

By: Mark Dance – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

Matthew Balfour – Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Barbara Cooper – Corporate Director, Growth Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 15 September 2015

Subject: Ashford District Deal

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report sets out an overview of the proposed District Deal model for continuing improved working between the County and Districts, as well as the proposed Ashford District Deal as a pilot. The Deal sets out both the shared priorities for the two councils, and a proposed set of new ways of working that will better enable the authorities to achieve these shared priorities.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Committee is recommended to:

- a) CONSIDER and COMMENT on this report and the District Deal model and potential programme;
 - b) CONSIDER and COMMENT on the proposed pilot District Deal with Ashford Borough Council;
 - c) RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council, and relevant Cabinet Members sign the District Deal with ABC once finalised.
-

1. Background

1.1. As presented to this Cabinet Committee in September 2014, District Deals are a concept proposed to promote further improved working between the County and districts within Kent. The proposed Deals will be agreements between Kent

County Council and each of the twelve Kent Districts, with the aim of improving service delivery and reducing costs through a clearer approach to joint working.

- 1.2. District Deals will provide the opportunity for the Districts and the County to achieve potentially exciting results by using the two-tier system as an advantage. The scope for Deals could be quite broad, taking in anything from shared regeneration objectives, to new approaches to collaborative working in social care and public health services.
- 1.3. Each deal will be tailored to the priorities of the local district. In some cases, as in the Ashford pilot District Deal (see below), there is likely to be a strong interest in the economic development agenda, and an opportunity with District Deals to identify clear, shared regeneration objectives and a shared approach to more effectively and efficiently achieving these objectives.
- 1.4. Where there is an appetite for improved working in agendas beyond regeneration, the Deals would provide an opportunity for further joined up engagement with our communities (e.g. the troubled families programme), using existing local networks (public and third sector) to better coordinate services and support to customers within the districts, including the most hard to reach. Through this improved local engagement, the Deals offer a platform for a strengthened prevention agenda, thereby contributing to overall reduction in demand and thus savings to the public purse.
- 1.5. In this way, the Deal offers an opportunity for potential efficiencies and savings against a backdrop of increasingly challenging budget conditions for both tiers of Government. Achieving these savings whilst maintaining and potentially improving the quality of service for our shared customers – i.e. the residents and businesses of Kent – will require fundamentally new ways of working. Whilst the savings ultimately may be modest compared with the financial challenges faced by KCC's large volume services, the District Deals offer an opportunity to start to explore more fundamental changes.
- 1.6. Critically, the District Deal approach reflects the Government's continued pursuit of joint working and devolution across the public sector. In this way, District Deals have the potential to provide a strong model for joint working across the local government "family" in Kent, at a time when Government is looking for credible and robust local governance to which to devolve powers and funding.

2. A District Deal for Ashford

- 2.1. At the original GEDCCC discussion on District Deals in September 2014, the Chief Executive for Ashford Borough Council presented a programme of priority

projects, which it was proposed could form the basis of a District Deal between the two authorities.

- 2.2. In response to this initial interest in the District Deal approach from ABC have progressed a pilot District Deal with Ashford. The draft Deal has been coordinated by KCC's Economic Development Team and is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3. Building on positive working between KCC and ABC to date, the Deal is designed to more effectively and efficiently enable the authorities to achieve a set of shared outcomes, including KCC's corporate outcomes. The Deal identifies the "**Big 8**" – eight strategic projects that, combined, have the **potential to unlock 13,650 jobs and over 13,600 homes for Ashford**. These projects include major town centre regeneration projects as well as the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
- 2.4. In order to help deliver the ambition of the Big 8 shared outcomes, the Deal also identifies a series of **new ways of working** which offer fresh approaches to how we work between County and District on some of our most critical agendas – from health and social care to delivering infrastructure.
- 2.5. The Deal will be a living document, and be refreshed on an annual basis. The delivery of the Deal will be monitored against a Delivery Plan which will set measurable targets and milestones.
- 2.6. The Deal will be overseen by a District Deal Board, which will include both Council Leaders and senior officers from both authorities, whilst a Strategic Delivery Board will oversee delivery of specific outcomes. Officers from both authorities will meet on a more regular basis through a Strategic Coordination Group, which will enable more effective joint working.
- 2.7. Following input from the Cabinet Committees for Growth Economic Development and Communities and Environment and Transport in September, the Deal will be revised with final input from the Leaders, Cabinet Members and relevant officers from within the two authorities. The Deal will be signed by the two Council Leaders in October following similar member consultation in Ashford.

