

Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026

March 2012

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Dover District Play Strategy 2007-2012 was developed by the Dover District Play Partnership (a range of organisations and agencies involved in the Play sector) in response to a commitment from Central Government to raise the national profile of Play. The document provided a strategic approach to improving play provision and services in the District. Since then, partnership working has facilitated significant progress in achieving the objectives set out in the Strategy, for example a programme to raise the standard of play at strategically important sites is almost complete. The Play Partnership has reviewed progress against outcomes and is ready to begin preparing the next edition of the Strategy.

Purpose

1.2 This document is a review and update of the play facility (i.e. children's play areas) element of the Dover District Play Strategy 2007-2012, and represents the first phase of a full revision. It sets the strategic approach the Council will follow in respect of play area provision over the period 2012-2026. Provision of multi use games areas and skate parks will be reviewed in 2012/13, along with play services.

1.3 Considerable progress has been made since the last strategic review of play area provision more than five years ago and, the national and local context has also changed. The reviewed and updated strategy of play areas will assess the current state of play facilities in the district and identify gaps in provision. This will provide a clear framework to guide the development of new projects over the coming years.

1.4 Publicly accessible play areas are provided by a number of organisations in the Dover District, most of whom are represented in the Play Partnership. Defining the desired level of equipped play provision across the district in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility will assist all play providers to justify continued expenditure from their own budgets and to secure external funding for priority projects. The information presented in this play area review will provide the evidence necessary to support applications to grant giving bodies.

1.5 The impetus to carry out this review and to establish standards for future play area provision also arises from a commitment in the Dover District Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted in 2010) for the Council to work with partners to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan. An important element of this work is the development of open space standards, including standards for play provision. Consultation with stakeholders will ensure that the standards are set at a level that is both adequate and sustainable. The standards will be tested as part of the Land Allocations document process including an examination in public and adoption by the Council.

1.6 The adopted Core Strategy is based on a high growth approach and it is reasonable to expect that there will be an increased quantity of development over the coming years. If clear standards for play provision are in place, this will allow

the additional need arising from new development to be accurately assessed. In some cases new play facilities may be required, in others off-site contributions to increase the capacity of existing sites may be the preferred approach.

Background

Approach

1.7 A comprehensive audit of the quality and quantity of play provision throughout the district was undertaken by consultants in 2004. The audit demonstrated a level of provision that was well above the national average in terms of quantity, but that in many cases the quality was below expected standards. Of the 72 play areas in the district at that time, 35⁽¹⁾ were provided by Dover District Council with most of the remaining sites provided by Parish Councils, and a smaller number owned by housing associations and the Ministry of Defence.

1.8 A draft strategy for the District Council sites was subsequently developed and was reported to Cabinet in May 2005. Following a formal consultation exercise later that year, Cabinet members recommended that the District Council should continue to provide equipped play areas at strategically important sites, but that responsibility for local sites should largely fall under the remit of other providers. The strategic sites selected are mostly situated within large open spaces or parks that serve a broad range of children from within the district and visitors to the district.

1.9 This approach has enabled standards of play provision to be raised. The District Council has delivered projects that have improved the quality of provision at strategic sites to a high level, worked with partners to transfer responsibility for local play areas to suitable providers where appropriate and removed equipment from unsustainable sites. At the same time several local providers have improved their sites through projects initiated by Town and Parish Councils and community groups.

How play has developed on Dover District Council owned sites

1.10 The strategy recommended by Cabinet members in 2005 gave a clear direction for the development of play areas funded by the Council's General Fund (GF), because these mainly consisted of the strategic sites. However 20 of the Council's play areas were funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and none of these were identified as being of strategic importance at the time. Attempts were made to engage stakeholders in deciding the future of the HRA play areas that could not be transferred to local providers, but unfortunately the Housing Tenants Group at that time was unable to reach a conclusion and withdrew from taking decisions.

1.11 A further review in 2008 focusing on the future of HRA funded sites was conducted by council officers in consultation with members. This resulted in transferring two HRA play areas to parish councils and closing seven HRA play areas. There are nine remaining HRA play areas. This review of play area provision, with

1 Three play areas were closed between the time of the audit and the report to Cabinet in May 2005

associated public consultation, will enable proposals for the future of these sites to be more fully developed. Appendix 3 refers to the proposed levels of future provision for HRA play areas and delivery of this will form part of the strategy's action plan.

Resources used to develop the approach

1.12 Raising the quality of accessible and inclusive play provision was clearly an important objective in the District Play Strategy 2007-2012. Many play providers struggle to finance the maintenance of existing equipment, let alone undertake capital improvements to raise standards from within their own budgets. Therefore sourcing external capital has been vital in delivering the action plan, and the Dover District Play Strategy 2007-12 has played a key role in providing evidence to support external funding applications for both the District Council and local play providers.

1.13 In recognising the importance of investment at strategic sites, Dover District Council allocated a considerable capital sum to initiate the programme of improvements. This was used as seed money to support successful applications for matched funding opportunities such as Big Lottery Children's Play Programme and the (former) Department for Children, Schools and the Family Play Builder Programme. Planning monies and contributions from Town Councils also contributed towards the overall improvement and redevelopment of the network of strategic sites.

1.14 Recent successful funding applications by community groups and Town and Parish Councils indicate that locally focused projects may continue to succeed in securing grants from external bodies. Examples include projects delivered by the Friends of Poulders Play Area, the North Deal Community Partnership, Sandwich Town Council and St Margaret's Play Action Group.

Achievements

1.15 The Play Strategy 2007-2012 highlights five main themed policy statements that guided the approach for delivering play. Each theme is listed below, and action points that relate specifically to provision of children's play areas are discussed:

Theme 1 – Promoting a partnership approach

- **1.16 To engage in consultation regarding a partnership approach to play area provision:** The District Council has had dialogue with town councils and several parish councils in helping to maintain local provision. Other providers were encouraged to take responsibility or share responsibility for the provision and management of localised sites. For example: (i) Sandwich Town Council with respect to the Bulwarks Play area and Poulders Gardens Play area in Sandwich (ii) Guston Parish Council with respect to Guston Play area (iii) Ringwould with Kingsdown Parish Council with respect to Ringwould Play area (iv) North Deal Community Partnership with respect to the North Deal Recreation Ground.

