

14 July 2016 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 06.07.16






Cabinet


Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Fleming; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Lowe
Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Agenda

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2016, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)		
4. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees		
5. Affordable Rent Tenure (proposed adjustment) 	(Pages 5 - 8)	Gavin Missons Tel: 01732 227332
6. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 	(Pages 9 - 40)	Adrian Rowbotham, Nick Scott Tel: 01732 227153/7397
REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
7. Local Plan Update - Local Development Scheme (LDS)	(Pages 41 - 66)	Hannah Gooden Tel: 01732 227178

 Indicates a Key Decision

 indicates a matter to be referred to Council

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227247 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Searles

Cllrs. Clack, Maskell, McGarvey, Pett and Scholey were also present.

5. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 21 April 2016 and 10 May 2016, be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

7. Questions from Members

There were none.

8. Matter referred from Scrutiny Committee

a) Reference from Scrutiny Committee held on 3 May 2016 (Minute 39)

Scrutiny Committee were requesting that Cabinet consider whether it would be appropriate to apply a target of 75% of Penalty Charge Notice appeals to be won at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

Cllr. Clack addressed Members explaining why he had raised it as an issue at the Scrutiny Committee. He believed that a target would help ensure more correct decisions before an issue went to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT).

The Portfolio Holder for Direct & Trading Services advised that fewer than 15 out of 14,147 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued, went to the the TPT, and the currently policy was not to send an officer as it cost more to send an officer than if the case were lost. He was happy to revisit this policy. There was a higher success rate for the Council if an Officer was sent. Performance Indicators were useful for policy direction, but he did not believe one would be helpful here. The Council already had a different approach to enforcement which had received national press coverage and praise. The figures were already published and publicly available and he had undertaken to bring them to his Advisory Committee.

Resolved: That no new Performance Indicator be applied.

9. Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The minute reference from the Finance Advisory Committee was tabled. The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which updated Members on the progress that had been made on the review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in liaison with other Kent authorities; and asked Members to agree the broad scheme framework in readiness for public consultation; and requested delegated authority to be given to the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder. He further advised that the Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet subject to not consulting on including Child Benefit and Child Maintenance in the assessment of income.

Members were concerned that there was a lot of information and options within the consultation and were keen that the purpose be better explained and the consultation simplified, where possible, to enable better comprehension of what was being asked. Members were also keen to limit the consultation to those options that would better achieve alignment with Housing Benefit and achieve cost benefits. Members were clear within the debate that more work would need to be carried out in order to condense and clarify the proposed options within the public consultation, and it was suggested that HERO Officers could be asked for their input. More information was also required to understand whether there was a potential cumulative impact on certain residents. It was noted that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council had produced a video to help understand the proposals and this was thought a useful aid that required further investigation.

Members were in agreement that at this stage they would prefer to defer a decision on this report until Officers had had an opportunity to address the issues raised.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty, attached as Appendix C to the report, and that residents may fall into more than one category of affected person.

Resolved: That

- a) Officers look at ways and liaise with the HERO officers to make the public consultation clearer, including the idea of a video; and
- b) consideration of the proposal with an amended report be deferred for decision at a future meeting.

10. Provisional Outturn 2015/16

The minute reference from the Finance Advisory Committee was tabled and noted. The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which recommended that the funding for stabilisation works at the Otford Palace Tower be taken from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to enable the General Fund Reserve to remain at £1,500,000 which was considered a prudent level relative to our net service

Cabinet - 9 June 2016

expenditure. The Finance Advisory Committee had considered the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That funding for the Otford Tower be taken from the Budget Stabilisation Fund and not from the General Fund Reserve.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.05 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 13 June 2016. The decision contained in Minute 10 takes effect immediately. The key decision report considered at Minute 9 was deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

AFFORDABLE RENT TENURE (PROPOSED ADJUSTMENT)

Cabinet - 14 July 2016

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: Yes

This report supports the Key Aim of the District Council's affordable housing development programme and wider housing strategy.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Gavin Missons Ext. 7332

Recommendation to Cabinet: That Members approve an amendment to the rent setting objectives by allowing all new-build Affordable Rented (AR) housing to be set at a rate of up to 80% of Open Market Rent (OMR) values.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the District Council continues to be an effective enabler of affordable housing by adapting to emerging national policy.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Back in 2012, the Affordable Rent (AR) tenure was introduced to enable Housing Associations (HA) to charge higher rents with a view to becoming self-sufficient and to supplement reduced public subsidy. This new model allowed HAs to charge up to 80% of OMR, whereas the Social Rent (SR) model had been traditionally set at around 60% of OMR.
- 2 Although Local Authorities (LA) were mindful of the change in approach and fully understanding of its purpose, the majority view of Kent LAs was that they should seek to ensure that HAs charged rent at up to 80% OMR (as per Government advice), but to hold to a threshold of the relevant LHA (given the lack of clear Government advice). In doing so, LAs could still ensure a protection net for those tenants fully reliant on Housing Benefit (HB), i.e. those residents could claim 100% HB and not have to fund any shortfall themselves.
- 3 This approach allowed for the AR tenure whilst still corresponding with LA objectives whereby the housing would remain affordable for those most in need. This was all set out in the Kent Tenancy Strategy and the District Council's own subsequent Tenancy Strategy 2012 (which included the LHA

Agenda Item 5

threshold rule). HAs were consulted on this policy and there was no objection to the LHA rule.

- 4 With AR, all housing-related service charges must be included within the AR charge itself. This is completely different to SR where rent and service charges are charged separately. A proportion of the additional revenue generated by AR can be lost to service costs, therefore. With an increasing number of flatted developments in the District and those increasingly being of an executive type (Ryewood and The Pembroke, for instance), service charges can be that much greater. This then leaves a lower net rent available to the HA to service its respective debt. All of this, of course, has a consequent negative effect on any HA development viability appraisals.

Recent policy/legislation

- 5 Having now gained Royal Assent, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 has introduced a statutory 1% rent reduction on social housing rents. This is to tie in with a freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from this year and through to 2020. With HA business plans previously assuming rent increases (typically CPI+1%), rather than a (now) year on year reduction, HAs are left facing an unforeseen and combined reduction of around 14% in revenue through that period (and potentially beyond 2020). Therefore, revenue generated by any new-build housing must be maximised, more than ever, to: 1) counteract the removal of all grant funding for AR housing, and 2) maximise income to offset the effects of the 1% rent reduction.

Likely effects of recommended action

- 6 Assuming a delivery rate of 50 x new AR homes per year in the District over the next decade, an additional 500 x AR properties would be added to the District's social housing stock. By 2026, we would expect there to be 7,650 units of social housing and around 7,000 of those would be SR tenure. The AR housing numbers would therefore amount to around 7% of the total social stock.
- 7 With an average of 341 relets per annum and 7% of AR properties being charged at 80% OMR, this would amount to just 24 x AR (80% OMR) vacancies arising in 2026 - so a very small number and particularly when set against total social lettings for the year. Considering the 10-year projection and its effects at the end of that period, it would take several decades for any real impact to be seen and far too long in the future to be concerned about any tipping of the balance.
- 8 In fact, this additional tenure option (that being AR 80% OMR) would enable the District Council and its partner HAs to target those in low-paid employment and/or not fully benefit-dependent and, in doing so, better support economic development and other strategy associated with protecting the local essential workforce. This would therefore create an alternative product for a different and key client group (and one largely

limited with its options), so it could be seen as good strategy for the long-term future.

HA feedback

- 9 The District Council's key HA partners would welcome this amendment as it gives flexibility to secure funding for new-build projects. Their current expectation is that they will look to secure deals that cap the rents to the lower of either LHA or 80% OMR, but this could change as funding and income is further restricted.

Tenure conversions

- 10 Partner HAs are also now able to convert a proportion existing housing tenancies at the point of vacancy, e.g. SR to AR or SR to shared-ownership - the former generating additional revenue through to the long-term and the latter creating an immediate capital sum by unlocking some equity in the property. This, again, was introduced as a means to create additional funding to support reduced grant. There have been very few conversions in the District to date, however, which is a positive in terms of related housing strategy.
- 11 This position could potentially change as things become more of a struggle for HAs, however, and so the Housing Policy Team will monitor the situation and report back to the Housing and Health Advisory Committee (HHAC) if conversion rates do start to become a concern. For the time being, it is proposed that the relaxation of the LHA threshold only applies to new-build properties, therefore, this being key to creating viable projects.

