

# **Dartford Sustainable Community Strategy**

General Assembly of the Council on 28 July 2008 resolved that the Corporate Plan 2008-2011 be approved and that it be used as the Dartford "Area Chapter" for the Dartford and Gravesham Sustainable Community Strategy and the Kent Agreement 2.

# **DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2008 - 2011**

The Corporate Plan sets out the Dartford focussed elements of the Dartford and Gravesham Sustainable Community Strategy. An overall vision for the area has been developed which is:-

**To make Dartford “the place of quality and choice, a place where people choose to live, work and enjoy their leisure time”.**

Both the Corporate Plan and the Dartford and Gravesham Sustainable Community Strategy develop this vision under the following five themes:

- Economic Development
- Health and Well Being
- Safer Communities
- Environment and Transport
- Housing and Stronger Communities

In addition the Corporate Plan includes the following theme:

- A Council Performing Strongly

This document sets out the priorities for Dartford under each of these themes taking into account Council priorities, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Kent Agreement 2 (The Local Area Agreement). The Plan also reflects the priorities set out in key documents such as the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Plan and the Kent Health Inequalities Action Plan.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **STRATEGIC AIM: TO ENSURE THAT REGENERATION IN DARTFORD IS SUSTAINABLE AND OF BENEFIT TO ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES**

Dartford is at the heart of the Kent Thames Gateway regeneration area. The Council is determined to create a Borough with a prosperous local economy which has a sufficient range of jobs and training opportunities to enable local residents to access local employment. The financial services, environmental technologies, creative industries and construction/logistics sectors have been identified as the ones most likely to lead to sustained growth of Dartford's economy, taking advantage of its strategic road and rail links and Government objectives for the Thames Gateway. A vibrant town centre at the heart of the area's economic, social and cultural life is also a key objective for regeneration in Dartford.

Dartford has seen a significant growth in jobs; some 18,000 additional jobs were created over the period 1995 – 2005. These jobs have tended to be in the retail, logistics and office sectors. At the same time there has been a decline in the traditional manufacturing and primary industries. The development of Ebbsfleet and The Bridge offers opportunities to grow the financial services and high technology sectors of the Dartford economy, as does the continued expansion of the Crossways business park. The Council's approach is to aim to provide sufficient new jobs to at least match the number of new economically active residents coming into the Borough, whilst providing opportunities for those who currently commute to work outside the Borough, which would mean creating two jobs for every home built, or approximately 32,000 jobs.

According to the 2001 Census only 41% of the jobs in the Borough were filled by residents and 55% of residents commuted to work, mainly in London. This would appear to demonstrate that either the type of jobs which residents want are not being created locally or that they are not able to compete for the jobs being created. Qualification levels in Dartford are lower than the national and regional averages. For example 37.8% of Dartford's working population is qualified to at least NVQ Level 3 or above, compared to a South East average of 49.4% and a Great Britain average of 45.3%. The 2005 Thames Gateway skills audit suggested that 60% of the new jobs created in the area would require Level 3 qualifications or above. Securing a tertiary education presence in the area is therefore an objective for Dartford.

Dartford town centre does not presently fulfil its potential as a centre for community life and commerce. However a number of new developments and environmental improvements are planned which will transform the centre and confirm its role as a shopping, entertainment and service centre for the Borough as a whole.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- ED 1.** Develop the Ebbsfleet Valley, and in particular the commercial element of the site.
- ED 2.** Improve the economic performance of Dartford Town Centre against the standard range of healthcheck indicators.
- ED 3.** Improve access to jobs for local people through skills, training and other initiatives.
- ED 4.** Create opportunities for growth in the financial services, environmental technologies, creative industries and construction/logistics sectors of the Dartford economy, particularly at Ebbsfleet Valley, The Bridge and Crossways.