- **1.17 Maximise the development of children's play provision:** Regular meetings of the Play Partnership and dissemination of information electronically between meetings has facilitated the sharing of good practice. It also provided a means of sharing the most up to date information on external funding opportunities for all play providers to help upgrade play facilities.

Theme 2 – Promoting Accessible and Inclusive Play

- **1.18 Ensure the needs of disabled children and young people are considered in the planning of play facilities and services and ensure that they are not excluded from participating:** Design & consultation work around the development of new strategic sites incorporated comments provided by parents with children who have disabilities. Organisations such as the Children's Society, Pegasus Playscheme (for children with disabilities) and the Whitfield Aspen Units 1 & 2 were invited to participate in the consultation process. Although the Council attempted to engage meaningful dialogue it recognises there is scope for improvement. Nevertheless the comments received were fed into the design brief for the redevelopment of strategic play areas and were an important consideration in specifying the design of equipment to allow for inclusive play.
- **1.19** Consultation work with the Dover Access & Mobility Group and the Disability Forum group took place during the course of putting together & implementing an extensive programme of Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) work across a number of strategic play areas in the District. This is recognised as one of the Council's most successful DDA projects carried out in response to the audit of Council's assets undertaken in 2004-05.
- **1.20 To seek views of disabled and disadvantaged children and young people to monitor and evaluate facilities and services:** The consultation process undertaken during the improvement of strategic sites included post improvement satisfaction surveys. This ensured that evaluation data was captured, and the user feedback proved helpful when planning subsequent projects. In addition to the groups listed in 1.18 above, consultation in respect of the Victoria Park play area project included young people in the Linwood Youth Centre Up2You Alternative Curriculum programme, which caters for young people excluded from school.
- **1.21 Promote the use of traffic calming and zones within existing and new developments:** The Kent Design Guide includes guidance on the layout of streets in residential areas to ensure that people have priority over drivers. Dover District Council has adopted the guide as a supplementary planning document and will expect proposals to comply with Manual for Streets 2. For example, traffic calming information from these documents has been incorporated into masterplanning for the Whitfield Urban Expansion.

Theme 3 - Providing & Promoting Quality Play

- 1.22 Develop a portfolio of projects in response to the needs identified in the Play Strategy and seek funding from Big Lottery Children's Play Programme and research other funding opportunities:** A great deal of success has been achieved in this area. Dover District Council has secured funding for the strategic sites from major funding programmes such as Big Lottery Children's Play Programme (£257,700) and Play Builder (£83,400). Fowlmead Country Park also secured £50,000 from Play Builder. Significant contributions were also received from planning agreements and Deal Town Council. Eight of the nine strategic play areas have benefited from significant investment to improve play facilities and they now provide innovative and exciting play opportunities. These comprise five sites in Dover, two in Deal and one in Sandwich. At the time of the preparation of this draft, one project is on-going at North Deal.

1.23 A comprehensive list of grants awarded to local play projects since 2007 would provide powerful evidence for play providers in the district on the value of applying for external funding. It is intended to seek full details of such grants through the consultation exercise on the review and update of play areas.

- 1.24 Encourage the development of good quality play and imaginative play provision that has the potential to meet the needs of all children and young people:** Comprehensive design consultation with the public and in particular school children has been undertaken to achieve this objective. The following schools and organisations played an active role in helping to create and select the most popular and preferred design proposals:

St Mary's Primary School, Dover

River Primary School, Dover

St Edmund's Secondary School, Dover

STARR Initiative (Sandwich Town Action and Rural Revival)

The Deal Schools Consortium

The Dover District Youth Forum

Local Town Councils

1.25 Additional public organisations involved are referred to at 1.18. The Community Safety Unit, Health & Safety Officer, Property Services & Leisure Services at Dover District Council provided advice during the consultation

process. Positive feedback obtained through post installation surveys at Pencester, Marke Wood, Connaught Park and Kearsney Abbey play areas shows that the projects have met the needs of users.

- **1.26 Work with Community & Safety Reduction Unit to address anti-social behaviour that has a negative impact on communities enjoying existing and new play provision:** The police architectural liaison officer was a member of the project panel for all new play area developments. A survey of perceptions of anti-social behaviour carried out at Pencester Gardens and Marke Wood play area in 2009 revealed that almost all respondents felt either safe or very safe and that none felt unsafe.

Theme 4 – Promoting Awareness of Play & Education

- **1.27** There were no action points under this theme specifically related to play area provision

Theme 5 – Providing Better Information

- **1.28 Share best practice:** The Play Partnership has facilitated the sharing of best practice and has enabled the networking among other providers of play at its meetings. Additionally Dover District Council delivered a successful Play Training Workshop in March 2011 inviting parish and town councils and active community groups to attend. Topics such as funding opportunities, advice on starting your own play project including design and consultation work, procurement and general maintenance were all presented and discussed.

2 Where will children play in 2012??

2.1 While the review and update of play areas focuses on provision of equipped play areas, it is important to acknowledge that play happens wherever children and young people are: at home, in the street and on the way to school. The contribution to play provided by multi-functional amenity open space is also discussed.

Audit of local provision

2.2 An audit of local provision was undertaken by the District Council in 2010 to provide an up to date picture of the quantity and quality of equipped play areas in Dover. The distribution of play areas was mapped to investigate whether gaps in provision exist. Further useful information was provided by a range of consultations, including a high street survey undertaken in autumn / winter 2010 as part of the Green Infrastructure Study.