Summary of recommended approach

- 12 With the above in mind and to ensure that the District Council continues to be an effective enabler of affordable housing into the future, it is recommended that the District Council allows new-build AR social housing to be let at up to 80% OMR from this point forward. That said, the District Council could still support the LHA threshold where viability allowed and develop other models of delivery which would help to maintain LHA levels on new-build housing, e.g. cross-subsidy projects and/or institutional investment.
- 13 If agreed by Cabinet, this approach would be reviewed when the District Council's upcoming housing needs study is complete and as part of the subsequent development of a new housing strategy. This approach would be a potentially interim measure, therefore.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 14 If the District Council were to retain the current LHA capping rule, it would likely see far fewer active HA partners pursuing development opportunities in the future and the affordable housing programme could potentially grind to a halt, or at least become minimal in its delivery. The recommended

Agenda Item 5

change in approach would help to safeguard the District Council's affordable housing programme by giving its partner HAs the scope to increase revenue and, as a result, maintain development programmes here in the Sevenoaks District by charging up to 80% of OMR.

- 15 The Housing Policy Team will continue to explore new delivery models and this will likely result in a move towards more cross-subsidy and institutional development projects. The recommended change in approach will enable current models to continue to work and will be critical to enabling continued provision in the interim period and until such time as alternative models become the norm.

Key Implications

Financial

No impact on District Council resources.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The above recommended approach accords with all related legal and policy issues. If the District Council were to stick with LHA capping, it would risk future development and, potentially, the whole affordable rented housing development programme.

Equality Assessment

This approach could potentially cut out a very small number of relets to those fully reliant on welfare benefits, but the added benefits of being able to deliver additional housing far outweighs any negative impact.

Sustainability Checklist

No negative impacts.

Background Papers:

[Kent Tenancy Strategy 2012](#)

[SDC Tenancy Strategy 2012](#)

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME - UPDATE

Cabinet - 14 July 2016

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report updates Members on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme taking into account the issues raised by Cabinet on 9 June 2016.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Searles

Contact Officers Adrian Rowbotham Ext. 7153
Nick Scott Ext. 7397

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Note the work undertaken to date and the Kent Finance Officers' group recommendation that any new Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme should be based on the current scheme but with a series of potential modifications upon which we should consult;
- (b) For the 2017/18 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme, starting on 1st April 2017, launch a consultation on the potential introduction of a range of modifications to the current CTR scheme for working age claimants as follows:
- (i) Reduce the maximum level of CTR for working-age applicants from 81.5% of their Council Tax liability to 80%. (Option 1)
 - (ii) Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants. (Option 2)
 - (iii) Reduce the backdating provision from 6 months to 1 month. (Option 3)
 - (iv) Introduce a 'Minimum Income Floor' for self-employed claimants after their first year of trading. (Option 4)
 - (v) Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive CTR from 13 weeks to 4 weeks. (Option 5)
 - (vi) Remove the Work Related Activity Component (WRAC) in the
-

calculation of CTR for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance. (Option 6)

- (vii) Limit the dependent child addition used in the calculation of CTR to a maximum of two children. (Option 7)
- (viii) Exclude foreign nationals with limited immigration status (Persons from Abroad) from receiving CTR. (Option 8)
- (ix) Introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship. (Option 9)

(c) Through the consultation, seek views on other ways of meeting the demands highlighted through the report other than changing the existing CTR Scheme.

(d) Note the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) at Appendix C and

(e) Endorse the proposed arrangements for the consultation.

Introduction and background

- 1 The CTR scheme was introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in April 2013 as a replacement for the Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2 As part of its introduction, Central Government set out a number of key elements:
 - The duty to create a local scheme for Working Age applicants was placed with Billing Authorities;
 - Government funding to authorities was reduced by the equivalent of 10% from the levels paid through benefit subsidy to authorities under the previous CTB scheme; and
 - Persons of Pension Age would be protected under regulations prescribed by Government.
- 3 Across Kent, a common approach was adopted for the design of local schemes, with the new schemes broadly replicating the former CTB scheme but with a basic reduction in entitlement for working age claimants. In Sevenoaks District, working age claimants must pay at least 18.5% of the council tax liability. The figure of 18.5% represented the 10% funding loss applied to the working age caseload across Kent. In other parts of Kent, the % varies. Therefore, although we do have a 'common platform' across Kent, local schemes at district level have been tailored to local needs.

- 4 Since its introduction in April 2013, our own local scheme has been refreshed annually to allow for inflationary increases in the personal allowances used to calculate CTR, but the core elements remain as were originally agreed.
- 5 The scheme is underpinned by the Kent-wide agreement, which recognises that all the Kent districts (as the billing authorities) will seek to have a common 'platform'. In return, the major precepting authorities (Fire, Police and the County) agreed to collectively pay to each district council an 'administration fee' of £125,000 each year, for three years, to assist with the costs of delivering and managing the CTR scheme.
- 6 The original three year period ceased on 31 March 2016, but it was agreed with Kent County Council, Kent Police and Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue that the scheme would effectively 'roll on' for one more year (i.e. into 2016/17).
- 7 A review of the scheme has been carried out on behalf of all Kent districts, details of which were contained in the report to Cabinet on 9 June 2016.

Reasons to Change the Current Scheme

- 8 The review mentioned above looked at local schemes across the country to see how they have operated and what lessons could be learnt.
- 9 The objectives of the review of the scheme are to:
 - Accurately target support to those working age claimants who most need it.
 - Align the scheme with proposed changes to Housing Benefit and introduction of Universal Credit.
 - Address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants.
 - Maintain a common approach to the design of local schemes across Kent.
- 10 The major precepting authorities have requested that additional council tax income is received through the CTR scheme for them to continue to pay each district council an 'administration fee', which is currently £125,000.
- 11 If this 'administration fee' is no longer received, services would have to be cut elsewhere for this council to continue to provide the current level of resources in the Revenues Team.
- 12 The £125,000 is currently used to employ staff to proactively engage with customers and recover the additional council tax due as a result of the reduced level of financial support provided by the scheme. If this resource was removed, it is likely that the council tax collection rate would reduce resulting in this council receiving less income via council tax. If less council tax is received, services across the council would have to be cut.

Options for Change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 13 In liaison with the consultant who reviewed the scheme, the Kent Finance Officers' Group has considered a wide range of options for potential change. These options were included in Appendix A of the report to Cabinet on 9 June 2016.
- 14 The most practical option would be to maintain a scheme similar to our current scheme because:
- It is known to our claimants and largely mirrors the housing benefit (HB) system:
 - The Council's Revenues and Benefits system is adapted for this type of scheme and would, therefore, require little additional cost; and
 - Staff are familiar with the administration of this type of scheme and, as it is also aligned to HB, we can continue to take advantage of 'economies of scale'.
- 15 It is important that we seek to reduce the overall costs further whilst maintaining fairness and a sense of 'reality' as to what is feasible.
- 16 Due to the potential impact of changes on vulnerable residents, it is considered that it is important that an 'Exceptional Hardship' policy is integral to the new scheme. Whilst details of this policy still need to be drawn up, it is anticipated that applications would be accepted where claimants have qualified for CTR but are in need of further support due to severe financial hardship.
- 17 Recommendation made by the Finance Advisory Committee on 24 May 2016 and Cabinet on 9 June 2016 have been reflected in the proposed consultation options.
- 18 The council's HERO service has confirmed that they found the proposed consultation document understandable.

Other Alternatives to Changing the Current Scheme

- 19 As explained above, if changes are not made to the current scheme, savings would need to be made elsewhere if compensating funding could not be found.
- 20 Through our Financial Strategy, we already have planned over the 10-year budget period to use the Budget Stabilisation Reserve to ensure that the Council has a sustainable financial position going forward.
- 21 The 10-year budget already assumes that the Council will increase council tax by 2% each year from 2017/18 which is likely to be the maximum permitted without triggering a referendum. The Council could increase

council tax further, but the costs of holding a referendum would need to be factored in, and the public would need to support the proposed increase.