**ACTIONS:**

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
Develop the Ebbsfleet Valley, and in particular the commercial element of the site.	<b>ED1 (a)</b> Ensure that the Quarter Master Plans for the site reflect the level of commercial development required by the Council.	Master plans for the Ebbsfleet site reflect the Council's requirements in terms of commercial development.	Development Control Manager in partnership with Gravesham Borough Council and the Kent Thameside Delivery Board (KTDB)
	<b>ED1 (b)</b> Monitor project milestones for the Ebbsfleet Valley to ensure that build programme is achieved.	Development of the business district under way.	Development Control Manager in partnership with Land Securities and the KTDB
Improve the economic performance of Dartford Town Centre against the	<b>ED2 (a)</b> Produce finalised Area Action Plan for the Town Centre.	Action Plan agreed by Government.	Planning Policy Manager

standard range of healthcheck indicators.	<b>ED2 (b)</b> Undertake negotiations with developers and approve planning applications for the redevelopment of key sites within the Town Centre.	Development of key sites within the Town Centre underway or completed.	Development Control Manager
	<b>ED2 (c)</b> Work with partners to assemble development sites, including through the use of Compulsory Purchase where necessary.	Development commenced or ready to commence on all key sites.	Regeneration Director
	<b>ED2 (d)</b> Secure funding to implement regeneration projects in the Town Centre.	All AAP projects funded.	Project Delivery Manager
Improve access to jobs for local people through skills, training and other initiatives.	<b>ED3 (a)</b> Implement Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent Thameside.	The number of people in the Borough with NVQ Level 3 and above has increased.	Project Delivery Manager, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and Kent County Council
	<b>ED3 (b)</b> Develop the multiversity concept in Kent Thameside, building on current educational facilities, the Nucleus and the proposed centre for training in sustainable construction.	Core elements of the multiversity concept in place, including the centre for training in sustainable construction.	Managing Director in partnership with KTDB and National Government

	<b>ED3 (c)</b> Implement local employment initiatives.	Schemes in place to ensure the employment of local people on regeneration sites.	Development Control Manager
Create opportunities for growth in the financial services, environmental technologies, creative industries and construction/logistics sectors of the Dartford economy, particularly at Ebbsfleet Valley, The Bridge and Crossways.	<b>ED4 (a)</b> Work with Locate in Kent and private developers to increase the overall size of the sectors outlined	Increase in the percentage of the workforce working in the key sectors of the Dartford economy.	Planning Policy Manager in partnership with Locate in Kent and KTDB
	<b>ED4 (b)</b> Ensure that key employment sites are available for development.	Development under way on all key employment sites.	Planning Policy Manager

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 164 Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 3 or higher</b>	<b>37.8%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>LI CP/ED 1 Jobs created at Ebbsfleet</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>1088*</b>	<b>1632*</b>
<b>LI CP/ED 2 Increase in Dartford Town Centre's position in the Kent hierarchy</b>	<b>16th</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>13th</b>
<b>LI CP/ED 3 % of the workforce in the (a) finance, sector, (b) distribution, (c) transport and (d) tourism related sectors of the Dartford economy</b>	<b>(a) 15.6%</b> <b>(b) 36.6%</b> <b>(c) 7.5%</b> <b>(d) 7%</b>	<b>17%</b> <b>37%</b> <b>8%</b> <b>7%</b>	<b>20.6%</b> <b>37.5%</b> <b>8.5%</b> <b>7.4%</b>	<b>25.6%</b> <b>38%</b> <b>8.5%</b> <b>7.8%</b>

\*Cumulative target

The following National Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

**NI 151: Overall Employment rate (working-age)**

**NI 152: Working age people on out of work benefits**

**NI 171: New business registration rate**

**NI 172: Percentage of small businesses in an area showing employment growth**

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

### **STRATEGIC AIM: TO REDUCE OVERALL HEALTH INEQUALITY IN DARTFORD AND TO PROVIDE FOR A RICH AND VARIED QUALITY OF LIFE**