3. Looking forward – the District Deal programme

- 3.1. The Ashford District Deal is intended to be the first of a series of Deals to be agreed with all Districts. Each Deal will be tailored to the priorities of the area, and learning from each of the Deals will be shared across Districts.
- 3.2. A discussion on the proposed District Deal programme will be taken to Kent Leaders and Chiefs in September, and a programme developed with the districts

to develop further Deals. The details of further Deals will be shared with the Cabinet Committee as they are developed.

4. Recommendation

4.1. The Cabinet Committee is recommended to:

- a) CONSIDER and COMMENT on this report and the District Deal model and potential programme;
- b) CONSIDER and COMMENT on the proposed pilot District Deal with Ashford Borough Council; and
- c) RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council, and relevant Cabinet Members sign the District Deal with ABC once finalised.

Author Contact Details:

Report author/Relevant Director:

Katie Stewart
Director, Environment, Planning and Enforcement
Directorate Growth, Economy and Transport
Tel: 03000 418827
Email: katie.stewart@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

THE ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (ABC) – KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC) DISTRICT DELIVERY DEAL – DRAFT

1. OVERVIEW

The **Ashford Borough Council – Kent County Council Delivery Deal** is an agreement to work together to deliver better outcomes for residents and business of the borough for the district and, by extension, Kent.

The Deal has two main parts:

- **A commitment to focus the combined efforts of both councils on delivering key strategic projects – the ‘Big 8’ - that will help to deliver Ashford’s significant potential**
- **An agreement to improve the way the Councils work together to make sure that we deliver the best quality outcomes possible for residents and businesses**

The Delivery Deal will enable an innovative and pragmatic approach to joint working between the Councils that will best benefit those we serve.

2. CONTEXT

The Deal is set within the context of increased budget pressures for local authorities on the one hand, but also increased opportunities for devolution of funding and responsibilities to local authorities via Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the Government’s wider localism agenda. Such opportunities demand an increasingly mature and sophisticated response from local government at county and district level.

The Deal is an opportunity for Ashford and Kent to build a new and even stronger relationship to deliver an ambitious programme of quality, sustainable economic growth. The Deal will play to the strengths of both the district – with its local knowledge and strong focus on delivery – and the county – with the critical mass and strategic influence it offers by bringing together the 12 districts. In so doing, the Deal will demonstrate the strengths of two-tier government.

As such, the Deal will better enable Ashford to realise its key role in the economic future of Kent. The town’s population grew 23% in the ten years to 2011, and jobs growth over the same period was significantly faster than the UK, south-east or Kent average. Ashford’s role will continue to grow as an important and vibrant commercial centre between London and the continent, with a range of facilities and attractions that reflect that status. Ashford is in many ways the gateway to East Kent and its strongest engine for growth.

The Deal sets out a shared commitment between KCC and ABC to not only economic growth, but a better quality of life for the residents of Ashford.

3. THE DEAL

The principles underpinning the Deal are:

- **Shared objectives and accountability:** the members and officers within ABC and KCC will share a common set of objectives and agenda, as well as the responsibility for delivery of the Deal outcomes.
- **Quality:** the Borough Council's agenda is to deliver quality places, jobs and services both to benefit local residents and businesses and to encourage confidence and further investment in the Borough.
- **Innovation and creativity:** old problems need new and creative solutions – the two Councils need to innovate and learn together if they are to deliver the best outcomes for the area, and best practice that can be used more widely around Kent.
- **Pragmatism:** the Deal is intended to give members and officers an opportunity to take decisions in as pragmatic a way as possible and to reduce bureaucracy where possible.