Methodology of audit

2.3 All play areas mentioned in the 2004 audit were visited and four newly created sites were added to the list. Since the audit in 2004 equipment has been removed from eight Dover District Council owned sites and two non-Dover District Council sites. The quality of each site was assessed using a score sheet based on Play England's Quality Assessment Tool (2009) and the Fields in Trust assessment 'Play Value Assessment for Playgrounds' (2008). The two approaches were combined in order to provide a fully rounded assessment. The following aspects were scored:

- Site Features
- Equipment Features
- Play Co-operation
- Access to site
- Maintenance
- Cleanliness
- Toilet facilities
- Access to natural environment

2.4 The play areas were classified using the Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) categories as described in 'The Six Acre Standard' (2001) as follows:

i. Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP)

This is an unsupervised site, mainly for older children, eight years of age and over with consideration for slightly younger accompanied children. It should offer at least eight types of play activity, be enclosed by fencing with self-closing gates and include a kickabout area, opportunities for wheeled play (such as facilities for skateboards, roller skating or bicycles) with seating for accompanying adults or for teenagers to use as a meeting place.

ii. Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)

This is an unsupervised area equipped for young children (four – eight years of age) with consideration for the needs of accompanied children from birth to four years and unaccompanied children slightly older than eight. It should offer at least five types of play activity, be enclosed by fencing with self-closing gates, with seating for accompanying adults.

iii. Local Area for Play (LAP)

This is a small area of open space specifically designated and laid out for young children to play close to where they live. It contains features that enable children to identify the space as their own domain, for example a footprint trail or a model of an animal or insect. It should be surrounded by a guardrail or fence with seating for accompanying adults.

2.5 The document 'Proposed Standards for Open Space' (Dover District Council, March 2011) reports the results of a literature survey, high street survey and benchmarking against neighbouring authorities undertaken during preparation of the proposed standards. The findings indicated that residents of the district would access NEAPs on foot by walking for up to 1 km, which equates to 600m straight-line distance. The coverage provided by LEAPs is 600m walking distance or 400m straight line, while LAPs are specifically designed to offer play for children within 1 minute walking time or 60m from home. Distribution maps of the sites and areas that they serve were created by locating each play area with a point surrounded by a shaded circle, the radius depending on the play area classification.

Audit findings

2.6 Quantity: Currently there are 63 play areas in our district. 22 provided by Dover District Council and 41 owned (or leased) by Parish Councils or other providers.

2.7 Using the Field in Trust classification, the number of children's play areas is divided as follows:-

Play Area Category	Number
NEAPs	14
LEAPs	45
LAPs	4
Total	63

Table 2.1

2.8 Two of the Dover District Council owned play areas were identified as surplus to provision during the 2005 audit, and are scheduled for closure in 2011/12. This will reduce the total number of play areas in the District to 61. This has no impact

on the proposed new standards. The total area covered by play areas is 6.61 hectares, which equates to 0.06 hectares per 1,000 population (Kent County Council estimated the population of the district as 106,140 in 2009). The average size of play areas in the district is 0.1ha

2.9 Quality: The quality of play areas varies widely across the District. As was expected the strategic sites generally scored highly due to their good locations combined with newly installed equipment. One of the highest scoring sites is a recently created play area located at Fowlmead Country Park, which is owned by the Homes and Communities Agency

2.10 Unless a play area was clearly intended to provide a very localised facility, the minimum level of classification used for play areas was a LEAP. Some play areas fell below the standard expected for LEAPs in terms of the number of play activities offered, but never the less were classified as such. This occurs where old equipment is at the end of its useful life, or has been removed, and capital investment is now required to raise the standard. An external assessment stating that a site would benefit from improvement can provide valuable information for play providers. For example, Northbourne Action Group is currently working with the local Parish Council to raise capital for improvements at the Almonry Meadow play area and data from the Dover District Council audit has been used as supporting information in successful funding bids.

2.11 Similarly play areas that contained a fair selection of fixed equipment and were co-located with other facilities for children and young people were classified as a NEAP, even if the number of play activities on offer did not quite reach the standard set out by Fields in Trust. In most cases the additional facilities were multi-use games areas and/or skate parks, often kick-about areas and youth shelters were also present. These play areas are well located in spacious sites, and would benefit greatly from investment. The play areas at Connaught Park, Marke Wood and Kearsney Abbey/Russell Gardens were classified as NEAPs even though they do not feature skate parks or MUGAs because they contain excellent equipment and are located in spacious parks with a selection of the following amenities; tennis courts, sports pitches, public conveniences, accessible woodlands, a tea room, a model boating lake and formal gardens.

2.12 Accessibility: As shown in the distribution map (Appendix 2), most residents of urban areas and villages live within reasonable walking distance of an equipped play area. Some urban areas, notably St Radigund's in Dover and South Walmer in Deal are deficient in play provision.

2.13 The proposed standards for play provision recommend that all settlements of village level and above should contain at least one play area. Smaller settlements are unlikely to be able to sustain formal play provision, and in any case children who live in hamlets usually have ready access to other types of open space such as public rights of way and semi-natural green space. A small number of villages do not currently contain publicly accessible play areas:

- East Studdal
- Goodnestone (play equipment in school only)
- Great Mongeham
- Lydden (play equipment in school only)
- Ripple
- West Hougham
- Woodnesborough

2.14 If residents of these villages wish to initiate projects to provide play areas, the District Council would aim to support their efforts by providing advice or evidence. New play provision may not be appropriate in all cases, for example if play equipment is already provided in the local school, as is the case in Goodnestone and Lydden.

Analysis of provision

2.15 This audit demonstrates that play provision in the Dover District is generally good in terms of both quality and accessibility. It confirms the finding of the high street survey that by far the majority of residents questioned were satisfied with current play provision. The audit has identified areas that are under served and these should be considered for future projects, where possible. In some cases physical constraints may restrict provision, for example it has not been possible to identify a suitable location for a new play area in the upper streets of the Maxton, Elms Vale & Priory ward. Several site options have been comprehensively explored, but the steep topography and density of houses has meant that it has not been possible to identify a suitable site for the provision of a new play area. However, should any opportunities arise through planning applications in this area, they will be pursued.

Review of provision

2.16 It is recommended to continue a partnership approach among play providers in the delivery of strategic and non-strategic play areas. The district council is committed to managing and maintaining council owned strategic sites. In addition to the previously designated GF strategic sites, three further potential HRA strategic sites have been identified: Northbourne Avenue in Dover, Sheridan Road in Dover and William Pit Avenue in Deal. It should be noted that play areas of similar high quality are owned and managed by other play providers, for example at Folwmead Country Park, Ash Recreation Ground and Whitfield Recreation Ground

2.17 With respect to non-strategic sites, the majority of LEAPs in the district are managed by town and parish councils, often with input from local community groups. It is anticipated that partnership working will play an increasingly important role in

localised play provision. Some town and parish councils have successfully taken on ownership or share the responsibility for more localised sites that were previously managed by the district council. The Friends of Poulders Play Area in Sandwich provides an excellent example of how local people, supported by the town and district councils, can work together to improve their local play area, in fact local needs can often be better met in this way. Local children and their parents near the Poulders Gardens site are actively involved in raising funds and in deciding which features they would like in their play area. This partnership approach in play delivery is reflected in the proposed action plan arising from this review and the district council will continue to explore opportunities for such arrangements.