- 22 The Council's general fund reserve is already at the recommended level of 10% of the net revenue budget so it is not proposed to reduce it.
- 23 Members will appreciate, therefore, that realistic alternative options to changing the CTR Scheme are somewhat limited. However, in the light of challenges to local CTR scheme consultations elsewhere, the question about alternative funding arrangements does still need to be asked of the public.
- 24 Thus, whilst it is not the preferred solution, it is recommended that the following questions are posed for completeness. Were any of these options to be supported and implemented, the impact would affect all residents in the District.
- Should Council Tax be increased for all Council *Taxpayers (beyond that already planned in the 10-year budget)* to fund the CTR scheme?
 - Should Council reserves be used up to fund the scheme?
 - Should there be further cuts to Council services (over and above those already required in the 10-year budget) to fund the scheme?

Consultation Process

- 25 All of the Kent district councils have reported similarly to their Members to seek authority to proceed in the way outlined in this report.
- 26 Prior to the implementation of any change to CTR Scheme, authorities are required to consult with the public. There have been a number of legal challenges to CTR Scheme consultations and it should be noted that a recent judgement handed down by the Supreme Court has defined what is meant by 'good consultation'.
- 27 There are legal requirements in terms of the consultation process and the need to get Full Council approval by 31st January 2017 on the scheme to be adopted for 2017/18.
- 28 The guiding principles which have been established through case-law for fair consultation are as follows:
- The consultation must be carried out at a stage when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - Sufficient information on the reasons for the proposals must be provided to permit the consultees to carry out intelligent consideration of the issues and to respond;

Agenda Item 6

- Adequate time must be given for consideration and responses to be made; and
 - The results of the consultation must be properly taken into account in finalising any decision.
- 29 The consultant has been working with the districts in order to prepare robust and consistent consultation material that can be individually ‘branded’ by each district within Kent. Each district must consult on its own scheme and ultimately make its own decisions about the ‘final’ scheme following the consultation.
- 30 The draft consultation document is shown at Appendix B.
- 31 It is anticipated that the consultation will be primarily web-site based, but it will be important to write to all claimants to draw their attention to the consultation and encourage them to participate by providing hard copy documents as appropriate. Additionally, it will be important to involve stakeholder groups such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, local debt advice agencies, registered social landlords and other organisations with a significant interest, to obtain their views.
- 32 A video is also being produced to assist people completing the consultation.
- 33 There is also a duty to consult with the major preceding authorities (County Council, Fire and Police) who are statutory consultees. This has already commenced and will continue throughout the project. At the time of writing, all major precepting authorities have advised that they are content with the proposals so far.

Key Implications

Financial

The financial reasons for changing the scheme are contained in the report.

The cost of consultancy has been shared by all Kent authorities. Sevenoaks District Council’s share of this cost is under £500.

It is anticipated that there will be some direct costs associated with the consultation process which will be contained within the revenue budget.

The cost of awards made under CTR Scheme impact on the declared taxbase and thereby the council tax yield. If the cost of awards were to be reduced, this would mean that the Council’s taxbase could increase and overall council tax income could increase. Any increase to council tax income is shared through the Collection Fund with major preceptors.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council has a statutory duty to consult on a proposed scheme; case-law has determined the guiding principles for fair consultation which we will follow.

Regard needs to be made to the rules around consultation laid out through the Supreme Court Ruling in the case of R (on the application of Moseley) v London Borough of Haringey (2014) and in particular, the need to set out alternative choices within the consultation.

If consultation is not carried out appropriately, there is a risk of challenge once a decision is taken.

Whilst all Kent Councils are working towards a common framework, ultimately individual schemes could be different (as they are currently).

Equality Assessment

At this stage of the process, the decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. However, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is at Appendix C. Prior to a final decision being taken by the Cabinet, a full EQIA will be prepared.

Conclusions

As outlined within the report, Kent district councils are working together in order to achieve a common framework in respect of the review of the local CTR schemes.

Each district council needs to individually agree the terms for consultation. If any significant issues arise through the 'group approach', Cabinet will be updated.

Appendices

Appendix A - Background Information to the Consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18.

Appendix B - Consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18.

Appendix C - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Paper:

[Council Tax Reduction Scheme - report to Cabinet 9 June 2016 and Finance Advisory Committee 24 May 2016](#)

[Cabinet 9 June 2016 - Minutes](#)

[Finance Advisory Committee 24 May 2016 - Minutes](#)

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer

This page is intentionally left blank

Background information to the consultation on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as the Council Tax Support Scheme) for 2017/18

What is this consultation about?

Watch our short 3 minute video [here](#) to see the reasons for this consultation.

How long will the consultation run for?

The consultation will run for 8 weeks. It will start on xx/xx/2016 and finish on xx/xx/2016.

What is the Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps the poorest residents in our district by reducing the amount of Council Tax they have to pay. The amount of help we give is means-tested so we calculate a claimant's entitlement to support based on their financial circumstances.

The scheme has been in place since April 2013 and it largely reflects the same criteria as the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, which was fully funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Why was the Council Tax Reduction Scheme introduced?

From April 2013, Council Tax Benefit was abolished. The DWP handed responsibility over to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and consequently, they introduced a number of requirements. They were:

- The responsibility to create Local Council Reduction Schemes for working-age applicants was placed on Local Authorities, i.e. Sevenoaks District Council;
- Government funding was reduced by the equivalent of 10% from the levels previously paid to Local Authorities through the fully subsidised Council Tax Benefit scheme, and;
- Persons of pension-age applying for Council Tax Reduction would be protected from any cuts and be dealt with under regulations prescribed by the DCLG

What is this consultation about?

Since 1st April 2013, the Council has maintained a Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Under this scheme, we are only able to determine the level of support we can give to working-age applicants. The scheme for pension-age applicants is determined by Central Government and consequently, the level of support we have to provide for this group of applicants must remain equivalent to the level of support they would have received under

the previous Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

Along with other authorities across Kent, we have decided to complete a full review of our current scheme (which can be found [here](#)). The objectives of the review are to:

- Address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants;
- Align the scheme with changes that have been introduced in Housing Benefit and Universal Credit as well as changes that are being proposed in Housing Benefit;
- Target financial support to those working-age claimants who need it most, and;
- Maintain a common approach to the design of Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes across Kent.

This consultation sets out options for changing our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, starting from 1st April 2017. The law says that we must also include Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner. This has been done and the options detailed below take into account their views.

What are the options being considered?

Option 1

Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction for working-age applicants from 81.5% of their Council Tax liability to 80%

Irrespective of financial circumstances, we currently require all working-age claimants to make a minimum payment of 18.5% towards their Council Tax. Under this proposal, this would increase to 20%.

However, we are conscious that any increase in the minimum payment of Council Tax must be affordable to working-age claimants who are currently receiving support. Therefore, if this change is introduced we also think we should introduce an Exceptional Hardship Scheme to help protect the most vulnerable households from extreme financial difficulties.

Impact of introducing this option

Introducing this option would mean that every working-age claimant would share the estimated loss in Council Tax Reduction equally. Consequently, it would mean that every working-age claimant would be required to pay a little more towards their Council Tax.

Financial implications of introducing this option

Estimated number of claimants affected	Estimated weekly loss in Council Tax Reduction	Estimated annual saving to the Council	Estimated annual saving to Kent CC, Fire & Police	Total estimated annual saving
3174	£0.31	£8,584	£41,913	£50,497

Option 2

Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

The Family Premium is part of a figure (the applicable amount) that is used to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Reduction. The Family Premium is currently £17.45 per week and it is an amount which is included in the calculation when a claimant has at least one dependent child living with them.

Removing the Family Premium will only affect new claims from working-age claimants. It will not affect working-age claimants who currently receive Council Tax Reduction and it will not affect those on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

Impact of introducing this option

The Family Premium has already been removed from the Housing Benefit Scheme for all new claims from working-age claimants so this option will bring the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with the Housing Benefit Scheme.

Anyone currently claiming Council Tax Reduction who has a child will keep the Family Premium. However, they may be affected if they stop claiming Council Tax Reduction after 31st March 2017 and then have to make a new claim in the future.

Anyone with a child who makes a new claim for Council Tax Reduction from 1st April 2017 onwards will be affected and consequently, they will not be awarded the Family Premium. This means the level of support for new claimants will be less than the support given to existing claimants with a child. These households will therefore have to pay more Council Tax.

Financial implications of introducing this option

Estimated number of claimants affected	Estimated weekly loss in Council Tax Reduction	Estimated annual saving to the Council	Estimated annual saving to Kent CC, Fire & Police	Total estimated annual saving
163	£3.49	£5,029	£24,552	£29,581

Option 3

Reduce the backdating provision from 6 months to 1 month

At the moment, claims for Council Tax Reduction from working-age claimants can be backdated for up to 6 months where the claimant can show, with good reason, why they could not make their claim earlier.

