

Agenda Item No: 13
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 15th June 2017
Report Title: **The District Deal - 2017/18**
Report Author & Job Title: Richard Alderton, Director of Place and Space
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gerry Clarkson



Summary:

The District Deal has been in place for a year. The Deal is an informal agreement between the Borough and County Council's to improve the way we work together to deliver operational improvements to the complementary services we deliver and strategic projects of importance primarily to Ashford but also county-wide. Now is the time to review progress against the targets set and to consider what areas to prioritise for attention next year.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: All wards

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- (i) Note this report and welcome the progress made since the original District Deal was signed;**
- (ii) Agree the focus for next year's refreshed District Deal set out in this report and its appendix**

Policy Overview: The District Deal is designed to make continuous improvements on the way the Borough and County Council works, especially to deliver key strategic priorities set out in the Council's corporate plan.

Financial Implications: No additional implications beyond existing Council budgets.

Legal Implications None

Equalities Impact Assessment No specific new actions or policy changes are proposed in the District Deal – in short it is a commitment to work better together on existing issues and priorities.

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The District Deal - 2017/18

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

1. In September 2015 Cabinet agreed the first version of the District Deal. This is the only District Deal that exists in Kent and is testament to the close working relationship the two authorities enjoy and their shared commitment to deliver quality services and major new projects in Ashford. The District Deal provides a good basis to work together to seek continuous improvement in the way the two Council's work for the benefit of the community in the Borough.

Background

2. The Borough Council and the County Council enjoy good relations at a political and operational level and have achieved much working together on a wide variety of projects in recent years. But both are complex organisations, each with its own procedures and priorities and inevitably issues crop up which could be tackled better and faster.
3. The Deal is not a legally binding agreement but a short, clear statement of the Council's shared commitment to work together in key areas. The updated Deal will be considered by the Cabinets of each authority and, if it is agreed, will be formally signed by the leaders of each Council.
4. The Deal has two main parts:
 - a. A commitment to focus the combined efforts of both councils on delivering key strategic projects;
 - b. An agreement to improve the way the Council's work together to make sure that we deliver the best quality outcomes possible for residents and businesses
5. The original Deal focused on the Big 8 projects. There is no doubt that this focus has helped to deliver several projects where both Council's share an interest – achieving the funding needed for both the IPS station signalling and for M20 junction 10a are prime examples.
6. Operational improvements that were achieved in year one include the successful and pioneering approach to enforcing overnight lorry parking – an intractable problem but one where Ashford has tried to lead the way. Relations between the two Councils in managing the town centre environment and the role of the successful Town Centre Action team is another good example.

7. Not as much progress has been made in some areas that was hoped – negotiations over land transactions where there is a mutual interest have resulted in good outcomes but after significant delays. In some areas of both Council's the District Deal is not fully understood and hence does not always attract the priority it deserves. This is an area for improvement over the next year and a workshop event is planned to raise awareness amongst staff in both Councils.

New priorities

8. The refreshed District Deal and review of the last year is attached. It has been produced as a Powerpoint presentation to aid dissemination to staff in both Councils. In summary, it commits to completing the delivery of the Big 8 and following up next steps and two progressing two further ambitious strategic projects – Conningbrook Park and Newtown Works.
9. The operational priorities for the next year are:
 - the delivery of the comprehensive Chilmington protocol which outlines how county and borough staff involved in the many areas of responsibility affecting Chilmington will work together to deliver a high quality place and a strong Community Management Trust;
 - delivering broadband through BDUKs phase 2 programme in the Borough;
 - working with Town centre developers and investors to integrate infrastructure needed and create high quality public realm around new developments.

Governance

10. On a day to day operational basis the Deal is overseen by a small officer group – extending the remit of an existing group that already exists and works to support the Strategic Project Delivery Board that works to speed delivery of the 'Big 8' projects.
11. The officer group reports to the District Deal Delivery Board drawing on leading members from both authorities which meets twice a year to review progress against the objectives set and take any corrective action needed.
12. The County Council will also be formally considering this refreshed District Deal for 2017/18 in the coming weeks.

Risk Assessment

13. The 'District Deal' is not a legally binding document – it is a statement of political intent to tackle a range of project delivery challenges and to improve the ways the two Councils operate together.