New proposed standards of play area provision

Quantitative Standard	Accessibility Standard	Quality Standard
0.06 ha per 1,000 population	Local play space within 600m and/or strategic play space 1,000m. At least one equipped play space in each settlement of village level or above.	Play England Guidance, such as 'Design for Play'. Fields in Trust Guidance, such as 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play'.

Table 2.2

Taken from the proposed 'Dover District Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan' Dover District Council, March 2011

2.18 The standards have been set at a level that provide ambitious, but achievable, targets for play provision in the district. Primarily the standards will be used to assess planning applications, but they may also be used by play providers such as Parish Councils to guide the level of provision in their locality. The District Council will work hard to maintain the level of provision it contributes in terms of quantity and will continue to raise the quality of provision at strategically important sites. It is hoped that previous successes in partnership working may be built upon to allow as many as possible of the District Council owned non-strategic sites to remain open. Other play providers may open and close sites or undertake renovations during the timespan of this review according to their own priorities, outside the control of the District Council.

2.19 No standard is proposed for the provision of LAPs. As detailed in the Open Space Policy and Standards Consultation document it is proposed that rather than requiring LAPs in new developments, provision of playable space should be encouraged instead. Playable space is accessible green space designed to positively encourage play, and will be discussed in more detail in the forthcoming revision of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Due to its multifunctional nature playable space will not be measured against the quantitative standard for children's play space.

2.20 The way in which the proposed standards will be applied to planning applications is detailed in Section 9 of the Open Space Policy and Standards Consultation October 2010. In summary;

- Developments that are located outside the catchment of existing play facilities may give rise to the need for new play facilities.
- In other cases it may be more appropriate to secure an off-site contribution via a planning agreement, to increase the capacity of existing provision.

2.21 Historically Dover District Council has secured off-site contributions via S106 agreements, and this will continue at least until a locally determined Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is introduced. The Council is preparing to introduce CIL to the district, and may choose to secure funding for play area provision via that route in the future. In the meantime, the 2010 CIL regulations have introduced restrictions to the way in which S106 agreements may be used. Planning obligations (such as off-site contributions) may only be secured if they are:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

2.22 In addition, off-site contributions may only service the additional need that arises from the new development; they cannot be used to put right existing deficiencies.

2.23 The necessity of providing play facilities either on or off-site will be determined by application of the standards. Allocation of any off-site monetary contributions to projects will be guided by the proposed accessibility standards, to ensure the facilities provided are directly related to the development. The scale of any on- or off-site provision will depend on the particular local conditions and issues, which will vary from site to site. In some cases improved access arrangements to an existing facility may be an appropriate use of off-site contributions. Due to the terrain of Dover urban area topographical factors must often be taken into account when considering accessibility; the distance to the nearest play area would be measured along footpaths.

Delivery of play facilities through the planning process

2.24 The Council examines planning applications to ensure that obligations to provide play are attached to planning permissions, where appropriate. This will ensure that if a planning permission is implemented, the necessary play facilities will be provided and that there are subsequent arrangements for their maintenance. A strategic approach will help to deliver planning benefits in the form of play areas.

2.25 The adopted Core Strategy, which covers the period to 2026, identifies 'Strategic Sites' and 'Broad locations for urban expansion' for major residential development as well as setting targets for new dwellings in the District. The Council is currently preparing a Land Allocations Document that will identify the precise

location of sites for urban expansion and the targets for new dwellings set out in the Core Strategy. In areas where the Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026 has identified a shortfall in provision and there will be additional development in that locality, this will be considered in the Land Allocations Document.

2.26 St Radigunds ward is one of the areas identified as being deficient in play provision by this audit. The District's Core Strategy identifies that Coombe Valley needs comprehensive regeneration, to begin addressing this the Coombe Valley Regeneration Initiative (Stage 1 report) set out objectives that could guide future regeneration. Key objectives include the need for new development to meet the needs of the community, the creation of a new 'heart' for Coombe Valley and to improve recreation facilities, promoting healthy, active lifestyles. Public consultation highlighted that play facilities within the Valley are lacking. The Land Allocations Document will build on the outputs of the Regeneration Initiative (Stage 1 report) and evidence obtained during development of the Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026. Specific guidance will be developed for the Land Allocations Document detailing the way in which the sites put forward for development in Coombe Valley could provide necessary infrastructure, including play facilities.

2.27 Planning obligations that deliver new play areas must include provision for their long term maintenance. The District Council is not in a position to 'adopt' any new sites.



3 Financial costs for delivering the strategy

3.1 A summary table has been provided at appendix 3 to demonstrate the capital and revenue investment that is required across the next ten years (2012-22) in play areas provided by the district council. These are estimated figures.

3.2 In order to maintain strategic facilities at the existing standard of high quality provision:

- £27,325 annual revenue is required
- £150,400 capital investment is required

3.3 In order to maintain non-strategic facilities at the existing standard of quality provision:

- HRA sites: £26,800 annual revenue is required
£280,850 capital investment is required
- GF sites: £2,725 annual revenue is required

Funding sources to support this strategy

3.4 Budgetary pressures faced by councils at both local and district levels make it essential that all possible funding opportunities are explored. It is important this strategy clearly outlines the possible funding sources to finance the delivery.

Source one:

There is some sustainable revenue available from current district council budgetary provision that can be used to maintain strategic and non strategic play areas provided by the council. This is through the general fund account and housing revenue account. However, this will need to be kept under regular review given the continued level of financial pressure.

Source two:

Planning monies can be used to contribute towards provision of play areas. Likely sources of capital in the future will be developer contributions through Section 106 agreements, and potentially Community Infrastructure Levy payments. Each development will need to be considered individually and developer contributions sought will need to take account of local circumstances.

