

By: Adam Wilkinson, Managing Director

To: Environment & Regeneration Policy Overview Committee – 29 May 2008

Subject: Dover Pride and Dover Coalfields

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this note is to provide a background note and brief update for Members on the Dover Pride initiative and the regeneration of the former East Kent Coalfield area. Members will have received recently a note about the Dover Pride Regeneration Partnership and its terms of reference.

## **Dover Pride**

The Dover Pride initiative is targeted at the town of Dover, an area of some 30,000 inhabitants and where 4 of its six wards are among the most deprived in the UK. This is despite having the biggest “ro-ro” port in Europe and a cruise industry second only to Southampton in terms of passengers. Dover also has an international profile by virtue of the White Cliffs and Dover Castle, while some parts of the town have a run-down feel about them. The purpose of Dover Pride therefore is to boost the town’s prospects for regeneration and investment, as well as to capitalise on the catalytic potential of its existing assets.

Since the initiative began in 2004, the partnership has supported and carried out a range of projects. Brief details of these are set out in table 1, which shows increasing levels of activity and interest in the town’s regeneration. The table also includes some information about prospective projects, some of which are in the early stages of preparation while others are rather more aspirational.

The range of projects illustrates that Dover Pride has been instrumental in securing partners’ support for providing a framework for the town’s future growth.

## **Former Kent Coalfield**

The Kent Coalfield Regeneration Programme was started in 1998 following the closures, several years earlier, of the east Kent collieries at Tilmanstone, Snowdown, Betteshanger and Chislet. The Programme has been led by SEEDA in conjunction with English Partnerships (EP). It is by far SEEDA’s largest derelict land reclamation project, and involves the recovery of more than 190 hectares.

The Kent Programme is part of the National Coalfields Programme, which is managed through EP with a ring-fenced budget of some £380m available for the reclamation of over 1,940 hectares of brownfield land in England, mostly on former colliery sites.

By the time the Kent Programme is completed, possibly in 2012, SEEDA and EP expect it to have delivered about £43m of public sector capital investment and to have created up to 2,500 new jobs. In addition to this, over £1m of government funding has been provided for local community development projects in Dover and

Canterbury districts through the Coalfield Regeneration Trust. According to SEEDA's website, most of the capital investment through the Kent Programme has been completed, although the redevelopment of Betteshanger and, in particular, of Snowdown still has some way to go.

Most of the 120 hectare site at Betteshanger has been reclaimed for use as a park with an extensive cycling track and nature reserve. Currently, SEEDA is drawing up plans for ownership and future management of the site, which opened to the public last summer. It is understood that the Land Restoration Trust will be involved in the ownership and future management of the park. The remainder of the former colliery site (about 7.5 hectares) will be developed for industrial uses by 2010.

The future of the Snowdown site remains uncertain. It has been in an abandoned state since it closed in 1988, and is the last of the former Kent colliery sites to undergo redevelopment work. It is leased by the Coal Authority from the Plumtree Childrens Trust. There has been a difficult relationship between the Trust and SEEDA over the years, which is believed to have contributed to the delays in redeveloping the 41 hectare site.

Snowdown is now the only Kent site which retains most of its former colliery buildings, and 2 of these were recently spot listed by English Heritage. It seems unlikely that further buildings will be listed, despite some interest locally in securing alternative uses for them, mainly because of the considerable refurbishment and maintenance costs involved.

Currently there is a resolution to grant outline planning consent to develop 7.5 ha for B1, B2 and B8 employment uses (24,000 sq m and an estimated 745 jobs), and the remainder of the site (33ha) as a public resource for recreation and leisure. However, it is understood that other development options for Snowdown and the adjoining village of Aylesham may be considered by Dover DC with SEEDA, EP and the County Council.

Finally, there are plans for a major housing development at Aylesham comprising 1200 houses, involving Dover DC in partnership with developers Ward and Hillreed. This will have a significant impact upon the area, and provides opportunities for construction training and employment that both KCC and Dover DC are exploring with the developer.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to NOTE the report.