Dartford has the highest life expectancy gap, between the average age of death in deprived wards and that in the most affluent, in Kent, at some 14 years. This is higher than in some inner London Boroughs. The problem is concentrated in wards such as Joyce Green, Bean and Darenth, Littlebrook, Stone, Greenhithe and Swanscombe. Since 1998 teenage conception rates in the 15 – 17 age group has fallen by 2.3%, however in Kent as a whole the reduction has been 9.6%. Dartford has one of the highest percentages of smokers in Kent with 27.1 % of the population smoking, compared to 24.6% in Kent as a whole. This rises to nearly 40% in Swanscombe. Only 19.8% of the population eat healthily, compared to 25.4% across Kent. There are also lower levels of adult physical activity with 8.9% of the population undertaking at least 30 minutes of physical activity three times per week, compared to 11.2% in Kent as a whole, and 11.6% in England. Childhood obesity rates in Dartford, at Reception year are 11.6% compared to 9.4% for Kent as a whole. The Council, the West Kent PCT and the Voluntary Sector have been active in developing programmes in the area such as “Don’t Sit Get Fit” and a new health coordinator has been appointed.

The Council has made large scale investments in sport and leisure facilities across the Borough, including Princes Park Community Stadium, Acacia Hall, and Dartford Judo Club. Further improvements are planned to its range of Leisure and Recreation facilities, including a new swimming pool and sports hall, improvements and additions to Central Park and the creation of footpaths and cycleways.

The Council’s planning policies are designed to reduce the reliance on cars and encourage walking and cycling, by locating homes close to facilities, providing an improved public transport network and creating an attractive network of footpaths and green spaces.

The Council recognises the opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A number of venues in the Borough have been selected as possible training facilities for the Games.

The Orchard Theatre is an important community asset and adds to the variety of attractions available to residents and visitors. The Council’s aim is to tie the theatre in more strongly to the town centre’s overall evening offer.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

**HW 1.** Reduce overall health inequality in the Borough.

**HW 2.** Increase the opportunities for participating in sporting, cultural and leisure activities.

## ACTIONS:

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
Reduce overall health inequality in the Borough.	<b>HW1 (a)</b> In partnership with organisations such as the PCT introduce campaigns to encourage greater participation in sport and leisure activities in the Borough.	An increase in participation rates.	Leisure Services Manager in partnership with the Dartford Health Action Team
	<b>HW1 (b)</b> Introduce a Borough wide "Don't Sit Get Fit" campaign.	A reduction in the levels of childhood obesity in the Borough.	Environmental Health Manager in partnership with the Dartford Health Action Team
	<b>HW1 (c)</b> Introduce health promotion campaigns to reduce smoking prevalence.	Reduction in smoking prevalence.	Environmental Health Manager in partnership with the Dartford Health Action Team
	<b>HW1 (d)</b> Introduce projects targeted at those most at risk of teenage pregnancy.	Reduction in the teenage conception rate.	Environmental Health Manager in partnership with the Dartford Health Action Team

<p>Increase the opportunities for participating in sporting, cultural and leisure activities.</p>	<p><b>HW2 (a)</b> Use community facilities such as Princes Park and Acacia Hall to encourage people to become involved in sport. Expand schemes such as the Dartford Heath, Darent Country Park and Darent Wood volunteering schemes.</p>	<p>Higher rates of participation in sporting and voluntary activities.</p>	<p>Leisure Services Manager</p>
	<p><b>HW2 (b)</b> Develop the Darent Valley footpath as a key link between the Dartford Marshes, Central Park and the Brooklands Lakes.</p>	<p>The Darent Valley footpath open, linking key sites along its length.</p>	<p>Project Delivery Manager</p>
	<p><b>HW2 (c)</b> Develop plans for a cultural quarter around the Orchard Theatre site.</p>	<p>The concept of the Cultural Quarter agreed as a part of the Town Centre Area Action Plan.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Manager</p>

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation (LAA INDICATOR)</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>NI 55 Obesity in primary school age children in Reception (LAA INDICATOR)</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
<b>NI 112 Under 18 conception rate</b>	<b>43.3 per 1000</b>	<b>40 per 1000</b>	<b>37 per 1000</b>	<b>34 per 1000</b>
<b>NI 120 All age all cause mortality rate (LAA INDICATOR)</b>	<b>613 per 100,000 pop</b>	<b>575 per 100,000 pop</b>	<b>561 per 100,000 pop</b>	<b>548 per 100,000 pop</b>
<b>NI 123 Stopping smoking</b>	<b>30% of adult population smoke</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>LI CP/HW 1 Percentage of completed residential units with direct access to public open space</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>75%</b>