Source three:

Financial opportunities continue to be available from new external funding programmes. This district has a consistent record of producing successful funding applications for development of play areas and the Council and its partners need to continue making best use of these opportunities. Maximising funds to invest in play through external funding programmes contributes to the action plan in this play strategy.

4 Action Plan

4.1 The five key themed policy statements referred to in 1.15 that guided the approach for delivery of play during 2007-2012 will continue to be progressed through the delivery of the following action plan for 2012-2026.

What action?	How?	By who?	By when?
1. Maintain high quality standards at existing strategic play areas	Financially as outlined at 3.2	DDC & other play providers	On-going
2. Develop projects to raise quality standards at play areas provided by Dover District Council	Secure funding via grant applications and planning monies. Continue to ensure the needs of disabled children are considered in the planning of play facilities through use of targeted consultation	DDC	Seek to deliver one project per year
3. Pursue planning opportunities to provide play facilities in new developments where appropriate	Assessment of all planning applications submitted to the council according to the procedure being developed in the emerging Open Space and Standards	DDC & developers	On-going
4. Review the transfer and closure option for non-strategic play areas	Open dialogue with local town and parish councils and community groups. Discuss possible transfers, provide advice on best practice and possible funding opportunities. Agree and complete potential transfers. Close remaining play areas.	DDC, providers of play areas to include local community groups	Transfers may take up to two years to fully complete - 2012-2014

What action?	How?	By who?	By when?
5. Continue to work with the community to encourage good quality inclusive and imaginative play provision	Identify and offer support to community groups. Encourage sharing good practice. Organise annual workshop that will examine particular themes and topics of interest.	DDC, Play Partnership play providers, community groups	Deliver annual workshop
6. Explore all funding opportunities	Research all funding opportunities. Share information with local providers. Deliver funding seminar to enable all providers to maximize funding opportunities.	DDC, Play Partnership play providers and community groups	Deliver annual seminar
7. To review the action plan of the Play Strategy annually	Progress reports to Portfolio Holders and the Play Partnership	DDC	April/May every year
8. To conduct an audit of play provision every five years	Assess the quantity and quality of play areas with site visits. Use the most up to date guidance for this assessment	DDC, Play providers, community groups	Every five years from 2012

Table 4.1

5 Monitoring

5.1 The Play Partnership will assist with monitoring delivery of the action plan and a progress report will be submitted to the partnership on an annual basis or as otherwise agreed. Monthly budget monitoring meetings held by council officers will keep expenditure in facilities provided by the council under close review. The report will highlight actions completed, those currently being delivered and those behind schedule. A review of actions will be undertaken and agreed.



6 Consultation

6.1 Details of the consultation approach on the draft Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026 are set out in Appendix 4. The procedure follows guidelines laid out in Dover District Council's adopted 'Statement of Community Involvement' (2006) and the Council's consultation toolkit.



Appendix 1 Provision of play areas by ward

Provision of Play Areas by Ward

Aylesham		
Site	Type	Provider
Attlee Avenue	LEAP	Parish Council
Derwent Way	LEAP	Dover District Council
Hill Crescent	LEAP	Parish Council
Nonington	LEAP	Parish Council
The Crescent, Snowdown	LEAP	Parish Council

Buckland		
Site	Type	Provider
Colton Crescent Play Area	LEAP	Dover District Council
Ottawa Crescent Play Area	LEAP	Housing Association
Sheridan Road	NEAP	Dover District Council

Capel-le-Ferne		
Site	Type	Provider
Lancaster Avenue Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council

Castle		
Site	Type	Provider
Connaught Park	NEAP	Dover District Council
Pencester Gardens Play Area	NEAP	Dover District Council

Eastry		
Site	Type	Provider
Betteshanger Community Park	LEAP	Homes and Communities Agency

Eastry		
Site	Type	Provider
Betteshanger Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council
Centenary Gardens	LEAP	Parish Council
Downs Road, East Studdal	LEAP	Parish Council
Eastry Gun Park Play Area	LEAP	Parish Council
Northbourne Village, The Grove	LEAP	Parish Council
Tilmanstone	LEAP	Parish Council

Eythorne and Shepherdswell		
Site	Type	Provider
Elvington Adelaide Road	LEAP	Parish Council
Eythorne Playing Field	LEAP	Parish Council
Shepherdswell Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council

Little Stour and Ashstone		
Site	Type	Provider
Ash Recreation Ground	NEAP	Parish Council
Collar Makers Green, Ash	LEAP	Housing Developer
Preston Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council
Staple Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council
Wingham Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council

Lydden and Temple Ewell		
Site	Type	Provider
King George's Field, Brookside	LEAP	Parish Council
Russell Gardens	NEAP	Dover District Council

Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory

Site	Type	Provider
Elms Vale Play Area	NEAP	Dover District Council

Middle Deal and Sholden

Site	Type	Provider
Fowlmead Country Park	NEAP	Homes & Communities Agency
Travers Road	LEAP	Dover District Council
Victoria Park Playspace	NEAP	Dover District Council
William Pitt Avenue Play Area	NEAP	Dover District Council

Mill Hill

Site	Type	Provider
Cowdray Square Play Area	LEAP	Dover District Council
Elizabeth Carter Avenue	LEAP	Dover District Council
Freemen's Way	LEAP	Housing Developer
Wilson Avenue	LEAP	Dover District Council

North Deal

Site	Type	-Provider
North Deal Playing Field	LEAP	Dover District Council

Ringwould and Kingsdown

Site	Type	Provider
Kingsdown (The Butts)	LEAP	Parish Council
Ringwould	LEAP	Parish Council

River

Site	Type	Provider
Alkham Recreation Ground	LEAP	Parish Council

River		
Site	Type	Provider
Kearsney Abbey Play Area	NEAP	Dover District Council
River Recreation Ground Play Area	LEAP	Parish Council

Sandwich		
Site	Type	Provider
Poulders Gardens Playing Field	LEAP	Dover District Council
Stonar Close	LEAP	Housing Association
The Bulwarks Play Area	LEAP	Dover District Council
The Butts Recreation Ground	NEAP	Dover District Council
Worth Play Area	LEAP	Parish Council

