	Net	Gain	Loss	Net	Gain	Loss	Net
B1a/E(g)(i) (Office)	1021	250	771	819	102	717	11440	3131	8309
B1c/E(g)(iii) (Light Industrial)	0	0	0	0	0	0	12186	269	11917
B2 (General Industry)	0	54	-54	0	246	-246	1449	337	1112
B8 (Storage)	808	0	808	4233	1601	2632	16660	390	16270
Total	1829	304	1525	5052	1949	3103	41735	4127	37608

Progress in Delivery of Employment Allocations

As set out in Policy SP6 Part 1, the delivery of a minimum of 117,290 sqm (gross) of new employment floorspace¹ over the Plan period will be achieved through new development on allocated employment sites, at Discovery Park and on urban and rural sites in accordance with Policy E1.

Table 2 shows the majority of the floorspace completed in 2024/2025 were on allocated employment sites and one redevelopment at site at Discovery Park.

There is ongoing uncertainty regarding the availability of Phase 3 of White Cliffs Business Park for new employment development. The site was proposed to be an Inland Border facility and is owned by the Department for Transport whose intentions are likely to include some form of employment generating use to be developed during the Plan period.

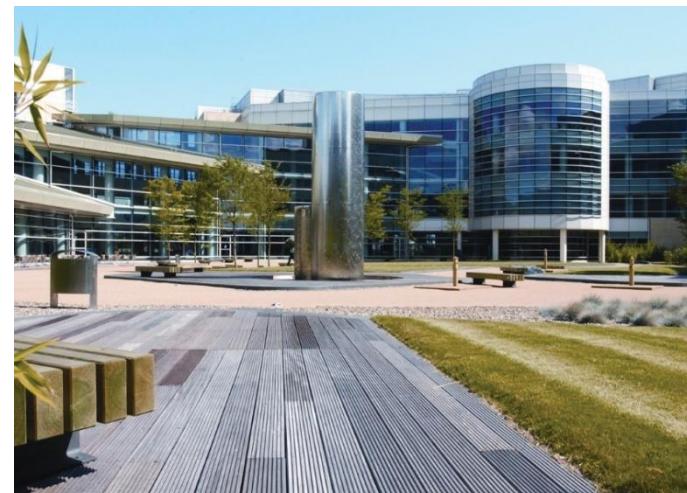
Phase 4 of White Cliffs Business Park has been allocated to ensure there is not a shortage of suitable employment land if Phase 3 does not come forward.

Table 2 – Completed and extant development on Local Plan Employment Allocations (2024-25)

Location	Indicative capacity (sqm)	Floorspace completions (sqm)	Extant floorspace (sqm)
Discovery Park, Sandwich	50,000	0	11,119
White Cliffs Business Park Phase 2	12,000	2,496	22,497
White Cliffs Business Park Phase 3	80,000	0	0
White Cliffs Business Park Phase 4	40,000	0	0
Dover Waterfront	10,000	0	448
Aylesham Development Area	8,500	0	0
Statenborough Farm, Eastry	2,000	0	0
Total completions & extant	-	2,496	34,064

Image 1 – Discovery Park CGI

Image credit: Dover District Council



¹ For the purposes of Strategic Policy SP6 (1), 'employment floorspace' includes offices, research and development, light and general industry and storage and/or distribution uses.

Economic activity

For district wide data (when compared to Kent, South East and the UK) on the following topics, please refer to [Economy and employment data - Kent County Council](#).

- Working age population
- Total jobs and job density
- Economic activity rate
- Resident Occupation Group
- Earnings by residence and workplace
- Level of unemployment
- Level of qualification attainment

These data demonstrate that the district has a higher rate of economic inactivity than the national average, owing to a higher proportion of both retirees, and working aged people unemployed.

Nonetheless, the local economy is strong and growing. It is diversified, with no sector accounting for more than 20% of total employment. The district also has a higher rate of self-employment and tourism-related employment than average.

As well as building on this strength, the Local Plan aims to increase opportunities in sectors such as research and development, logistics, and administration, while resisting loss in other sectors such as retail, construction and heavy industry.

Businesses operating from a residential property

Whilst Policy E3 has no target applied, its aim is to support suitable opportunities within the district for new and flexible working practices. As the Local Plan was adopted part way through the monitoring year, the monitoring of applications determined using Policy E3 will be available in next year's report.

Tourism Accommodation and Attractions

Policy E4 aims to increase the number of overnight staying visitors within the district. Improvements to infrastructure and facilitation of new hotels, restaurants and attractions will help achieve this goal. The tourism industry is a significant contributor to the local economy, and this proactive approach to encourage the expansion of existing tourism infrastructure will continue to grow this sector, boosting the economy and creating jobs.

A range of accommodation, both serviced (hotels, B&Bs) and self-catered (holiday lets, glamping etc.), is needed to meet the district's tourism requirements. Visitor accommodation has been predominantly self-catered, and the Plan seeks to enable the growth of serviced hotels and B&Bs, as well as the continued expansion and diversification in the self-catered market.

Major tourism proposals should be located within areas of the district that can be accessed by a range of transport options, whilst acknowledging that many rural areas are an attraction in themselves to visitors. The Plan seeks a balance between the two and to ensure that development is

appropriate to its location, is sustainable, and will not damage the character of the environment which attracts tourists in the first place.

The policy also seeks to protect existing tourist accommodation. As such, accommodation of over 10 bedrooms can only be lost where it is demonstrated that it is no longer suitable or commercially viable.

Gains and losses of tourism by area of district in 2024/2025

- ❖ 10 planning applications were recorded as completed, of those, 6 were 'holiday lets'.
- ❖ 1 planning application saw the loss of tourism, as a 11-bed guest house returned to two private dwellings. The loss of overnight accommodation for tourism has seen the return of the buildings to their original use class as dwellings, which is a positive change and delivers much needed housing across the district. Through the application process it was proven that the Guest House was no longer commercially viable and became a vacant building, therefore compliant with Policy E4.

New applications granted for tourism by area of district in 2024/2025

Information about applications granted under Policy E4 in the monitoring year is in Table 3 and shows the net gain for tourism uses is expected to continue to increase.

Table 3 – Tourism Applications Granted During 2024/2025

Application	Location	Tourism Type	Gain/Loss
22/01450	Ash	Camping/Glamping	Gain: 5 tents, 30 pitches
23/00762	Ash	Camping/Glamping	Gain: 20 pitches
23/00695	Northbourne	Camping/Glamping	Gain: 4 mobile units
21/01307	Walmer	Holiday Let	Loss: to residential
23/00780	Preston	Holiday Let	Gain: New build
22/00931	Ripple	Holiday Let	Gain: New build
23/01035	Dover	Holiday Let	Gain: From agricultural building
23/00803	Nonington	Holiday Let	Gain: Conversion from garage
23/00480	Woodnesborough	Holiday Let	Gain: Conversion from garage
23/00993	Sholden	Holiday Let	Gain: New build
24/00102	Dover	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Loss: to 2 residential
24/00624	Worth	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Gain: 2 additional rooms
23/01454	Preston	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Gain: BB 4 rooms
23/01095	Sholden	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Gain: 120 rooms
24/00827	Sandwich	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Gain: 9 rooms
23/00751	Northbourne	C1 (Hotel, B&B)	Gain: 4 additional rooms