The following National Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

**NI 137: Healthy life expectancy at age 65**

**NI 173: People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits**

## SAFER COMMUNITIES

### STRATEGIC AIM: TO CREATE A SAFER BOROUGH IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK AND SOCIALISE

The Dartford and Gravesham Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has now published its Community Safety Plan for 2008 – 2011. The plan sets out its priorities for the area and actions which it intends to take over the next three years.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

**SC 1.** Increase public confidence.

**SC 2.** Reduce anti-social behaviour.

#### ACTIONS:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED	LEAD OFFICER
Increase public confidence.	<b>SC1 (a)</b> Improve the communication between communities and the CDRP through Parish Councils, community groups and the PACT panels.	X%* reduction in the percentage of people perceiving ASB as a problem.  *Awaiting CDRP agreement	Enforcement and Regulatory Services Manager in partnership with Dartford and Gravesham CDRP
Reduce anti-social behaviour.	<b>SC2 (a)</b> Tackle anti social behaviour caused by individuals or families through the Dartford and Gravesham multi agency anti social behaviour group.	Increased public confidence in the local agencies involved in tackling crime and to reduce the percentage of the public with a high level of perceived anti social behaviour in the local area to 15%.	Enforcement and Regulatory Services Manager in partnership with Dartford and Gravesham CDRP

	<p><b>SC2 (b)</b> Create designated alcohol control zones.</p>	<p>Reduction in alcohol related violence and street nuisance.</p>	<p>Enforcement and Regulatory Services Manager in partnership with Dartford and Gravesham CDRP</p>
	<p><b>SC2 (c)</b> Continue to run Grabbacab in Dartford Town Centre.</p>	<p>Reduction in the percentage of the public who perceive drug use/dealing or drunk and rowdy behaviour to be a problem in their area.</p>	<p>Enforcement and Regulatory Services Manager in partnership with Dartford and Gravesham CDRP</p>
	<p><b>SC2 (d)</b> Improve provision for teenagers and young people in parks and open spaces by providing suitable youth equipment such as multi use games areas and teen shelters.</p>	<p>Creation of safe accessible areas for young people of all ages.</p>	<p>Leisure Services Manager</p>

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 21 Dealing with local concerns about anti- social behaviour and crime by the local council and police (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>Awaiting baseline from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>
<b>NI 39 Rate of Hospital Admissions per 100,000 for Alcohol Related Harm (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>1024.4*</b>	<b>1089.6*</b>	<b>1148.6*</b>
<b>NI 117 16- 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>4.41%</b>	<b>4.15%</b>	<b>3.89%</b>	<b>3.63%</b>

\*(Target aimed at lowering a projected increasing trend)

The following National Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

**NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour**

**NI 37: Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area**

**NI 140: Fair treatment by local services**

## ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

**STRATEGIC AIM: TO PROMOTE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH IS ATTRACTIVE, ADAPTED TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHICH PROVIDES A REALISTIC CHOICE OF TRAVEL OPTIONS**

Dartford has a number of attractive assets, including its proximity to the Kent countryside, its parks and open spaces and its historic town centre. At the same time, its environment is compromised by its position on the strategic motorway network, which leads to congestion and pollution. The Council will continue to lobby for a Lower Thames Crossing, to reduce the amount of long-distance traffic needing to pass through Dartford on its way to destinations throughout Britain. In the meantime, it is necessary to pursue policies which mitigate these effects as far as possible.

In common with all other Councils, Dartford needs to play its part in dealing with the effects of climate change. These include measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, and planning to deal with the increased risk of flooding.

DEFRA figures show that domestic carbon dioxide emissions per capita in Dartford are 2.7 tonnes per annum. This is below the national mean of 2.86 tonnes. However the total carbon dioxide emissions per capita in Dartford amount to some 10.9 tonnes per annum. This compares to a national mean of 10.6 tonnes.