St Margarets-at-Cliffe		
Site	Type	Provider
Alexander Field	LAP	Parish Council
Burgoyne Heights	LEAP	MOD
Corunna Place	LEAP	MOD
Gibraltar Square, Burgoyne Heights	LEAP	MOD
Guston	LEAP	Parish Council
King George V Playing Field	LEAP	Parish Council
Langdon Playing Field	LEAP	Playing Field Association

St Radigunds		
Site	Type	Provider
Bunkers Hill Avenue	LAP	Housing Association

Tower Hamlets		
Site	Type	Provider
Northbourne Avenue	NEAP	Dover District Council

Town and Pier		
Site	Type	Provider
Aycliffe Ropewalk Play Area	LEAP	Dover District Council

Walmer		
Site	Type	Provider
Marke Wood Recreation Ground Play Area	NEAP	Dover District Council

Whitfield		
Site	Type	Provider
Green Close (off Aspen Drive)	LAP	Housing Developer
Guilford Avenue	LEAP	Dover District Council
Whyte Close (off Aspen Drive)	LAP	Housing Developer
Whitfield Recreation Ground	NEAP	Parish Council



Appendix 2 Map to illustrate location

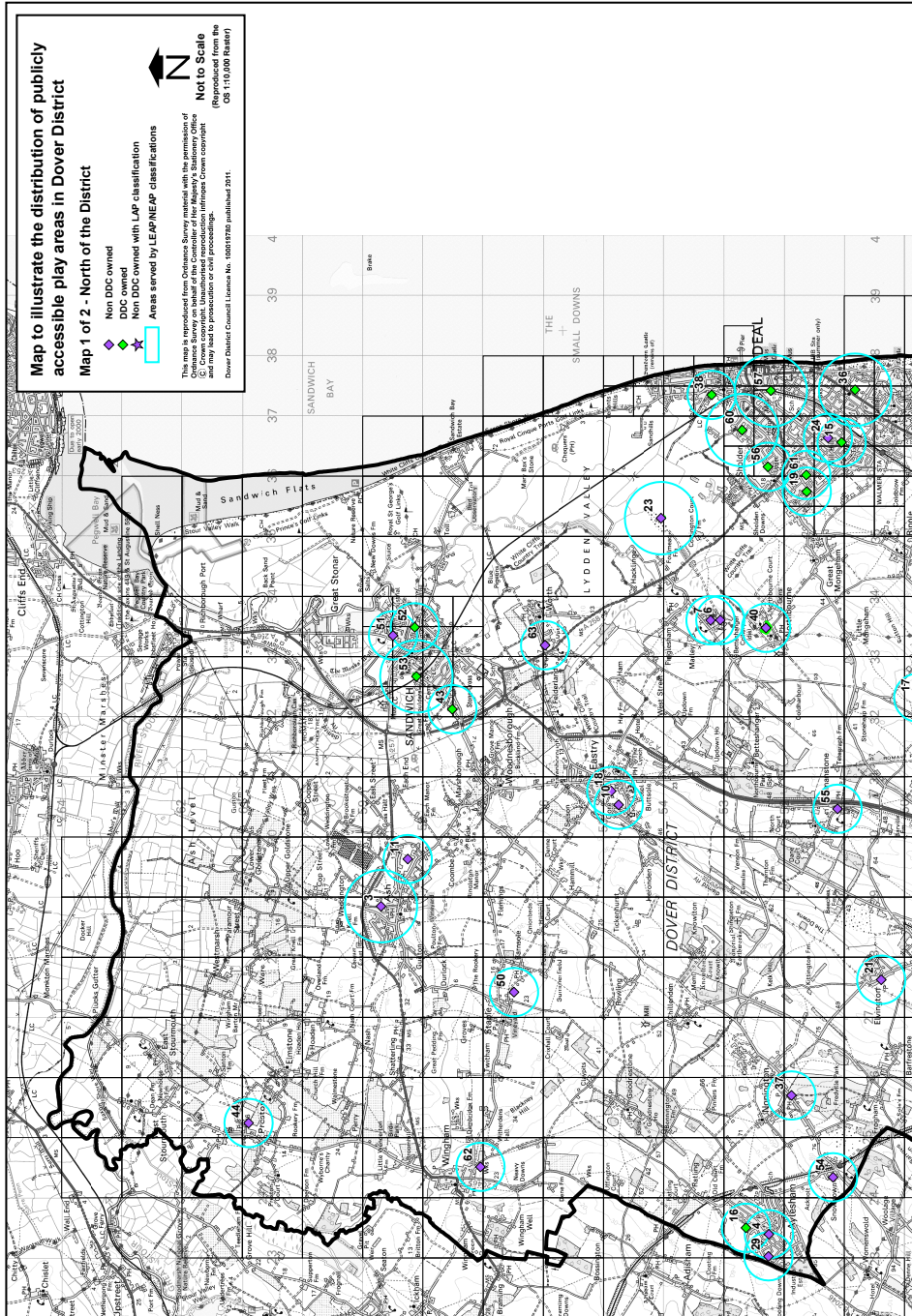


Figure 2.1

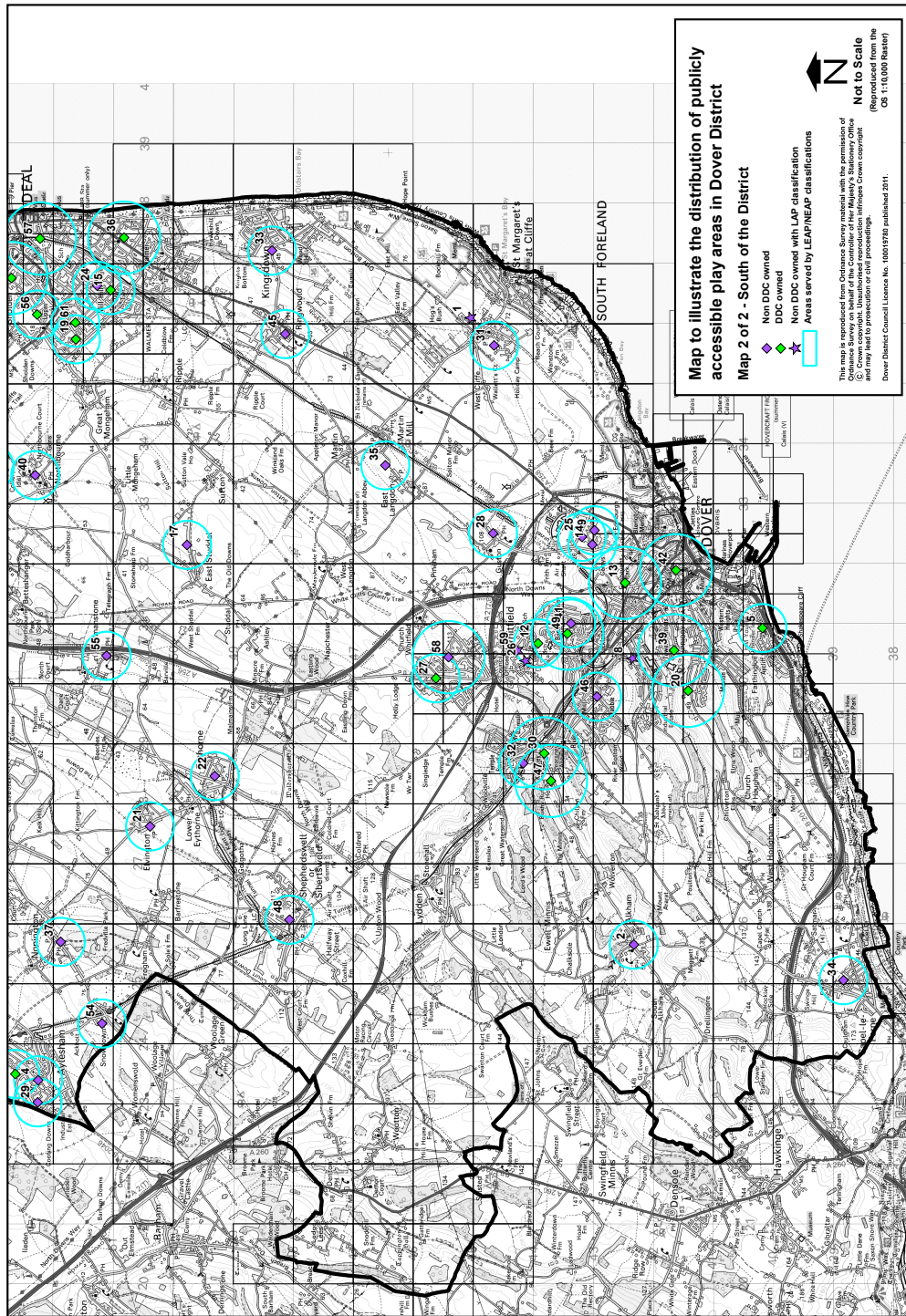


Figure 2.2

ID	Location	Provided by
1	Alexander Field, St Margaret's at Cliffe	Parish Council
2	Alkham Recreation Ground (Slip Lane)	Parish Council
3	Ash Recreation Ground, Queen's Road, Ash	Parish Council
4	Attlee Avenue, (Playing Space off), Aylesham	Parish Council
5	Aycliffe Ropewalk Play Area, end of St David's Avenue, Aycliffe	Dover District Council
6	Betteshanger Community Park	SEEDA
7	Betteshanger Recreation Ground	Parish Council
8	Bunkers Hill Avenue, Dover	Housing Association
9	Burgoyne Heights	MOD
10	Centenary Gardens (rear of), Eastry	Parish Council
11	Collar Maker's Green, Ash	Housing Developer
12	Colton Crescent Play Area, off Hirst Close, Whitfield	Dover District Council
13	Connaught Park, Dover	Dover District Council
