



**14 December 2016**

**Protocol to improve planning performance unveiled**

In response to the need to deliver growth by building more homes and business space across Kent and Medway, a planning protocol has been agreed by all the key organisations involved in the area’s planning and development process.

The planning protocol sets out a shared approach to development by developers, planners and local authorities, and has been developed and agreed by all of the District Councils in Kent, as well as Medway Council, Kent County Council, Kent Developers Group, Kent Housing Group and Kent Planning Officers Group, supported by Locate in Kent.

The Planning Protocol has been welcomed by Gavin Barwell, Housing and Planning Minister, who said: ‘Planning reform is essential to delivering the new homes this country needs in places people want to live.

“It is fantastic to see local planning bodies working together in such an innovative way to improve and strengthen the planning process.”

The planning process is often hugely complex and lengthy. The planning protocol seeks to make the process more efficient by enabling greater collaboration in the pre-application and planning application stages of the process through better communication and consistency.

Nick Fenton, Chairman of Kent Developers Group, said: “Although not a binding document in planning terms, the Protocol sets out a shared and public commitment to working together to deliver high-quality and sustainable development for Kent which we have now all signed up to.”

It has been estimated by Kent County Council, and Medway Council, that the area’s population will rise by more than 413,900 people over the next 20 years, which will require the construction of 188,200 new homes.

Eileen Martin, Chair of Kent Housing Group, said: “A tremendous amount of work has gone into bringing the protocol to this stage. It clearly demonstrates our commitment to collaborative joint working and clarifies what this means in practice.

“We anticipate considerable advantages and efficiencies in developing this approach further and will work with all parties concerned to maximise the benefits that will result.”

The protocol sets out the following series of commitments and guidelines:

* We will ensure appropriate resources are made available to deliver an efficient, high quality planning service
* We will promote training opportunities
* We will communicate effectively
* We will increase certainty and consistency

Simon Thomas from the Kent Planning Officers Group added: “The aim of the Planning Protocol is for all those involved in the delivery of new homes and jobs across Kent to work positively together to ensure that all new development is of high quality and serves the needs of the people of Kent”.

ENDS

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**Notes to Editors:**

Kent Developers Group (KDG) is a unique association of owners and developers of the main development sites in Kent and Medway. KDG is a part-owner of Locate in Kent and has three places on its Board of Directors.

Locate in Kent’s expertise makes it the one-stop shop for businesses looking to succeed in Kent. It offers companies a number of free corporate relocation services, which includes access to its comprehensive Commercial Property Search – [www.commercialpropertykent.com](http://www.commercialpropertykent.com), giving businesses the opportunity to search for premises in every part of Kent and Medway.

Established in 1997, Locate in Kent is funded and supported by [Kent County Council](http://www.kent.gov.uk/), [Medway Council](http://www.medway.gov.uk/), [local councils](http://www.locateinkent.com/about/links.kentareas.php), and the Kent Developers Group - a partnership of the area's leading commercial property developers and [partners](http://www.locateinkent.com/about/partners.php) from the private sector.

For more information about Locate in Kent, call 01732 520700, email enquiries@locateinkent.com or visit [www.locateinkent.com](http://www.locateinkent.com)