The Council has joined the Local Authorities Carbon Management Programme, which will lead to the adoption of a Carbon Management Action Plan in 2009. It will also pursue planning policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

The scale of development in Dartford offers new opportunities in terms of energy management and providing high quality living environments. The draft South East Plan has set a target of providing 15,700 new homes in Dartford, over the period 2006-2026. This level of housing growth will require careful phasing to ensure that housing supply is related to infrastructure provision, in particular transport capacity, water supply and waste treatment, the creation of local jobs and the provision of green infrastructure. However the new development sites will also offer an opportunity to reduce energy use and emissions through the provision of zero carbon homes and through technologies such as micro generation of renewable energy and Combined Heat and Power plants.

A satisfaction survey of new developments in Dartford showed that whilst there were high levels of satisfaction with the area as a whole, lack of parking space and poor management of communal and landscaped areas were seen as problems. The Council will develop its policies for the layout, design and

aftercare of new developments to deal with these issues, and will implement these through the development control system.

Transport is a major issue for residents. In the 2006 General User Satisfaction Survey congestion was second only to crime in terms of the issues which needed to be improved. The new developments will increase pressure on the road system which cannot be met by building new roads. The emphasis in new development will therefore be on reducing the need for car use by increasing local employment opportunities, promoting local facilities and increasing accessibility by foot, bicycle and public transport. Fastrack routes A and B are now operational and passenger numbers have exceeded initial forecasts by some 50%. Additional routes will become operational over the coming years. The Green Grid is also being developed to link development areas across the Borough.

The fact remains that as the Dartford economy grows so will traffic. Studies have shown that if the level of development envisaged takes place, by 2026 journey times will have increased by 20%. A programme of transport schemes has been identified which will help to contain the impact of traffic growth and also provide public transport alternatives. Funding for this programme is to come from a variety of sources, including a strategic transport tariff on development and Central Government contributions.

The Council's new recycling scheme (2007/08) has increased the recycling of household waste to 30%. This is being followed in 2008/09 with a key waste minimisation initiative.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- ET 1.** Reduce carbon emissions.
- ET 2.** Ensure that development in Dartford is sustainable, with high standards of design, layout and energy efficiency.
- ET 3.** Manage transport demand in a sustainable way and increase travel options.
- ET 4.** Minimise the amount of waste requiring collection and disposal, and increase the amount of waste which is recycled.
- ET 5.** Ensure a high quality street scene.

**ACTIONS:**

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
Reduce carbon emissions.	<b>ET1 (a)</b> Work with developers, business and the local community to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint.	An 11% reduction in the carbon footprint.	Environmental Health Manager
Ensure that development in Dartford is sustainable, with high standards of design, layout and energy efficiency.	<b>ET2 (a)</b> Introduce appropriate planning policies and work with developers to reduce energy use and provide high quality living environments.	All major new development will reach at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and comply with the Council's planning policies for sustainable communities and sustainable development.	Planning Policy Manager in conjunction with Development Control Manager and Building Control Manager
Manage transport demand in a sustainable way and increase travel options in the area.	<b>ET3 (a)</b> Ensure that all eligible domestic and commercial developments make tariff contributions.	Tariff operational framework in place.  Tariff trajectory met and transport schemes being funded.	Development Control Manager
	<b>ET3 (b)</b> Increase travel options in the area. Expand Fastrack to include new development sites.	Fastrack Route C in place, with parts of Route D operational. Improvements to Dartford Interchange programmed, and first phase completed.	Planning Policy Manager in partnership with KTDB, KCC and Network Rail

	<b>ET3 (c)</b> Promote a pattern of development which ensures close links between homes and jobs and homes and facilities.	New developments created with a range of facilities and green links which promote walking and cycling.	Planning Policy Manager
Minimise the amount of waste requiring collection, and increase the amount of waste which is recycled.	<b>ET4 (a)</b> Fully implement the new recycling and waste minimisation scheme across the Borough.	Recycling figures in the top quartile for District Council performance.	Waste and Recycling Manager
Ensure a high quality street scene.	<b>ET5 (a)</b> Continue to work with the Cleaner Kent initiative and the Crime and Disorder reduction partnership to reduce fly tipping, graffiti and littering.	Met Kent Agreement 2 targets for street scene improvements.	Waste and Recycling Manager