14. There is a risk that expectations are raised and the Deal fails to live up to these – in short a reputational risk. The achievements in year one have reduced this risk but similar success needs to be achieved in year two.

Handling

15. Assuming both Council's endorse the revisions to the Deal, it will be formally signed by the two Council leaders. Each authority will need to take responsibility for 'cascading' the updated Deal through their authority so that staff at operational levels understand the nature and strength of the commitments made in it.

Conclusion

16. The District Deal is a real attempt to build on the strength of an existing relationship to deliver even better results for the community in the future. Its success will depend on the commitment of members and officers of both authorities. The oversight proposed for the delivery of the Deal should help to make sure that the best intentions set out in this updated document have a good chance of being met.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- (i) Note this report and welcome the progress made since the original District Deal was signed;**
- (ii) Agree the focus for next year's refreshed District Deal set out in this report and its appendix**

Portfolio Holder's Views

These will be relayed at the meeting.

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The
ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

DISTRICT DELIVERY DEAL



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ASHFORD





OVERVIEW

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

The deal has 2 parts:

- A focus on key strategic projects
- An improved way of working together

DELIVERY PRIORITY

- 001.** 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
- 002.** Construction of Ashford College – including completion of land assembly; build programme; input into curriculum planning and opening
- 003.** 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
- 004.** Enabling the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy – working with the Company and funding partners to scope and then deliver the project
- 005.** 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
- 006.** Potential expansion of the Designer Outlet – full consideration of scheme and its relationship with the town centre; now permission is granted work with partners to deliver project, including environmental enhancements en route to the town centre and town centre projects
- 007.** Construction of J10a, 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
- 008.** Development of the Commercial Quarter into a commercial centre for Kent – complete public realm works; bring forward 1 office development and create starter buildings

THEME 2: A MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO HIGHWAYS TRANSPORT AND WASTE

- 008.** 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.
- 009.** More coordinated enforcement of lorry parking and minor incidents to provide more effective responses to keeping streets in Ashford safe.
- 0010.** 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.
- 0011.** Sustaining and enhancing waste recycling performance through strong strategic partnership working under the auspices of the Mid Kent Waste Partnership, to deliver a high quality and seamless service to Kent residents to explore the potential for new recycling markets, increasing the number of materials that can be recycled at the kerbside.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES: BETTER WAYS OF WORKING

THEME 1: MORE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH

- 001.** 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.
- 002.** A stronger emphasis on Design Quality which will include a review of the Design Protocol for Ashford, which seeks to set a benchmark for ABC/KCC commissioned public building projects. 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.
- 003.** A clear and robust CIL and s106 strategy with early agreement on the level of contributions to be sought 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.
- 004.** A commitment to the strategic coordination of Council property management as a pilot for One Public Estate programme. In considering the transfer of land owned by each Council to support the Councils collective objectives, on a case by case basis both Councils will consider the extent to which economic regeneration and community factors are to be taken account when assessing 'best consideration' under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 005.** Reciprocal consultation on strategic planning applications and other strategic planning matters to impact on both

THEME 3: DELIVERING QUALITY OF PLACE

- 0012.** 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.
- 0013.** Coordinated approach and campaign to encouraging outdoor leisure and active travel, as part of the borough's integrated transport strategy, 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.
- 0014.** 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.
- 0015.** Exploration of a more collaborative approach to use of intelligence in delivering trading standards and public protection, including an improved service for the delivery of licensing.



2: FOCUS ON DELIVERY

The Deal focuses on delivery of the joint strategic priorities “The Big 8” for the borough of Ashford.

Since April 2016, the Deal has also focused on delivery of 5 Operational Priorities, identified from the original 15 set out in the District Deal.



2: FOCUS ON DELIVERY

Delivery Priority

DD1	Chilmington Green
DD2	Ashford College
DD3	Ashford International Station Spurs Project
DD4	Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy
DD5	Elwick Place
DD6	Designer Outlet Expansion
DD7	Construction of J10a, M20
DD8	Commercial Quarter

Operational Priority

OD3	A clear and robust CIL and s106 strategy
OD4	Strategic coordination of property management
OD8	Joint approach to street maintenance & highway verge
OD9	Coordinated enforcement of lorry parking
OD 10	Caretaker scheme to TCAT

Governance

ABC/KCC DISTRICT DEAL BOARD

To drive/steer and oversee delivery of new ways of working as well as outcomes from the Delivery Deal Projects.