In such cases, it is proposed that the backdating period for new Council Tax Reduction

claims be reduced from 6 months to 1 month.

Impact of introducing this option

The backdating provision has already been reduced from 6 months to 1 month in the Housing Benefit Scheme so this option will bring the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with the Housing Benefit Scheme. Consequently, this would mean less Council Tax Reduction would be paid to working-age claimants who make a new claim from 1st April 2017 onwards and where they make a request for their claim for support to be backdated.

Financial implications of introducing this option

We are not able to forecast the financial impact of introducing this option because we cannot predict how many new applications for Council Tax Reduction in 2017/18 will have a request for the claim to be backdated.

Option 4

Introduce a 'Minimum Income Floor' for self-employed claimants after their first year of trading

It is proposed that a 'Minimum Income Floor' (MIF) be introduced for self-employed working-age claimants whose business has been running for more than a year. The MIF would be an assumed level of earnings and this would be calculated using the National Living Wage and based on a 35 hour week.

Any income above this amount would be taken into account based on the actual amount earned. The MIF would not apply for a designated start-up period of one year from the start of the business and variations would also apply to part-time workers.

Impact of introducing this option

The principle of introducing the MIF in Council Tax Reduction is the same as it is for Universal Credit i.e. to encourage self-employed people to grow their business, rather than nudging along at minimal income levels and relying on the maximum entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

The MIF has already been introduced into Universal Credit so this option will bring the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with Universal Credit. If introduced, it would impact on working-age self-employed claimants where their business has been running for more than a year. The level of self-employed income that would be used in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction in these cases would, from 1st April 2017, be based on what we would expect an employed person to receive in similar circumstances. Consequently, if this assumed level of income is higher than the amount that has been declared, it will mean that those affected will receive less Council Tax Reduction.

Financial implications of introducing this option

Estimated number of claimants affected	Estimated weekly loss in Council Tax Reduction	Estimated annual saving to the Council	Estimated annual saving to Kent CC, Fire & Police	Total estimated annual saving
307	£15.41	£41,815	£204,156	£245,971

In addition, Option 1 will also affect the claimants affected by this option. Therefore, the combined impact of both options will mean that the 307 claimants will potentially see a loss in Council Tax Reduction of £15.72 per week.

Option 5

Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction from 13 weeks to 4 weeks

Within the current scheme, claimants can be temporarily absent from Great Britain for up to 13 weeks without it affecting their Council Tax Reduction entitlement. This option proposes to reduce this so that if a claimant is absent from Great Britain for a period of more than 4 weeks, their Council Tax Reduction will cease (there will be exceptions for certain occupations).

Impact of introducing this option

The period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Housing Benefit will be reduced from 13 weeks to 4 weeks sometime this year, so this option will bring the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with the Housing Benefit Scheme.

If introduced, this option would impact on working-age claimants who are going to be absent from Great Britain for a period which is likely to exceed 4 weeks. It will mean that their Council Tax Reduction will cease from the date they leave the Country and consequently, they would need to re-apply for Council Tax Reduction on their return.

Financial implications of introducing this option

We are not able to forecast the financial impact of introducing this option because we cannot predict how many Council Tax Reduction claimants are likely to leave Great Britain for more than 4 weeks during 2017/18.

Option 6

Remove the Work Related Activity Component (WRAC) in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance

Claimants who apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) also have to undergo a Work Capability Assessment to see the extent to which their illness or disability affects their ability to work. If the assessment places the applicant in a Work Related Activity

Group (WRAG), this means they are considered capable of work at some time in the future. Anyone in a WRAG can get the WRAC component and this is an extra allowance that is used in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction.

From April 2017, new claimants of ESA who are placed in the WRAG will no longer receive the WRAC component in either their ESA or within the calculation of Housing Benefit because it is being abolished.

Impact of introducing this option

From 1st April 2017, the WRAC will be removed in the calculation of Housing Benefit for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and placed in the WRAG. Therefore, removing the WRAC in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction will bring the treatment of ESA in line with the calculation used for Housing Benefit.

Anyone currently receiving ESA who is currently placed in the WRAG and claiming Council Tax Reduction will not see a reduction in their Council Tax Reduction entitlement. However, they may be affected if they stop claiming Council Tax Reduction after 31st March 2017 and then have to make a new claim in the future.

Anyone in receipt of ESA and placed in the WRAG who makes a new claim for Council Tax Reduction from 1st April 2017 onwards will be affected. Consequently, they will not be awarded the WRAC and this means the level of support for new claimants will be less than the support given to existing claimants.

Financial implications of introducing this option

We are not able to forecast the financial impact of introducing this option because we cannot predict how many new Council Tax Reduction claimants are likely to claim ESA and be placed in the WRAG during 2017/18.

Option 7

Limit the dependent child addition used in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two children

The dependent child addition is part of a figure (the applicable amount) that is used to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Reduction. The addition is currently £66.90 for each child and there is currently no limit on the number of dependent child additions used in the calculation.

From April 2017, the Government will be limiting dependent additions to a maximum of two children in Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits.

Impact of introducing this option

Limiting the dependent child addition to a maximum of two children from 1st April 2017 will bring the calculation of Council Tax Reduction in line with the calculation for Housing

Benefit.

This will only affect households who have a third or subsequent child on or after 1st April 2017, however, there will be exceptions where there are multiple births after 1st April 2017, there are adopted children in the household or where households merge.

Financial implications of introducing this option

Estimated number of claimants affected	Estimated weekly loss in Council Tax Reduction	Estimated annual saving to the Council	Estimated annual saving to Kent CC, Fire & Police	Total estimated annual saving
31	£2.83	£776	£3,787	£4,563

Option 8

Exclude foreign nationals with limited immigration status (Persons from Abroad) from receiving Council Tax Reduction

This proposal is simply to apply the same restriction that exists in other state benefits.

Impact of introducing this option

This option will bring eligibility for Council Tax Reduction in line with eligibility for Housing Benefit but it will mean that foreign nationals with limited immigration status will not be entitled to Council Tax Reduction.

Financial implications of introducing this option

We do not currently have any foreign nationals with limited immigration status claiming Council Tax Reduction. We are not able to forecast the financial impact of introducing this option for 2017/18 because we cannot predict how many claims we are likely to receive from this category of claimant.

Option 9

Introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship

This proposal would introduce a scheme that would give additional financial support to people who claim Council Tax Reduction but who still struggle to pay their Council Tax.

Impact of introducing this option

This option would give us greater flexibility to target support to those most in need and it would provide a safety net for those households suffering exceptional financial hardship. It would be a targeted scheme that could be adapted to meet individual circumstances

Financial implications of introducing this option

We are not able to forecast how many claimants will need additional financial support due to exceptional hardship but we do know there will be some additional costs if this scheme is introduced.

Are there any alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

We have thought about other ways to make savings so that we can maintain the level of financial support we currently provide through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme. These alternatives are detailed below and you are asked about them in our consultation questionnaire.

We will take your views into consideration before making a decision but our view at the moment is that we should not consider these alternatives for the reasons given.

The alternative options are:

1. Increase the level of Council Tax

Increasing the level of Council Tax to keep the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme would mean all residents in the district having to pay more Council Tax.

In order to do this, we would need to hold a local referendum to ask residents to vote on whether or not they would support such an increase. This would be very expensive to do.

2. Find savings from cutting other Council services

If we decide to protect the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme this will mean there is less money to deliver all the other services we provide.

3. Using the Council's reserves (savings)

Using our reserves to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme would only be a short-term option. Once our reserves have been used they will no longer be available to support and invest in other Council services.

What do I do if I want more information?

You can email us with any enquiries you may have to LCTSconsultation@sevenoaks.gov.uk (need to set up/confirm)

Consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as the Council Tax Support Scheme) for 2017/18

Have your say on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18

1. Before proceeding with this questionnaire, please confirm that you have read the background information ([here](#)) and watched our short 3 minute video ([here](#)) that accompanies this consultation.

Yes

No

2. Should the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 be exactly the same as our 2016/17 scheme? (Our current scheme can be found [here](#))

Yes

No

Don't know

3. If Yes, please give your reasons for wanting to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from any cuts.

Options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

As explained in the background information, in order to address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants, we are consulting on 9 proposals that would potentially change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017.