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 188 Planning to Adapt to Climate Change (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>Level1</b>	<b>Level1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<b>NI 192 % Of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>LI CP/ET 1 % Of major new developments reaching Level 4 and above of the Building code</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>LI CP/ET 2 Strategic Transport Tariff contributions on trajectory</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Awaiting finalised trajectory</b>		

The following National Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>Awaiting baseline from KCC</b>			
<b>NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the area (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>10.6 Tons</b>	<b>10.2 tons</b>	<b>9.8 Tons</b>	<b>9.5 Tons</b>
<b>NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting) (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>

## **HOUSING AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

### **STRATEGIC AIM: TO FACILITATE QUALITY, CHOICE AND DIVERSITY IN THE HOUSING MARKET AND TO CREATE STRONG AND SELF RELIANT COMMUNITIES**

Dartford is experiencing one of the greatest periods of change in its long history. There is therefore a need to ensure that local people and communities are involved in the decisions which affect their lives and that the development which takes place is relevant to their needs and aspirations. There is also an opportunity to help communities to thrive and become self reliant through participation in voluntary and community organisations.

The Council's approach to housing is to put the needs of the local community first, while also recognising the wider factors which shape the housing market. The Council wishes to promote a stable community which sees Dartford as its long-term place of choice, with a quality of life and a breadth of facilities which meet the needs of young and old alike. It considers that in the long-term, family housing with gardens is the type of housing product which is most able to adapt to the changing pattern of housing demands, and most likely to promote strong and stable communities. The Council is also determined to ensure that its own housing stock and that in the private rented sector meets the Decent Homes standards.

The Council will continue to promote sport, culture and leisure as ways of engaging the community in positive activity, building on its recent achievements with the development of Princes Park Community Stadium, the Dartford Judo Centre, the skatepark in Central Park and its ongoing support of The Orchard Theatre. It will also engage with volunteer groups and organisations, for example through its "Salute to Youth" programme.

The Council will engage with the community on important decisions affecting Dartford. A series of major consultation exercises has been held about the future of Central Park and the Town Centre as a whole. However in the 2006 General User Satisfaction Survey 27% of residents were satisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision making provided by the Council. Levels of volunteering are also lower than the national average.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- HS 1.** To meet the housing needs of the Borough and achieve self reliant communities.
- HS 2.** Increase the percentage of both the private rented and public housing stock reaching the Decent Homes standard.

**ACTIONS:**

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
To meet the housing needs of the Borough and achieve self reliant communities.	<b>HS1 (a)</b> Agree a Local Development Framework Core Strategy setting out the Council's approach to the creation of sustainable communities with housing relevant to local needs and provision of a comprehensive range of local community services.	All newly-planned developments comply with the relevant LDF policies.	Planning Policy Manager
	<b>HS1 (b)</b> Promote volunteering activity around projects such as the restoration of Central Park and the use of facilities such as Princes Park, Acacia Hall and the Judo Centre.	A thriving voluntary and community sector with extensive public involvement in the development of the Borough.	Leisure Services Manager
	<b>HS1 (c)</b> Ensure that there is sufficient land supply to meet development needs in the Borough.	Sufficient land identified to meet the needs of developers.	Planning Policy Manager
Increase the percentage of both the private rented and public housing stock reaching the Decent Homes standard.	<b>HS2 (a)</b> Continue with the modernisation programme for all Council housing stock.	100% of the housing stock will have reached the Decent Homes standard.	Head of Housing
	<b>HS2 (b)</b> Reduce the number of private sector rented dwellings which are in poor condition.	35 private sector rented dwellings to reach the Decent Homes standard.	Head of Housing

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 3 Civic participation in the local area (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>
<b>NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>Awaiting baseline from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>	<b>Awaiting disaggregated target from KCC</b>
<b>NI 154 Net additional homes provided (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>1438</b>
<b>NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA Indicator)</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>481</b>
<b>NI 158 % non-decent council homes</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>LI CP/HS 1 Number of unfit properties made fit or demolished</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>

The following National Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

**NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood**

**NI 5: Overall/general satisfaction with local area**

## **A COUNCIL PERFORMING STRONGLY**

### **STRATEGIC AIM: TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES THAT REFLECT PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS AND DEMONSTRATE IMPROVEMENT**

The Council is committed to the provision of high quality services. The authority has recently undertaken a number of consultation exercises to understand the views of local residents; these include the General User Satisfaction Survey and a major voting exercise across the Borough regarding the frequency of rubbish collection. The Council has published a set of service standards for the public, setting out the levels of service they can expect when contacting the authority.