14	Corunna Place	MOD
15	Cowdray Square Play Area, Deal	Dover District Council
16	Derwent Way, Aylesham	Dover District Council
17	Downs Road, East Studdal	Parish Council
18	Eastry Gun Park Play Area	Parish Council
19	Elizabeth Carter Avenue, Deal	Dover District Council
20	Elms Vale Play Area, Dover	Dover District Council
21	Elvington Adelaide Road	Parish Council
22	Eythorne (land between Green Lane/Hazel Close)	Parish Council
23	Fowlmead Country Park	Homes & Communities Agency

ID	Location	Provided by
24	Freeman's Way , Deal	Housing Developer
25	Gibraltar Square, Burgoyne Heights	MOD
26	Green Close (off Aspen Drive), Whitfield	Housing Developer
27	Guilford Avenue, Whitfield	Dover District Council
28	Guston - off Chance Meadow	Parish Council
29	Hill Crescent, Aylesham	Parish Council
30	Kearsney Abbey Play Area, River	Dover District Council
31	King George V Playing Field, St Margaret's	Parish Council
32	King George's Field (off Brookside), Temple Ewell	Parish Council
33	Kingsdown (The Butts)	Parish Council
34	Lancaster Avenue Recreation Ground, Capel le Ferne	Parish Council
35	Langdon Playing Field	Playing Field Association
36	Markewood Recreation Ground Play Area, off Liverpool Road, Walmer	Dover District Council
37	Nonington (Adjacent to Lower Lodge, Holt Street)	Parish Council
38	North Deal Playing Field	Dover District Council
39	Northbourne Avenue, Dover	Dover District Council
40	Northbourne Village (land adj Village Hall), The Grove, Northbourne	Parish Council
41	Ottawa Crescent Play Area, Dover	Housing Association
42	Pencester Gardens Play Area, Dover	Dover District Council
43	Poulders Gardens Playing Field, Sandwich	Dover District Council
44	Preston Recreation Ground (land adj to Preston School, Mill Lane)	Parish Council