The options, with full details in the background information document [here](#), are set out below and we would like to know your views on these proposals.

Option 1

Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction for working-age applicants from 81.5% of their Council Tax liability to 80%

4. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 1, please give them below.

Option 2

Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants

5. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 2, please give them below.

Option 3

Reduce the backdating provision from 6 months to 1 month

6. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 3, please give them below.

Option 4

Introduce a 'Minimum Income Floor' for self-employed claimants after their first year of trading

7. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 4, please give them below.

Option 5

Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction from 13 weeks to 4 weeks

8. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 5, please give them below.

Option 6

Remove the Work Related Activity Component (WRAC) in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance

9. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 6, please give them below.

Option 7

Limit the dependent child addition used in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two children

10. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 7, please give them below.

Option 8

Exclude foreign nationals with limited immigration status (Persons from Abroad) from receiving Council Tax Reduction

11. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.

Option 9

Introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship

12. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 9, please give them below.

13. If you have any other comments to make on the proposals detailed above, please give them below.

Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If we do not make any changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, savings will need to be found from elsewhere to help meet the expected reduction in Government funding over the next 3 years. Therefore, rather than making changes to our current scheme, do you think we should choose any of the following options?

Increase the level of Council Tax

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Find savings from cutting other Council services

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Use the Council's reserves (savings)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Based on your answers above, please rank your order of preference.

Increase the level of Council Tax

- 1
- 2
- 3

Find savings from cutting other Council services

- 1

2

3

Use the Council's reserves (savings)

1

2

3

14. If you would like us to consider any other options, please give your comments below.

15. If you have any further comments to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please give them below.

Insert equality details/questions

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

We will listen carefully to what everyone tells us and take all responses into consideration before making a final decision on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18. Following the decision, the full results from this consultation will be available on our website - www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

The new scheme will start on 1 April 2017. However, we will consider the impact of the scheme on an annual basis and we will consult again if we think further changes need to be made.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Equality Impact Assessment
Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Authority:	Sevenoaks District Council
Date EqIA commenced:	23 May 2016
Date first stage EqIA finalised for pre-consultation decision:	24 May 2016 (version 1) 28 June 2016 (version 2)
Date second stage EqIA finalised after consultation closed, prior to final decision being taken:	To be completed
Job titles of officers involved in completing the EqIA:	Chief Finance Officer Head of Transformation and Strategy Head of Revenues & Benefits West Kent Equalities Officer

Summary of decision to be made

Since 1 April 2013, the Council has maintained a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council has the ability to determine the level of reduction given to working age applicants only. The scheme for pension age applicants is determined by Central Government.

We have decided to complete a full review of the scheme. The objectives of the review are to:

- Accurately target support to those working age claimants who most need it.
- Align the scheme with changes and proposed changes to Housing Benefit and introduction of Universal Credit.
- Address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants.
- Maintain a common approach to the design of local schemes across Kent.

Scope of this equality impact assessment

1. Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013.
2. Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017.

How is the decision relevant to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The need to ensure that the scheme is not unlawfully discriminatory is relevant to the first aim of the duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The need to consider how we can take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and whether people with disabilities may need to be treated more favourably, in how the scheme is designed, is relevant to the second aim of the duty to advance equality of opportunity.

The proposed service changes could also be relevant to fostering good relations with regard to maintaining the confidence and trust in the local authority by people with protected characteristics who may use our services.

Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013

The current scheme requires all working age claimants to pay 18.5% of their council tax liability. Transitional funding meant claimants were only required to pay 8.5% in the first year of the scheme.

The current scheme was subject to a comprehensive equality impact assessment in 2012. That assessment identified that our Council Tax Reduction Scheme had the potential to have a negative impact on working age people with disabilities, carers, women and younger age groups. To mitigate these potential impacts it was agreed that we would continue to treat people with disabilities, carers and households with young children more favourably by disregarding some income, giving them a higher council tax reduction. The impact on working age groups was as a result of the Government protecting pension age people from any changes. However, transitional funding was intended to reduce the extent of the impacts in the first year of the scheme.

The equality impact assessment was reviewed by Full Council in October 2014 and found that the impact of the 18.5% reduction on people with disabilities had not altered significantly, that the impact on carers was more significant than initially anticipated and that the impact on females was less significant than initially anticipated. The scheme continues to disregard some income for people with

disabilities, carers and families with children, resulting in a higher council tax reduction. No further mitigating actions were identified.

Current claimant data is provided in Annex 1. Findings from the data are summarised below.

Disability

Working age people with disabilities make up a high proportion of the working age caseload at 21%. Working age people with disabilities receive more per week, than working age people without disabilities, on average.

Carers

There is a roughly equivalent proportion working age claimants with a carer in the household, than there are carers in the population overall. Working age claimants with a carer in the household receive more per week, on average, than working age claimants without a carer in the household.

Age

Those aged 18-24 make up a lower proportion of the caseload than the population overall. Those aged 25-34 make up a higher proportion of the caseload than the population overall. Other age groups broadly reflect the overall population. Those aged 55-64 currently receive the highest weekly amount, on average. Those aged 18-24 currently receive the lowest weekly amount, on average.

Sex

Females make up a high proportion of the caseload at 71%. Although, there is a small difference between the average amounts females and males receive per week, this is due to factors relating to circumstances which directly affect the calculation of council tax reduction, and is not linked to a claimant's sex.

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reduction. No new data is available, following the consultation in 2012.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reductions:

- Religion of belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017

There are nine recommendations being presented for consultation. Current claimant data, for each of the recommendations, where available, is provided in Annex 1. Where an option applies to new claimants, we have provided data for current claimants as an indication of the possible impacts as it is not possible to predict who may apply after 1 April 2017. Findings from the data can be summarised as follows:

Disability

There is a potential impact on people of working age with a disability of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (c)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 21% have a disability).

Carers

There is a potential impact on people of working age with a carer in the household of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (c)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 11% have a carer in the household).
- Recommendations (c)(ii) to (c)(iii) and (c)(v) to (c)(viii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (13% of working age claimants who receive non-dependent deductions have a carer in the household).

Age

As claimants of pension age are protected, there is a potential impact on other age groups, of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (c)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% (would affect all working age claimants).
- Recommendation (c)(iv): introducing a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants (37% of claimants in this category are aged 35-44).
- Recommendations (c)(ii) and (c)(vii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme:
 - 44% of current claimants who receive family premium in this category are aged 35-44 and 32% are aged 45-54, however the proposal would apply to new claims only.
 - 56% of current claimants who receive awards for over two dependents are aged 35-44, however, the proposal would only apply to claimants who have a subsequent or third child after 1 April 2017.

Sex

There is a potential impact on working age males and females of the following recommendations:

- Recommendation (c)(i): increasing the minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20% (would affect all working age claimants, of which 71% are female and 29% are male).
- Recommendation (c)(iv): introducing a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants (36% of working age claimants in this category are male).
- Recommendations (c)(ii) and (c)(vii): aligning regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme:
 - 83% of current claimants who receive family premium are female, however the proposal would apply to new claims only

- 74% of working age claimants who receive awards for over two dependents are female, however, the proposal would only apply to claimants who have a subsequent or third child after 1 April 2017).

Race

This information is not collected from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reduction. The Census (2011) shows that people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be economically active and less likely to be self-employed, than people from a White background. We have no evidence to indicate that working age people with different ethnic backgrounds would be affected differently. However, we will ask people to identify their ethnic group, when responding to the consultation.

Armed Forces Community

This is considered in this equality impact assessment as part of the commitments within the Community Covenant. Armed forces personnel deployed on operations overseas, who normally pay council tax, benefit from a tax-free payment on the cost of council tax paid directly by the Ministry of Defence. Following the announcement by the Chancellor in his 2012 Budget statement, Council Tax Relief will be worth just under £600 (based upon 2012/13 council tax) for an average six-month deployment based on the average Council Tax per dwelling in England. This will continue to be paid at a flat rate to all eligible personnel. More information is available at www.mod.uk. We also disregard income from war disablement pensions, providing eligible claimants with a higher council tax reduction.

Other protected characteristics

We do not collect information about the following characteristics from claimants as it is not relevant to the calculation of council tax reductions:

- Religion of belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity

Recommendation (c)(vii) to align the regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (which includes limiting the number of dependents to two) would affect any female claimants who are pregnant before 1 April 2017. Otherwise, there is no evidence to indicate that working age people with these protected characteristics would be affected differently to claimants overall.