However in the 2006/07 General User Satisfaction Survey only 38% of respondents felt very or fairly well informed about the Council, compared to 53% in 2003. 27% of residents were satisfied with opportunities for participation in local decision making provided by the Council. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council has a duty to consult and involve residents.

According to the Audit Commission the Council has reached Level 3 (out of 4) for the way it uses resources, which means the Council is performing well. The Council's Direction of Travel assessment shows that in 2005/06 55% of the Council's performance indicators were improving, against a national average for Districts of 58%.

During 2007 a corporate fitness review was carried out, looking at key services, such as Development Control, Benefits, Housing Services, Public Realm and Building Control. From this review a number of improvements to processes were made which are expected to show improvement in service delivery standards from 2008/9.

The Council recognises that it needs to identify opportunities for joint working with other authorities in order to realise savings. The Council has signed the Kent Commitment, designed to improve two tier working and identify savings through shared services.

The Council is also updating its approach to risk and resilience, ensuring that the organisation has identified the major risks to its operations and has plans in place to meet them.

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- PS 1.** Ensure that residents and other stakeholders are involved in the design and delivery of Council services.

**PS 2.** Show that the Council delivers high quality services, offers value for money and can demonstrate a culture of improvement.

**ACTIONS:**

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	BY 2011 WE AIM TO HAVE ACHIEVED	LEAD OFFICER
Ensure that residents and other stakeholders are involved in the design and delivery of Council services.	<b>PS1 (a)</b> Produce a new consultation strategy.	A series of initiatives aimed at involving and informing residents about the activities of the Council leading to the majority of residents feeling well informed about the Council.	Communications Manager
Show that the Council offers high quality services, value for money and can demonstrate a culture of improvement.	<b>PS2 (a)</b> The Council will introduce a Value for Money strategy.	Level 4 for the Use of Resources.	Head of Finance
	<b>PS2 (b)</b> The Council will develop an Improvement Planning process across its services.	40% of national performance indicators, relating to the activities of Dartford Borough Council, in the top quartile.	Management Analysis & Intelligence Manager
	<b>PS2 (c)</b> Identify opportunities for joint working, particularly in the provision of services, which will lead to efficiency savings.	Joint opportunities identified and agreed with savings targets identified.	Policy Advisor
	<b>PS2 (d)</b> Identify energy saving opportunities for the Council's main buildings and operations.	21% reduction in carbon emissions.	Regeneration Director

**INDICATORS:**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2009/10 TARGET</b>	<b>2010/11 TARGET</b>
<b>NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality</b>	40%	45%	<b>NO SURVEY</b>	50%
<b>NI 157 Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for (a) “major”, (b)“minor” and (c)“other” application types</b>	(a) 72.75% (b) 70.75% (c) 83.5%	(a)60% (b)65% (c)80%	(a)75% (b)82% (c)92%	Targets to be set
<b>NI 179 Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-09 financial year</b>	N/A	£375,000	£390,000	£400,000
<b>NI 185 CO2 Reduction from Local Authority operations</b>	Baseline to be calculated by the end of July 2008	7% reduction on baseline	14% reduction on baseline	21% reduction on baseline
<b>LI CP/PS 1 Use of Resources score</b>	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
<b>LI CP/PS 2 % of residents who feel very or fairly well informed about the Council</b>	38%	No Survey	50%	50%

The following National and Local Indicators will be used to demonstrate achievement of the strategic aim.

- NI 14: Reducing avoidable contact: Minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer**
- NI 181: Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events**
- NI 182: Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services**
- LI CP/PS 3: BV9 Percentage of Council Tax collected**
- LI CP/PS 4: BV10 Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected**