

## LOCAL ISSUES UPDATE

Reported by Adrian Galley, Chairman of the Planning Committee

### THE CANNON STREET MARKETING INITIATIVE

The East Kent Business Centre (comprising Dover District Council, Eurotunnel, Dover Harbour Board and the Dover Chamber of Commerce) has devised an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Dover District. This coincides with an initiative from the Dover Society Planning Committee for the regeneration of the town and the Society will be working with the East Kent Business Centre to achieve this aim.

In his address to the Society's Members' Meeting on 25 November Adrian Galley made the following points:

Dover is in a unique position in its quest to attract retail development to the centre of the town, when, nationally, retail investment confidence is low.

The District Council had this year opened a major tourist attraction in the town centre at a cost of over £13 million. The 'White Cliffs Experience' – designed by John Sutherland of Jorvik Centre fame – is attracting thousands of visitors each week (April 1991 – September 1991 over 150,000 paying visitors). This centre is quite literally yards from the town's 'Cannon Street' where a good number of available buildings are sited. The potential for these units is clearly only limited by the imagination! Coupled with this, one of the largest sites has recently been acquired and is being renovated to incorporate a major high street store, a number of other retail areas and a large number of residential units.

#### Targets

Clearly now is the time to embark on a major marketing initiative to capitalise on the developments now taking place in this area of the town. The initiative should be aimed at attracting retailers and developers to this area in particular, because of the available shop space. However, if developers or retailers who express an interest are either inappropriate to this area, or unable to find suitable space, then they would be directed to other areas of the town.

#### Benefits

The benefits to the town of this initiative could prove to be invaluable. The increase in quality retail outlets in the town has clearly been desirable for some time to the people of Dover and the opening of such outlets would present a positive impression of the District to our many visitors. The Chamber of Commerce has expressed very real fears for the town centre, with the prospect of further out-of-town retail use being allowed, and this initiative certainly should go a long way to redress the balance and make the town centre a focus for growth. Developers will be encouraged to take advantage of this initiative and with the support that the partnership may be able to provide developers will be able to see their investments bearing fruit.

#### Conclusion

The Dover Society has identified an achievable goal in the 'Cannon Street' area. Set in the centre of the town yards from the successful 'White Cliffs Experience' this street, full of character, has attracted a major developer on its own merits. With a professional partnership actively marketing 'Cannon Street' the full potential of this area CAN be realised.

Dover faces a challenging future and challenge demands a response. Let Dover's response be one of positive action.