We have not provided a breakdown of claimants with protected characteristics for recommendations that affect a minimal number of claimants overall. These recommendations are (c)(iii), (c)(v) to (c)(vi), and (c)(viii) relate to aspects of aligning the regulations of the current council tax reduction scheme with housing benefit and (prescribed) pension age council tax reduction scheme (recommendation (vii) and include:

- Reducing backdating to one month.
- Reducing the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and receive Council Tax Reduction to 4 weeks.
- Remove the award of a Work Related Activity Component

- Remove entitlement to Council Tax Reduction for a claimant classified as ‘Person from Abroad’ or subject to Immigration control.

Summary of initial findings prior to consultation

1. Review of the current scheme, introduced on 1 April 2013

All working age claimants, including those with protected characteristics, have received a reduction in their benefit amount. Pension age claimants, who also have protected characteristics, have not received a reduction as they are protected from any changes by Central Government. For example, 37% of claimants of pension age have a disability, 3% are carers and 61% are female.

The data shows that we currently provide higher reductions to working age people with disabilities and carers. There is no evidence to suggest that this is insufficient to mitigate the impacts of the scheme overall. The calculation of the reduction amount is not related to a claimant’s sex or age (with the exception of those of pension age who are protected). Any differences between the average weekly amounts received by males , females and working age groups is likely to be as a result of other factors. The analysis has not taken account of any council tax increases year on year so it is not possible to make comparisons between amounts across years.

2. Proposed changes to the scheme from 1 April 2017

A summary of the potential impact of each of the consultation options on the protected characteristics, identified from claimant data and other considerations, is provided in the table below. All options could impact on working age claimants with one or more of the protected characteristics of disability, age, sex or race. The extent of these impacts will be considered further following the consultation.

Recommendations (paragraph b)	Protected characteristic (potential for impact identified from Stage 1 of the EqlA)			
	Disability (inc. carers)	Age	Sex	Race
Increasing minimum contribution rate for working age claimants to 20%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Introducing a minimum income floor		Yes	Yes	
Aligning the regulations with housing benefit.	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Actions to mitigate any identified impacts

The possible introduction of an exceptional hardship scheme has been included as an option for consultation. The potential impact on working age claimants with protected characteristics will be taken into account, together with the consultation findings, when deciding which options will be taken forward. The need for any additional mitigating actions will be identified at that stage.

It is possible that individual claimants may be affected by more than one of the options presented for consultation. We will carry out data modelling to identify categories of claimants who may be affected by any options taken forward.

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 7 - Local plan update - Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The attached report was considered by the Planning Advisory Committee on 21 June 2016, relevant Minute extract below:

Planning Advisory Committee on 21 June 2016 (Minute 8)

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report which updated Members on the work programme for the production of planning policy documents to reflect current timetabling and content.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

Cabinet - 14 July 2016

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Planning Advisory Committee - 21 June 2016

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

Contact Officer Hannah Gooden, Planning Policy Team Leader, Ext. 7178

Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee: To note the revised Local Development Scheme

Recommendation to Cabinet: To note the revised Local Development Scheme

Reason for recommendation: To update the work programme for the production of planning policy documents to reflect current timetabling and content.

Summary

- 1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a rolling project plan that sets out the Council's proposals and timetable for the production of planning policy documents. The current Local Development Scheme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2015 and this update has been prepared to bring the timetable up to date. The main changes from earlier versions are the new dates for the production of the Local Plan and the removal of the residential character area assessments for Swanley and Edenbridge, which are now being prepared by alternative routes.

Introduction and Background











- 2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) no longer has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval, but an up-to-date programme has to be made available and published on the Council's website.

The LDS has been updated to reflect the current timetable for the preparation of local planning documents. It is proposed that the LDS be updated to include the timetable as set out below. This edition of the LDS includes amendments to bring the LDS up to date in the following ways:

Local Development Scheme
 (Planning Policy Timetable)
 Updated May 2016

	2016												2017												2018												2019													
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Development Plan Document																																																		
Local Plan																																																		

Development Plan Documents

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Preparation / Evidence Base |  | Pre-Hearing Meeting |
|  | Informal Consultation (Regulation 18) |  | Hearing |
|  | Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19) |  | Main Modifications Consultation |
|  | Cabinet/Committee Approval |  | Inspector's Report |
|  | Submission (Regulation 22) - Key Milestone |  | Adoption - Key Milestone |

Development Plan Documents (DPDs):

- 3 The timetable for the production of the Local Plan is now the sole item within the Local Development Scheme. The Council undertook a commitment during the ADMP examination in 2014, to undertake an early review of the Core Strategy, in part or in whole, within the next five years. An evidence base is currently in preparation in order to draft an issues and options plan for initial public consultation in late spring 2017. The draft Local Plan will then be subject to formal public consultation, published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2018, for examination and adoption in 2019.
 - Issues and Options consultation - late Spring 2017
 - Draft Local Plan consultation - Spring 2018
 - Pre-submission Publication - Summer 2018
 - Submission - Autumn 2018
 - Adoption - Summer 2019
- 4 The ADMP and CIL Charging Schedule are no longer included in the LDS timetable as these documents are now adopted. The work programme for the Gypsy and Traveller Plan is no longer included as a separate item within the LDS as this element will now be included within the wider Local Plan review.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

- 5 LDS no longer need to include the programme for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). However, information on the Council's adopted SPDs is included within the document for information. The Green Belt SPD and Statement of Community Involvement have been adopted.
- 6 The Residential Character Area Appraisals for Swanley and Edenbridge, which are scheduled to be prepared in 2016, are not now included within the LDS, as these workstreams are being progressed by the Neighbourhood Plan team in Edenbridge and through the Swanley and Hextable Master-Vision.

Next Steps

- 7 Once approved, the updated LDS will be made available and published on the Council's website.

Conclusions

- 8 This report outlines the updated Local Development Scheme timetable.

Agenda Item 7

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The reasons for the changes in the content and programme of the LDS are explained above.

Key Implications

Financial

No additional costs to the Council arise from the amendment of the LDS

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

All local authorities are required to produce an LDS to set out their timetable for the production of planning policy documents.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices

Appendix A - Local Development Scheme

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Sevenoaks District Council

Appendix A

Local Development Scheme

May 2016

Page 47



Agenda Item 7

Local Development Scheme May 2016

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	PREVIOUS SAVED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES	7
3	TIMETABLE FOR PRODUCTION OF THE LOCAL PLAN	8
4	DOCUMENT PROFILES	9
5	SUPPORTING STATEMENT	13
6	GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT FORMS	16
7	GLOSSARY OF TERMS	19

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the **project plan** for the production of the Local Plan for Sevenoaks District Council and has been prepared in accordance with Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 1.2 This Local Development Scheme sets out the Council’s programme for the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for the period up to 2019. The LDS no longer needs to include the programme for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). However, information on the Council’s adopted SPDs is included for information.
- 1.3 Progress in producing Local Plan documents will be assessed on an annual basis and reported in the Council’s ‘Authority Monitoring Report’ (AMR) published in December. The AMR will consider whether any changes are needed to the LDS in the light of changing circumstances or whether additional actions are needed to maintain the current timetable.
- 1.4 Following approval copies of the document will be made available for inspection at the Council Offices. Alternatively it may be viewed online on the Council’s website at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

About The District

- 1.5 Sevenoaks District Council has an area of 142 square miles and is located in West Kent bordering Greater London, Surrey and Sussex. The District covers three main towns, namely Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, together with many other small towns and villages and extensive areas of countryside.

Strategic Planning Context

- 1.6 The District is subject to a number of statutory national planning designations. 93% of the District lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and over 60% is within either the High Weald or Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are 24 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, approximately 2000 Listed Buildings and over 40 Conservation Areas within the District. In addition Sevenoaks has 17 designated Historic Parks and Gardens, the highest number in Kent.