This Deal is intended to be a living document. The outcomes will be regularly monitored and the Plan refreshed on an annual basis.

The Deal will operate on two levels:

- a. **Delivery of key strategic projects** – using the new way of working to achieving a short but deliverable set of actions/projects defined and reviewed on an annual basis
- b. **Better ways of working together to deliver shared priorities** – including more streamlined governance; improved service delivery; and the space for innovation

4. STRATEGIC DELIVERY OF KEY STRATEGIC PROJECTS: A DELIVERY DEAL

The authorities are already working closely to deliver major projects of shared importance; however, there is scope for improvement and there is a strong desire by both authorities to strengthen a shared single-minded focus on delivery. This needs

the clear commitment of members and officers and a process that provides the accountability needed so that projects are delivered.

The “Big 8” priorities are eight strategic projects with the greatest potential to unlock the borough’s potential to play this role and thus contribute to the future of Kent and Medway more generally.

Combined, the Big 8 have **the potential to unlock an estimated 13,650 jobs and over 13,600 homes** over the life of the projects.

These “**Big 8**” shared priorities are detailed below.

	Delivery Priority
DD1.	Delivery of Chilmington Green – including completion of legal agreements; delivery of A28 improvements; agreement of Design Code; phase 1 masterplanning and establishment of Community Management Organisation
DD2.	Construction of Ashford College – including completion of land assembly; build programme; input into curriculum planning and opening
DD3.	Ashford International Station Spurs Project – including completing the design work needed; finalising the funding package and working with all partners to secure delivery with minimum disruption to services
DD4.	Enabling the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy – working with the Company and funding partners to scope and then deliver the project
DD5.	Creation of leisure and commercial scheme for Elwick Place – including completion of land transfers; helping securing commitment from leisure operators and an acceptable scheme design; putting public realm management arrangements in place and delivery of associated town centre parking
DD6.	Potential expansion of the Designer Outlet – full consideration of scheme and its relationship with the town centre; if permission is granted work with partners to deliver project, including environmental enhancements en route to the town centre and town centre projects
DD7.	Construction of J10a of M20 – work to achieve acceptable design; finalise funding arrangements; co-ordinate with consideration of related development and work with partners – especially Highways England - to deliver scheme
DD8.	Development of the Commercial Quarter into a commercial centre for Kent – complete public realm works; bring forward phase 1 office development and associated land transfers; work to fund and create starter space for new users in existing and expanded buildings of interest

The authorities will be building on existing joint working, including collaboration through the Kent Environment Strategy, new ways of delivering waste services through Mid-Kent Waste Partnership, in order to further build new ways of working. In order to better achieve these shared priorities, the authorities will put in place new ways of working including the following:

	Operational Priorities – better ways of working
THEME 1: MORE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH	
OD1.	A streamlined, evidence-based strategic infrastructure framework (the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework) that aligns with and supports the emerging Ashford Local Plan.
OD2.	A stronger emphasis on Design Quality in all new public buildings which will include refreshing and recommitting to the Design Protocol for Ashford which sets a benchmark for ABC/KCC commissioned public building projects, whilst providing value for the public purse. In addition, the authorities will explore the scope for ABC to use its urban design skills and experience of design review and public involvement in design workshops to assist KCC in providing a county-wide support service at the early stages of KCC capital project delivery.
OD3.	A clear and robust CIL and s106 strategy with early agreement on the level of contributions required to enable social and physical infrastructure required to be delivered, without undermining scheme viability or reduced build costs that would lead to poor design quality.
OD4.	Strategic coordination of Council property management as a pilot for “One Public Estate” programme and an agreed approach to the transfer of land owned by each Council on an existing use value basis where there are wider, strategic public benefits of regeneration, transport improvement etc. to be achieved.
OD5.	Reciprocal consultation on strategic planning applications and other strategic planning matters that impact on both authorities that fall within the district
OD6.	Coordinated commissioning of health and social care infrastructure , working together from the earliest stages of developments to deliver quality health and social care infrastructure -including regular consultation between commissioning teams in delivering outcomes and an emphasis on working together to design in health care to projects from the outset.
OD7.	Jointly identifying ways to deliver the quality, diversity and scale of housing required to meet the needs of current and future residents, integrating commissioning plans for supporting infrastructure, and exploring

	recently developed models, such as the private rented sector (PRS) model, to provide a step change in housing delivery.
THEME 2: A MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO HIGHWAYS TRANSPORT AND WASTE	
OD8.	A joint approach to street maintenance, highway verge and roundabout maintenance with scope to review the frequency and quality of maintenance, including development and maintenance of gateway approaches as well as management of town centre spaces.
OD9.	More coordinated enforcement of lorry parking and minor incidents to provide more effective responses to keeping streets in Ashford safe.
OD10.	Exploring roll-out of the KCC caretaker scheme to the Ashford Town Centre Action Team to explore building on the delegated model in place for town centre maintenance of soft landscape, including regular joint, on-site town centre reviews to monitor progress.
OD11.	Strategic coordination and regular review of recycling and waste management to work with both KCC Waste Management and the Kent Resource Partnership to explore the potential for new recycling markets, increasing the number of materials that can be recycled at the kerbside.
THEME 3: DELIVERING QUALITY OF PLACE	
OD12.	Joint commitment to playing a leading role in promoting health and well-being – continuing to focus and strengthen the Ashford Health and Well-being Board, with the appropriate dedicated support on both the part of the County and District. The Board has a crucial role co-ordinating the provision of facilities and the commissioning of services to ‘join up’ our approach to creating a healthier Borough.
OD13.	Coordinated approach and campaign to encouraging outdoor leisure and active travel , including promoting Ashford as a cycling town to help promote the benefits of cycling; complete missing parts of the cycling and pedestrian network; and encourage green transport and healthy lifestyles.
OD14.	A jointly prepared and agreed strategic framework for cultural and creative industries in Ashford that confirms the Borough’s role in the wider Kent picture. This work will ensure that the Kent and Medway Cultural Strategy 2015-2023 reflects and supports delivery of the Ashford Cultural Strategy.
OD15.	Exploration of a more collaborative approach to use of intelligence in delivering trading standards , including an improved service for the delivery of licensing

5. DELIVERY

There will be a **District Deal Board** which brings together the Leader and Chief Executive of the District Council, as well as the Leader and Corporate Director for KCC. The Board will meet on a biannual basis to drive delivery of the District Deal and make sure that detailed outcomes are being achieved.

The **Strategic Delivery Board** is made up of a wider group of organisations operating in Ashford with the specific role of managing delivery of the strategic projects – the ‘Big 8’ – and will meet on a quarterly basis.

Supporting these Boards will be a **Strategic Officer Coordination Group**, which will call on relevant officers from each Council. The Group will be responsible for coordinating implementation of the Deal. The Group will meet on a bi-monthly basis, and it will include officers covering the following agendas:

- Economic development and regeneration
- Housing
- Strategic Planning
- Environment
- Property and asset management
- Highways, transport and waste
- Arts and culture
- Town centre management
- Health and well-being

Figure 1: Governance of the ABC District Deal



An action plan will be produced, and the Deal will be monitored according to outputs specified by theme and outcomes. Regular progress reports will be provided to the District Deal Board.

Within each authority, there will be a senior responsible officer (SRO) identified and whom will be accountable for ensuring that their authority is delivering against commitments made in this Deal. The nominated SROs are:

- Katie Stewart (KCC)
- Richard Alderton (ABC)

Each authority will take responsibility for ensuring that sufficient staff capacity is dedicated to the objectives agreed in this Deal. Any further resource requirements will be proposed to and agreed by the District Deal Board.

The authorities will work closely to promote progress against their wider joint strategic objectives and to communicate the benefits achieved through this District Deal.

6. SIGNED

Leader, Ashford Borough Council
 Leader and/or Relevant Cabinet Members, Kent County Council