Table 1 – Projects supported by Dover Pride initiative

Name of activity or project	Description of activity or project	Partners involved	Lead partner	Impact on regeneration effort in Dover
Dover Pride Partnership	Provides steer for regeneration initiative in Dover town	KCC, Dover DC, EP, SEEDA, DHB, English Heritage, Arts Council, LSC, local community and business organisations	Chaired by KCC, Vice chair is Dover DC.	Partnership oversees regeneration activities, which are delivered mainly through main partners acting as project leads.
<b>Strategy and policy development</b>				
DP Regeneration Strategy	Produced in February 2005 by consultants SQW as framework for regeneration activity in Dover town	Commissioned by KCC on behalf of Dover Pride	Project managed by client team comprising KCC, Dover DC and SEEDA	Provides the main policy framework for Dover Pride initiative.
Dover Town Master Plan	Identified key opportunity areas for future development within town centre. Undertaken by consultants Urban Projects in 2006.	Commissioned by KCC on behalf of Dover Pride	Project managed by client team comprising KCC and Dover DC	Provides the basis for subsequent work on town centre public realm, on “Mid Town” project, and input into Dover DC’s evidence base for Local Development Framework
Public Realm Strategy	Evaluated opportunities for high quality public realm and lighting projects in Dover town centre. Strategy prepared by Rummey Associates in 2007.	Commissioned by KCC on behalf of Dover Pride	Project managed by KCC	One of recommended projects (Station Approach) is now being implemented (see below)
Dover Mid Town Feasibility Study	Assessment of options for developing site occupied by South Kent College, utilities and retail. Carried out by consultants GVA Grimley in 2007.	Commissioned by KCC on behalf of client team comprising KCC, South Kent College and Dover DC	Project managed by South Kent College	Provides basis for LDF policies on Mid Town area of town centre.
Local Development Framework - Transport Study	Identify strategic development sites for housing to meet structure plan and growth point requirements. Assess in broad terms the transport impacts of these sites and highlight network issues.	Dover DC, KCC, Highways Agency, EP, DHB, private developers	Dover DC	Generate new residential development and population growth to stimulate town centre regeneration

Local Development Framework - Housing numbers	District LDF nearing completion includes bid by Dover DC for growth point status (minimum 10,000 houses)	Led by Dover DC but bid supported by KCC despite initial opposition by sub regional strategy for East Kent / Ashford in South East Plan	Dover DC	KCC support for extra 4,000 homes above SE Plan recommendation of 8,100 was made on regeneration grounds.
<b>Projects being undertaken to date by Dover Pride partners</b>				
Dover Priory Station refurbishment (Phase 1)	Refurbishment of station building and provision of new passenger facilities – completed summer 2007	KCC, Southeastern Railway, Dover DC	KCC provided project management and financially accountable body role for external funding	One of first “early win” projects for Dover Pride which has led to further work on Station Approach
Dover Sea Sports Centre	Construction of purpose built facility on Dover sea front to be completed autumn 2008	DHB, Sport England, SEEDA, EP, KCC, Roger de Haan Trust, local sports clubs	Dover Harbour Board	“Early win” project for Dover Pride will provide stimulus for waterfront regeneration. Also provides a possible focus for community based leisure and sports activities.
Dover Priory Station Approach (Phase 2)	Quality improvements to public realm around Dover Priory Station and Folkestone Road –works started February 2008 and will be completed by July 2009	KCC, Network Rail, Dover DC	Project managed by KCC on behalf of client comprising Dover DC, Network Rail and Southeastern Railway	When completed in 2009 it will be a flagship public realm project for Dover Pride
Dover Town Investment Zone (DTIZ)	Redevelopment of St James area within town centre for retail, hotel and residential uses. Asda is anchor development. Timescale for completion is 2011	Dover DC, Bond City (developer), SEEDA, EP	Dover DC	Development will be a focal point for town centre regeneration as well as provide c300 jobs.
Empty Homes Initiative	Bring empty properties into habitable use through No Use Empty scheme	KCC working in partnership with district council’s own Empty Property Strategy	KCC	Both KCC and Dover DC recognise value to regeneration of maximising provision of new homes through reuse of empty

				dwellings, and adaptation of empty space over shops
<b>Projects being planned or in preparation</b>				
Cultural regeneration	Bid for up to £4m of DCMS funding now being put together that will link improvements to visitor attraction at Dover Castle to Dover's waterfront and town centre	KCC, Dover DC, English Heritage and SEEDA	Preparation of bid being coordinated by KCC on behalf of client team	Seen by Dover DC as key to linking regeneration of town centre and waterfront with Dover's heritage assets.
Connaught Barracks	Redevelopment by EP of former MOD site for residential development (500) plus reuse of Fort Burgoyne	EP, Dover DC (as planning authority)	EP	Seen by Dover DC and EP as a flagship eco-homes development. Future uses of Fort Burgoyne also being assessed by EP.
Development at Western Docks2)	Expansion of port to meet increasing demands of freight traffic mainly as well as cruise industry - completion by 2013. Linked to waterfront regeneration opportunity around Granville dock	DHB, Dover DC, SEEDA, EP	DHB (for operational development) and SEEDA & Dover DC (for waterfront opportunity)	Regarded by Dover Pride as key to the regeneration of the town