Current Statutory Development Plan

- 1.7 Following the adoption of the Core Strategy for the District in February 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan in February 2015 the current Development Plan for the District comprises:

- *The Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011*
- *The Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) 2015*
- *the saved policies from the Kent Minerals Subject Plan: Brickheath Written Statement adopted 1986*
- *the saved policies from the Kent Minerals Local Plan: Construction Aggregates adopted 1993*
- *the saved policies from the Kent Minerals Local Plan: Chalk and Clay adopted 1997*
- *the saved policies from the Kent Minerals Local Plan: Oil and Gas adopted 1997*
- *the saved policies from the Kent Waste Local Plan adopted 1998*

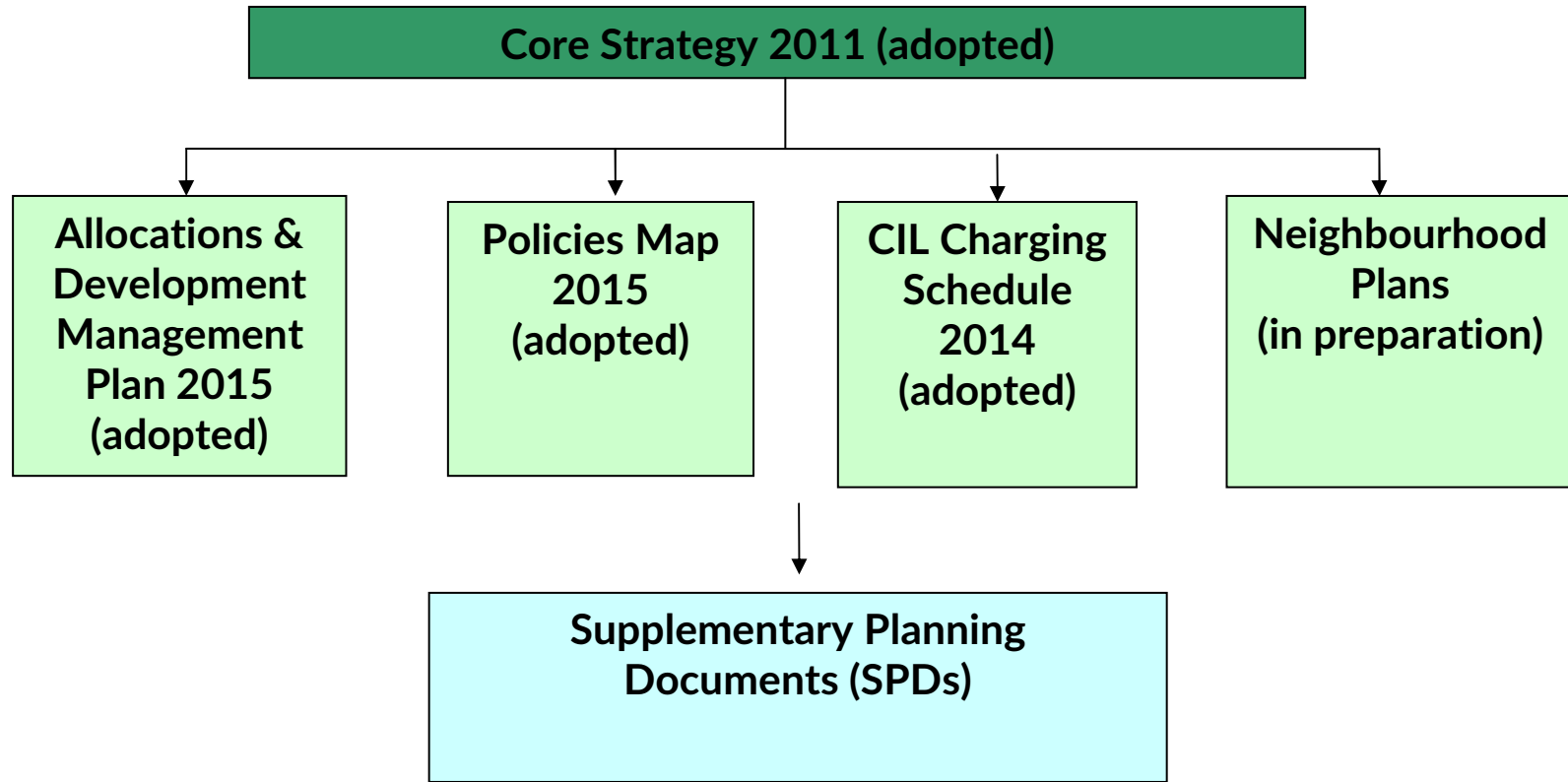
Local Plan

- 1.8 The figure over the page outlines the relationship between planning policy documents which will be or have already been produced.

- 1.9 The Council adopted the Core Strategy in April 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan in February 2015. The Council has several adopted SPDs. Kent Design was adopted as SPD in 2007, whilst the Residential Extensions SPD was adopted in May 2009. The Affordable Housing SPD and Countryside Assessment SPD were adopted in October 2011 and the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment was adopted in April 2012. The Development in the Green Belt SPD was adopted in February 2015 to accompany the Allocations and Development Management Plan. These documents, together with the SCI and LDS and a number of adopted Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, form the Local Plan for the District. The timetable for the production of additional Local Plan documents can be found in Chapter 3 Overall Programme and detailed descriptions of the documents can be found in Chapter 4 LDD Profiles.

- 1.10 The Council has adopted a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Future consultations to be carried out on all Development Plan Documents will be subject to the requirements set out in the SCI.

THE SEVENOAKS LOCAL PLAN KEY DIAGRAM



Page 52

Agenda Item 7

2 PREVIOUS SAVED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

- 2.1 The Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2000 has now been replaced by the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted 2015). The policies within the Local Plan 2000 which had been saved from 27 September 2007 are no longer used to assess planning applications.

3 TIMETABLE FOR PRODUCTION OF THE LOCAL PLAN











3.1 The following is an indicative timetable for the production of the Local Plan. The District supports the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans but they are not included as their preparation is led by local parish and town councils. Planning Briefs for other key development sites identified in the Core Strategy/ADMP may also be required.

- Issues and Options consultation – Late spring 2017
- Draft Local Plan consultation – Spring 2018
- Pre-submission Publication – Summer 2018
- Submission – Autumn 2018
- Adoption – Summer 2019

Local Development Scheme
(Planning Policy Timetable)
Updated May 2016

	2016												2017												2018												2019											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Development Plan Document																																																
Local Plan																																																

Development Plan Documents

	Preparation / Evidence Base		Pre-Hearing Meeting
	Informal Consultation (Regulation 18)		Hearing
	Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19)		Main Modifications Consultation
	Cabinet/Committee Approval		Inspector's Report
	Submission (Regulation 22) - Key Milestone		Adoption - Key Milestone

4 DOCUMENT PROFILES

- 4.1 The following table profiles the Development Plan Documents to be prepared by the Council up to the end of 2019.
- 4.2 This edition of the LDS includes amendments to bring the LDS up to date. The timetabling of the Local Plan Review has been updated to reflect the anticipated dates for consultation and examination.

Local Development Document	Area	Chain of Conformity	Led By	Other Contributor	Resources Required	Reasoned Justification
<p>Core Strategy DPD (adopted Feb 2011)</p> <p>The Core Strategy sets out the vision for the District. It contains spatial policies that deal with the distribution of development in the District and general policies that help to deliver the vision.</p>	Whole District	National Policy ▼ Core Strategy	SDC Policy Team	Adopted	Adopted	The Core Strategy is the first stage in preparing the spatial expression of the Community, and other strategies. It is a statutory requirement. It provides a strategic framework for the preparation of other local planning documents.