- Leaders
- Chief Executive/Corporate Director

MEETS TWICE
A YEAR



ABC/KCC STRATEGIC DELIVERY BOARD

To drive/steer and oversee delivery of the Delivery Deal Projects.

Relevant portfolio holders and senior officers, including:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Property/Asset Management
- Development Investment/Strategic Planning
- Highways, Transport and Waste
- Arts and Culture

MEETS
QUARTERLY



ABC/KCC STRATEGIC OFFICER COORDINATION GROUP

Relevant operational officers, including:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Property/Asset Management
- Development Investment/Strategic Planning
- Highways, Transport and Waste
- Arts and Culture

MEETS BI-
MONTHLY



SUCCESS

Overarching successes

The “Big 8” and 5 priority areas have seen KCC and ABC working together in innovative ways.

Officers in both organisations have found new ways of working together, collaborating across both authorities.

The Ashford District Deal is a model of best practice used by Kent County Council to demonstrate how the County and District Authorities can work together.

The deal illustrates how two tier government can collectively deliver across a range of shared strategic priorities.

The Leaderships' collective commitment to the Deal has given licence to officers across both organisations to explore more practical, innovative and effective ways of working.

The existence of the Deal and demonstration of a mutual commitment between ABC and KCC has begun to 'unlock' issues before they occur or require escalation.

The Deal has identified areas of existing good practice between teams within the organisations as well as areas for improvement.

It is clear that there has been areas of significant progress, there are also lessons to be learnt and more work to be done.



LESSONS LEARNT

Principles of the District Deal are embraced at the highest level of both organisations however filtering this way of working down through all levels and all teams, in both organisations remains a challenge.

Some issues are complex, they require bespoke solutions and are not often replicable. An agreed 'protocol' approach does not suit every situation.



REFRESHING THE DEAL

Significant progress has been made on the agreed Delivery and Operational Priorities set out at the start of the District Deal. With this in mind the District Deal officer team and leadership has agreed to set new areas for focus during 2017/ 2018.

6 :

AREAS STILL IN FOCUS

The Ashford key strategic projects, the “Big 8” remain at the heart of the District Deal. These projects have the greatest collective ability to unlock the borough’s potential and contribute to the future growth and economic success of Kent and Medway.

DD1	Chilmington Green
DD2	Ashford College
DD3	Ashford International Station Spurs Project
DD4	Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy
DD5	Elwick Place
DD6	Designer Outlet Expansion
DD7	Construction of J10a, M20
DD8	Commercial Quarter



NEW AREAS OF FOCUS

New areas of strategic priority have emerged in the past 12 months of the District Deal.

New Delivery Priorities

DD9	<p>Newtown Works</p> <p>This major regeneration opportunity has strategic and historic importance both for the town and the wider County. The Borough and County Councils will be working closely together with the landowner to explore options and create a viable project to secure the long term future of this important heritage asset.</p>
DD10	<p>Conningbrook Lakes Country Park</p> <p>This country park is an asset of strategic importance to the Borough and, as detailed plans are drawn up to create a great visitor attraction, the two Councils will need to work closely together to bring forward the next phase of this park.</p>

Existing District Deal Operational Delivery Priorities for focus

OD6	Coordinated commissioning of health and social care infrastructure , working together from the earliest stages of residential developments to deliver quality health and social care infrastructure. This includes regular consultation between commissioning teams and an emphasis on working together to design in health care to projects from the very outset
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 encourage outdoor leisure and active travel , including promoting Ashford as a cycling town to help promote the benefits of cycling; work to complete missing parts of Ashford’s cycling and pedestrian network; and encourage green transport and healthy lifestyles
OD15	Exploration of a more collaborative approach to use of intelligence in delivering trading standards , including an improved service for the delivery of licensing

New Operational Priorities

In 2016, new areas of focus emerged that had not featured in the original District Deal signed in 2015. The District Deal board considers the following areas are of such strategic importance to both Ashford and in some case Kent more widely, that they should be added to the District Deal Operational Priorities.

OD16	Broadband Improving Broadband infrastructure by delivering Kent's BDUK Phase Two programme. Promoting Ashford as a beacon area for FTTP delivery and fibre roll out
OD 17	Chilmington Protocol Develop and agree a Protocol to support the delivery of the infrastructure, providing officers with an approach to working which promotes partnership, flexibility, creativity and openness. This protocol will be a pilot for a new way of working which promotes quality design from the outset of a development.
OD18	Ashford Town Centre Developers Group Developing a joint innovative approach to infrastructure delivery and site coordination between town centre developers



8: NEXT STEPS

- District Deal Board approval
- Kent County Council Member sign off
- Ashford Borough Council Member sign off
- PR Opportunities

Appendix 1- Specific Successes

OD3- A clear and robust CIL and s106 strategy

- With s106 continuing to play a key role, both authorities have developed an agreed approach to identifying eligible projects and a working model for resolving contributions issues on a site by site basis for strategic development. The workshop held to agree a joint position on contributions requested for the Powergen site is an example of this approach in practice

OD4- Strategic Coordination of Property Management

- Terms were agreed for the relevant land transfers at Elwick Place, Commercial Quarter and Powergen, with lessons learnt about the levels of information and transparency needed to progress complex negotiations quickly.
- Ashford Borough Council have reviewed the way it holds property and landholdings data to greater effect. The new collated data will be uploaded onto the KCC EPIMS system, as part of a wider One Public Estate Programme

OD8- Joint approach to street maintenance and highway verges

- Positive approaches have been taken by both authorities on the newly developed Fly Tipping Protocol and the Kent Resource Partnership. Teams in both authorities are demonstrating coordination on waste, street cleansing and cold weather salting.
- Verge planting at Junction 9 is being coordinated as a direct result of officer collaboration

OD9- Coordinated enforcement of lorry parking

- The authorities are coordinating efforts on Operation Kindle and the new Enforcement Protocol on lorry parking. This has resulted in an increase in the use of the Ashford lorry park
- The Ashford Local Plan provides for increased overnight lorry parking provision at Waterbrook
- The authorities provided a coordinated response to the Operation Stack consultation and continue to work together to lobby for a long term solution for Kent

OD10- Exploring the roll out of the Caretaker Scheme to TCAT

- Ashford rural parishes have rolled out the KCC caretaker scheme and the authorities are collaborating on work plans for the new Ashford grounds maintenance company, Aspire.
- T-CAT now undertake independent maintenance within the town centre where there are no moving vehicles. T-CAT also provide support and additional resource to KCC maintenance teams where KCC have road closures and appropriate insurance in place

A strong operational relationship between the two authorities, established through the District Deal is credited with significant progress in the Council's Big 8 strategic priorities:

DD1- Chilmington Green

This is one of the biggest developments underway in the Country. Over the next 25 years or so a new community will be created based on two key themes the Council has demanded throughout:

1. strong design quality standards to create a fine place; and
2. an innovative Community Management Organisation to own and run open spaces and many local facilities.

Construction of the road accesses and other infrastructure works is already underway.

DD 2- Ashford College Campus

The new Ashford College is under construction and the first phase will open to students this autumn, 2017. It will provide a wide range of improved training opportunities for local people and the skills needed as the area's economy develops.

DD3- Station Spurs

The new generation of Eurostar trains demand revised signalling arrangements in order to access the International Station. The Borough and County Councils have secured funding of over £10m needed for these works from the South-East LEP and is working with Network Rail and the rail operators to make sure the works needed are in place with minimum disruption to the service.

DD4- Jasmin Vardimon

This project, to help create the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy, is being led by Kent County Council working with the Arts Council England and Ashford Borough Council. The intention is to create a purpose-built new training base and academy for this internationally-renown company, currently based in the Stour Centre.

DD5- Elwick Place

This development, including cinema, restaurants and a hotel, is due to be on site later this year, 2017.

DD6- Designer Outlet Expansion

This project – promoted by owners McArthur Glen – will substantially expand the centre and bring new, international brands to the town. Work is programmed to start later this year, 2017.

DD7- Junction 10a

The Government has recently announced that it will support the gap in funding J10a. This funding is in addition to the substantial funding already secured by the Borough and County Councils and other partners from the South East LEP. The independent local examination process is now underway with the junction due to open during 2019.

DD8- The Commercial Quarter

Construction of the first major office building and the first investment of this type for many years in Ashford's town centre is now underway.