ID	Location	Provided by
45	Queens Rise, Ringwould	Parish Council
46	River Recreation Ground Play Area, Lewisham Road, River	Parish Council
47	Russell Gardens	Dover District Council
48	Shepherdswell Recreation Ground (playground Approach Road)	Parish Council
49	Sheridan Road (Buckland Estate), Dover	Dover District Council
50	Staple Recreation Ground (Mill Road)	Parish Council
51	Stonar Close, Sandwich Industrial Estate, Sandwich	Housing Association
52	The Bulwarks Play Area, Sandwich	Dover District Council
53	The Butts Recreation Ground, Sandwich	Dover District Council
54	The Crescent (land off), Snowdown	Parish Council
55	Tilmanstone (site next to Village Hall)	Parish Council
56	Travers Road, Deal	Dover District Council
57	Victoria Park Playspace, Deal	Dover District Council
58	Whitfield Recreation Ground	Parish Council
59	Whyte Close (off Aspen Drive), Whitfield	Housing Developer
60	William Pitt Avenue Play Area, Deal	Dover District Council
61	Wilson Avenue, Deal	Dover District Council
62	Wingham Recreation Ground Play Area	Parish Council
63	Worth Play Area	Parish Council

Table 2.1 Location of Play Areas



Appendix 3 Proposed level of provision for District Council owned strategic and non-strategic play areas

Urban Area	Play Area Name	General Fund (GF)/ Housing/ Other	Recommended action with notes	Annual revenue from 2012/13	Total investment proposal for 10 yrs from 2012/13 ⁽¹⁾
Strategic Sites					
Deal	Marke Wood	GF	Remain Open	3,400	16,000
Deal	North Deal	GF & North Deal Community Partnership	Remain Open - successful transfer to NDCP	50	nil
Deal	Victoria	GF	Remain Open	2,325	17,000
Dover	Connaught Park	GF	Remain Open	3,250	nil
Dover	Elms Vale	GF	Remain Open	2,575	14,600
Dover	Kearsney Abbey	GF	Remain Open	2,275	36,800
Dover	Pencester Gardens	GF	Remain Open	6,950	16,400
Dover	Russell Gardens	GF	Remain Open	3,275	13,300
Sandwich	The Butts	GF	Remain Open	3,225	36,300
				27,325	150,400
Non Strategic Sites					
Deal	Cowdray Square	GF	Retain until equipment fails and explore planning or partnership work	2,725	nil
Sandwich	Bulwarks	Sandwich Town	Successful transfer to STC	nil	nil

Urban Area	Play Area Name	General Fund (GF)/ Housing/ Other	Recommended action with notes	Annual revenue from 2012/13	Total investment proposal for 10 yrs from 2012/13 ⁽¹⁾
		Council (STC)			
Sandwich	Poulders Gardens	Sandwich Town Council (STC)	Successful transfer to STC	nil	nil
Whitfield	Guilford Avenue	GF	Remove Equipment in 2011/12	nil	nil
Aylesham	Derwent Way	Housing	Seek replacement in Aylesham development	2,625	nil
Deal	Elizabeth Carter Ave	Housing	Remove equipment in 2011/12	nil	nil
Deal	Travers Road	Housing	Retain at minimal level until planning opportunities are further explored	3,175	nil
Deal	William Pitt Avenue	Housing	Remain open, potential strategic site	6,425	77,300
Deal	Wilson Avenue	Housing	Seek to transfer	2,600	30,000
Dover	Aycliffe Ropewalk	Housing	Remove equipment. Seek to transfer provision and relocate play area by year 2	2,100	Removal cost 5,100

Urban Area	Play Area Name	General Fund (GF)/ Housing/ Other	Recommended action with notes	Annual revenue from 2012/13	Total investment proposal for 10 yrs from 2012/13 ⁽¹⁾
Dover	Colton Crescent	Housing	Seek to transfer	2,175	22,700
Dover	Northbourne Avenue	Housing	Remain open, potential strategic site	4,625	71,550
Dover	Sheridan Road	Housing	Remain open, potential strategic site	3,075	74,200
				29,525	280,850

Table 3.1

1. It should be noted that even where nil investment is currently indicated above, financial contributions from development may become available to fund investment proposals at any of the play areas listed above. Play providers may also explore external funding opportunities. See sections 2.23 and 3.4 for further details.



Appendix 4 Consultation Approach for the draft Review Play Area Provision 2012-2026

Name of Document	Review of Play Area Provision 2012 - 2026
Topic	This draft document examines how the standards proposed for play provision could be implemented. There are currently 63 play areas across the district, of which Dover District Council owns 22. The newly proposed standards have been combined with an existing policy that identifies strategic and non-strategic play areas. The document also provides a basis on which they can be funded and maintained.
Period	27 October - 22 December 2011 The consultation period is 8 weeks rather than 12 in order to meet the timescales laid out in the Local Development Scheme
Promotion and Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notice in local paper ● District newsletter ● Alerts on homepage of Dover District Council website, Regeneration Delivery and Community & Leisure ● Notices and paper copies to be circulated to main and area offices of the District Council
List of Consultees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providers of Play listed in Appendix 1 of the draft document ● Dover District Play Partnership ● Special Interest Community Groups ● Elected members of Dover District Council ● List of individuals with expressed interest in Play and the Local Development Framework ● Statutory consultees for planning consultations, such as KCC, neighbouring districts and the Environment Agency
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate with consultees via email providing a web link to on-line version of the document. http://www.dover.gov.uk/ldf ● Consultees are requested to submit their comments via the Council's website if possible, this will make analysis of comments more cost effective ● Alternatively comments may be emailed to regenerationdelivery@dover.gov.uk or communitydevelopment@dover.gov.uk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultees can also make representations by letter or on a representation form, which is available at the main Council offices, Area offices and on-line • Consultees who do not have an email address will be contacted by letter
Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All comments will be compiled by subject matter • Officers will provide responses
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated responses will be sent to everyone who submits a comment, explaining the timescale for addressing the issues raised • A report will be presented to Cabinet detailing issues raised through the consultation. The Council will consider all comments received to determine whether changes should be made before the documents are finalised • The final report will be sent electronically to everyone who has submitted a comment
Costs	<p>Costs will be kept to a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation work will be undertaken in-house • Communication via electronic means as far as possible • Press notice costs shared with two other consultations (estimated at £100) • Postage & printing (estimated £100)
Points of contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration Delivery team on (01304) 872477 or regenerationdelivery@dover.gov.uk • Community and Leisure team on (01304) 872338 or communitydevelopment@dover.gov.uk

Table 4.1 Consultation Approach