<p>The Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted Feb 2015)</p> <p>The plan identifies new land use site allocations including housing and other land use designations such as the Green Belt and AONB boundaries. It also includes detailed policies for the management of development that will be used in the determination of planning applications and to ensure that development will achieve the vision of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Whole District</p>	<p>National Policy ▼ Core Strategy ▼ Allocations and Development Management</p>	<p>SDC Policy Team</p>	<p>Chief Planning Officer Chief Officer Communities & Business Chief Officer Housing Chief Finance Officer Parish/Town Councils</p>	<p>Adopted</p>	<p>This deals with the allocation and designation of areas of land. In terms of new allocations it identifies housing sites to meet the Core Strategy provision. It shows national designations such as Green Belt, AONBs and local designations which aim to protect existing uses under development pressure such as green spaces, shopping frontages and business areas. It also includes detailed development management policies where needed that replace the remaining Saved Local Plan policies and provide an up to date local policy framework for the detailed consideration of development proposals.</p>
---	-----------------------	---	------------------------	---	----------------	---

<p>The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted Feb 2014)</p> <p>The charging schedule sets out the charges applicable to new developments to fund necessary infrastructure improvements for the District.</p>	<p>Whole District</p>	<p>National Policy ▼ Core Strategy ▼ CIL Charging Schedule</p>	<p>SDC Policy Team</p>	<p>Adopted</p>	<p>Adopted</p>	<p>The preparation of a charging schedule is a requirement for authorities introducing CIL. Funding from CIL is necessary to support necessary infrastructure improvements required to support new development in the District. The charging schedule is supported by evidence of infrastructure needs and costs drawing on the Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p>
---	-----------------------	--	------------------------	----------------	----------------	---

<p>Local Plan Review</p>	<p>Whole District</p>	<p>National Policy ▼ Local Plan</p>	<p>SDC Policy Team</p>	<p>Chief Planning Officer Chief Officer Communities & Business Chief Officer Housing Parish/Town Councils Neighbouring Authorities Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>Officer and Member time PAC / Cabinet time Financial resources for consultation, publication, postage and publicity</p>	<p>An additional work-stream has been added to the LDS, namely the Local Plan Review. This is a commitment from the ADMP examination, that the Council will undertake an early review of the Core Strategy, in part or in whole, within the next five years. The Council's evidence base will be updated, starting with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Options will then be developed and a revised Local Plan will be prepared, culminating in initial public consultation in late spring 2017. The draft revised Local Plan will be published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2018, for examination and adoption in 2019.</p>
---------------------------------	-----------------------	---	------------------------	--	--	--

5 SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Background Studies

- 5.1 The Council has commissioned a number of background studies that will be used as an evidence base for the preparation of the Local Plan. These are set out in the table below:

Study	Comments
Affordable Housing Viability Study	Completed November 2009 Being Updated in 2016/17
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Completed September 2015
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) / Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELAA)	Completed July 2008 Being Updated in 2015/16
Tourist Accommodation Study	Completed 2015
Economic Needs Study	Completed October 2013 Being Updated in 2016
Retail Study	Completed May 2005/Updated 2009 Being Updated in 2016
Open Space Study, Sport and Leisure	Completed January 2009 Being Updated 2016
Settlement Hierarchy	Completed October 2009 Updated in 2015/16
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Completed May 2008 Being Updated in 2016
Transport Study	Completed January 2007 Being Updated in 2016/17
Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport	Completed July 2010 Being Updated in 2016/17
Gypsies and Travellers Local Needs Assessment	Completed February 2012
CIL Viability Assessment	Completed July 2012
Swanley & Hextable Masterplan	Being produced in 2016

Sustainability Appraisal

5.2 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all DPDs will be required to assess how they will impact on the social, economic and environmental fabric of the District. SA involves five stages and the preparation of three key reports as follows:

- *Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the Scope (Scoping Report)*
- *Stage B: Developing and refining options (Initial SA Report)*
- *Stage C: Appraising the effects of the plan (Final SA Report)*
- *Stage D: Consulting on the plan and SA Report*
- *Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan*

5.3 Sustainability Appraisal was carried out at all stages in the preparation of the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Reporting Structures

5.4 Cabinet is responsible for making executive decisions affecting preparation of Local Plan documents, scrutinised by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). Draft LDDs will go to Full Council for approval prior to Formal Submission.

Resources

5.5 The Planning Policy Team is located within the Planning Services section of the Council. Members of the team have other duties in addition to the preparation of the Local Plan.

-
- 5.6 For the preparation of specific Local Development Documents, the Council will call on the expertise of other appropriate members of staff. These include members of the Development Management Team, Housing Policy team, and Communities and Business Team.
- 5.7 The Council will draw on expertise from Kent County Council and also has access to a range of expertise and skills within the Kent Downs and High Weald AONB Units.
- 5.8 A Service Plan with Performance Management targets based on LDS milestones and internal reporting is prepared annually and will be reviewed in line with the Authority Monitoring Report and any revisions to this LDS. This will be used to inform individual work plans for team members.

Financial Resources

- 5.9 A 5 year budget plan has been prepared in consultation with the Chief Officer, Finance which will form part of the Council's overall budget setting.

6 GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT FORMS

Date: May 2016
 Service: Local Plan
 Assessed By: Hannah Gooden
 Location: Planning Policy
 Review Date: May 2017

No	Hazard	Severity 1-5 1=low 5=high	Likelihood 1-5 1=low 5=high	Level of Risk	Control Action / Contingency Action	Result	Triggers for Action
1	External factors such as implications of the National Planning Policy Framework leading to uncertainty in the strategic planning background and potential delay	4	3	12	This is beyond the Council's direct control Maintain close liaison with PINS, and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Monitor outcome of comparable DPDs and identify relevant lessons	N	Inspector's advice
2	Government planning reforms may lead to changes in future requirements for Local Plans	2	4	8	The Core Strategy already identifies a significant role for Parish Plans and Village Design Statements and for other initiatives developed at a local level, including Neighbourhood Plans. It is therefore well-placed to take on board the Localism agenda which reduces the severity score. Monitor proposals and be prepared to carry out a further review of the LDS if	A	Progress in implementing the Localism Act and related guidance

Page 62

Agenda Item 7

					necessary. Give priority to DPDs if there are additional demands on available resources		
3	Staff turnover, sickness or retirement	4	3	12	Incentives maintained to retain staff including market payments and career grade structures. Give priority to DPDs over SPDs should there be an extended loss of staff resources.	N	Appraisal System and 1-1 sessions.
4	Production and Council approval of the various components of the Local Plan are late (for whatever reason) with subsequent knock-on effect on the overall timetable	3	2	6	Reporting procedures in place to review progress against timetables and intervene at an early stage to keep Local Plan work on track.	A	Failure to meet targets and milestones in the LDS
5	Extended Citrix failure. Failure of main computer server - inability to access software programs	5	1	5	Return to conventional network system Set up limited paper files for essential records	T	Known problem - if it fails, everything stops
6	The budget for Local Plan work is inadequate financial resources to complete the Local Plan according to timetable.	4	2	8	A long term rolling budget programme has been set and agreed by Members. The LDS has been reviewed to re-programme activity and achieve a substantial saving by reducing the number of separate DPDs Undertake joint working with partners to	A	Budget over spend

					cut costs Maximise use of the website to reduce printing costs		
7	The Inspector for the Examination considers the DPD as unsound resulting in considerable extra work for planning officers and failure to meet planned timescales	5	2	10	The Council will seek to minimise this risk by ensuring that the DPDs are sound founded on a robust evidence base and high standard to stakeholder and community engagement Use of Counsel to advise on procedural and soundness issues Establish and maintain close liaison with key stakeholders and maintain close liaison with PINS, and the CLG Monitor outcome of comparable DPDs and identify relevant lessons Maintain staff training.	A	Inspector's Report
8	There is a legal challenge to the adoption of the DPD	4	1	4	The Council will seek to minimise this risk by ensuring that the DPDs are sound founded on a robust evidence base and high standard of stakeholder and community engagement	T	Notice of challenge

Key

N = Not adequately controlled (11-25)

A = Adequately controlled (6-10)

T = Trivial risk (1-5)

7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviation	Document Name	Document Description
AMR	Authority Monitoring Report	Authorities are required to produce AMRs to assess the implementation of the LDS and the extent to which policies in the Local Plan are delivering the Council's spatial vision.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A levy on new development to fund infrastructure improvements. The levy is supported by a charging schedule which sets out the levy for different types of development supported by evidence of future needs and costs of provision.
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government	DCLG sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. In England, it has responsibility for all race equality and community cohesion related issues, building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues.
DPD	Development Plan Document	The Documents that a local planning authority must prepare, and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. The Core Strategy is the key plan within the Local Plan and should be prepared by every local planning authority. Other DPDs may be prepared where necessary to provide additional detail which would not be suitable for a Core Strategy and which needs to have development plan status.
LDD	Local Development Document	LDDs comprise DPDs, and SPDs.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The LDS sets out the programme for preparing Development Plan Documents.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Government statement of national planning policy.
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance	Government Planning Practice Guidance providing explanation of the NPPF
PINS	Planning Inspectorate	Independent body which undertakes examination of the Local Plan.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the policies and proposals contained within the Local Plan.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Document explaining to stakeholders and the community, how and when they will be involved in the preparation of the Local Plan, and the steps that will be taken to facilitate this involvement.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Documents which will provide further guidance regarding how development plan policies should be implemented.

This page is intentionally left blank