

13 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 05.07.17

Cabinet

Membership:




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


Agenda

There are no fire drills planned. If the fire alarm is activated, which is a continuous siren with a flashing red light, please leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs.

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 June 2017, 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		
a) Planning Advisory response to referral - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board	(Pages 5 - 8)	
REPORTS ALSO CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES		
5. Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a scheme etc) (England) Order 2014	(Pages 9 - 16)	James Cox Tel: 01732227312
6. Housing Strategy 2017	(Pages 17 - 86)	Gavin Missons Tel: 01732 227332



- | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7. | Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Policy | (Pages 87 - 102) | Hayley Brooks
Tel: 01732 227272 |
| |  | | |
| 8. | Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment | (Pages 103 - 118) | Hayley Brooks
Tel: 01732 227272 |
| |  | | |
| 9. | Local Plan Issues and Options | (Pages 119 - 214) | Antony Lancaster
Tel: 01732227326 |
| |  | | |

 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 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Lowe (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dickins, Firth, Hogarth, Piper and Scholey

Cllrs. Edwards-Winsor, Eyre, Hunter and Pett were also present.

7. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 20 April, 9 May, and 6 June 2017, be approved and signed as a correct record subject to the replacement of the word 'incumbent' with 'encumbrance' in a sentence in minute 94.

8. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

9. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

There were none.

10. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

11. Governance of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Chairman of the Planning Advisory Committee introduced the report which made some recommendations to amending the current CIL governance arrangements. The recommended changes were intended to assist the CIL Spending Board in making decisions and make the process more consistent. The Chairman of the Planning Advisory Committee advised that the Advisory Committee had considered and debated the same report and had agreed to recommend it to Cabinet with some amendments as detailed in the reference.

Members considered Recommendation A, which suggested changing the Spending Board membership from a pool to a fixed committee. Some Members expressed reservations against changing the Spending Board away from a pool system. They considered the pool system to be an appropriate way of ensuring consistency of approach and preventing conflicts of interest. It was considered by these Members that the pool system would protect the reputation of the Council. Other Members

were of the view that a fixed membership for the Spending Board would be more appropriate and sufficient to achieve the same end.

Cabinet did not consider that the recommendation from the Planning Advisory Committee was sufficiently clear and the Chairman of Cabinet moved that Recommendation A be referred back to the Planning Advisory Committee to devise a recommendation on a model for Spending Board similar to that applicable to Development Control Committee. This resolution was approved. Recommendations B-E were unanimously accepted by Cabinet.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved:

- a) Recommendation A from the Planning Advisory Committee of 16 May 2017 be referred back to the Planning Advisory Committee to devise a recommendation on a model for Spending Board similar to that applicable to Development Control Committee;
- b) the original pro-forma be amended as illustrated in the proposed form at Appendix A to the report, and that the pro-formas be used immediately upon approval;
- c) as well the initial validation, bids go through another validation process, as detailed within the report, with recommendations based on the initial priorities laid out for consideration at Appendix C to the report, with permission to refine and agree these at the initial meeting of the Spending Board;
- d) the report circulated and drafted by officers, with the assistance of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, consist of the following
 - *Summary of current CIL Legislation or any recent changes.*
 - *Amount of funding available to be spent by the Spending Board.*
 - *Summary of where the CIL receipts have come from.*
 - *Summary of needs highlighted in the Infrastructure Strategy (Regulation 123 List)*
 - *Summary of the priorities for the Spending of CIL receipts. Summary of the top 5 bids and reasons for this.*
 - *Summary of all bids submitted.*
 - *Recommendation of officers.*
 - Appendices will consist of the completed Assessment Criteria and pro-formas completed;
- e) the provisional timescales set out at Appendix D to the report be noted.

12. Provisional Outturn 2016/17

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which reported the Provisional Financial Outturn figures for 2016/17. He advised that the Finance Advisory Committee had considered and debated the same report and agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.

The Head of Finance set out that the final revenue position for 2016/17 was a favourable variance of £350,000. The final outturn variance would be transferred to the Budget Stabilisation Fund.

The Head of Finance set out that the outturn took into account the final position on the Collection Fund for the year and advised that the Council was able to retain an additional amount of £392,000 for business rates income for 2016/17.

The Head of Finance also set out that Appendix A provided a summary of the year's activity compared to budget. This showed a favourable variance for the year of £350,000 after the transfers to reserves for carry forward items approved on 20 April 2017.

She set out that as part of the Council's sound budgetary control arrangements, Finance Advisory Committee had considered the explanations provided by Chief Officers for any variances between outturn and budget. These were shown in Appendix B.

The Head of Finance also set out that Provision had been set aside for an issue relating to Land Charges, being the repayment of claims for personal search fees. The case had concluded and it was no longer correct to hold a Provision and so the unrequired balance of £78,000 had been transferred to the Budget Stabilisation Reserve.

The figures were still subject to completion of final accounts and annual audit.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.08 PM

CHAIRMAN

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 16 June 2017. The decisions contained in Minutes 11 and 12 take effect immediately.

Item 4a - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Board

At Cabinet on 15 June 2017 (Minute 11), the following was referred to Planning Advisory Committee:

- a) Recommendation A from the Planning Advisory Committee of 16 May 2017 be referred back to the Planning Advisory Committee to devise a recommendation on a model for Spending Board similar to that applicable to Development Control Committee;

At Planning Advisory Committee on 22 June 2017 (Minute 15) this was considered and it was

Resolved: That

- a) Officers be delegated authority to finalise a draft CIL spending Board protocol in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Chairman of the CIL spending board;
- b) the draft protocol be referred to Governance Committee;
- c) it be recommended to Cabinet that the CIL Spending Board consist of a fixed membership of 19 Members; and
- d) the draft protocol be recommended to Cabinet.

The draft protocol was referred to Governance Committee on 27 June 2017 (Minute 6) and it was

Resolved: That

- a) the reference be noted; and
- b) no objection be raised with the proposed draft protocol.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are asked to note the action that has been taken and agree the attached protocol (Appendix A) recommended by the Planning Advisory Committee and agreed to by the Governance Committee.

If the protocol is agreed Members are requested to:

- i) **delegate authority to the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to make the necessary changes and/or consequential amendments to the Councils' Constitution to enact the agreed protocol; and**
- ii) **appoint the membership of the CIL Spending Board (as discussed in Appendix B).**

Draft Protocol for the CIL Spending Board

Role of members and members conduct

- The agenda for the CIL Spending Board will be available for at least 5 working days before the Board meet. It is incumbent that Members of the Spending Board ensure that they remain impartial and receptive to all points of debate before reaching a decision on how to vote on a Bid.
- Members should remain at meetings of the Board until the end of the meeting unless they have a compelling reason not to do so.
- Members who enter the meeting during discussion of a Bid, or are not present during the whole of the discussion, should not vote on the Bid as they will not have heard all the arguments for and against the proposal.
- Members should be informed when a Bid is submitted by the Council or involves the provision of infrastructure on Council land.
- Members can vote on all Bids but must make declarations of interest, Lobbying and Pre-determination before any Bids are debated.
- Members should contact Legal and Democratic Services before a meeting if they have any doubt in their minds regarding a potential Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).
- All sitting members of the Board must avoid reaching a judgement before all relevant evidence is presented to the Board. All sitting Board members must ensure that they never give the impression of closing their minds to information relevant to the Bid.

Board structure, procedures and speaking protocol

- There is a fixed Chairman and Vice-Chair, who are part of the 19 members proposed. They will be elected annually at Annual Council.
- 5 members are required to constitute a quorum.
- Officers will be invited to introduce a summary of CIL at the beginning of the meeting to include;
 - Summary of CIL Legislation
 - Amount of funding available
 - Where CIL receipts have come from
- Each bid will then be discussed individually.
- Bids will only be debated at the discretion of the Chairman, if it is requested for debate by a Local Member or if there are registered speakers and this must be agreed prior to the meeting.

- Those wishing to speak must contact the District Council before 5pm on the day of the Spending Board at the latest. However at the Chairman's discretion, late registration may be accepted until the start of the meeting. Only one public speaker supporting the application and one against will be permitted.
- The company/person/body submitting the Bid will be expected to present their Bid to the Spending Board. Visual aids are allowed by speakers.
- At the beginning of the meeting the Chairman will indicate the Bids on which Local Members, the Town or Parish Council, applicants or members of the public have asked to speak, which shall automatically be reserved for debate.
- The Chairman will read out the project title.
- The officer will introduce the item and lay out the key considerations and summarise the recommendation.
- Speakers who have previously registered will be invited to do so by the Chairman in the following Order for a maximum of 3 minutes (Local Members will have 4 minutes):
 - A member of the public wishing to speak for the Bid.
 - A member of the public wishing to speak against the Bid
 - The company/agent/body responsible for the Bid.
 - The Local Council representative.
 - The Local Member
- Speakers will then be asked questions of clarification.
- Members of the Spending Board will then have an opportunity to ask questions of the officers present.
- Discussion of each Bid will then take place.
- A decision on each Bid will only be made at the end of the meeting after all the Bids are discussed.
- A vote will then be taken on each bid after a motion has been moved and seconded. Any motion put forward can only be for one of the following recommendations:
 - Funding for the scheme is approved
 - Partial funding for the scheme is approved
 - Funding for the scheme is not approved on the basis that the other proposed schemes have been given greater priority
 - Funding for the scheme is not approved on the basis that insufficient evidence has been provided to justify it.
 - Funding for the scheme is not approved on the basis that the scheme is not considered appropriate for the use of CIL.
- A vote will take place and the Chairman will advise the meeting of the result.

Memberships and Appointments

The current membership of the CIL Spending Board (Appendix H of the Constitution) is as follows:

(Current) Membership

Each Board to consist of 7 Members: 1 permanent Chairman, 1 permanent Vice Chairman and at least 5 members called (more if the Chairman or Vice Chairman are unable to sit) from a pool of 13 members.

(7 Members: 5 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 UKIP)

Chairman: Cllr. Edwards-Winser

Vice Chairman: Cllr. Reay

Pool: Cllrs. Ball, Mrs. Bayley, Brown, Clack, Dyball, Halford, Kelly, Maskell, McArthur, McGregor, Parson, Purves and Miss. Stack

Substitutes (in order to maintain political proportionality): Cllr. Dr.Canet, Lindsay

If the draft protocol is agreed, a fixed membership will need to be appointed, subject to political proportionality rules, of 19 members (or other figure that may be agreed).

(19 Members: 17 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 UKIP)

Item 5 - Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a scheme etc) (England) Order 2014

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 20 June 2017. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

This page is intentionally left blank

REDRESS SCHEMES FOR LETTINGS AGENCY WORK AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT WORK (REQUIREMENT TO BELONG TO A SCHEME ETC) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2014

Cabinet - 13 July 2017

Report of Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Health & Housing Advisory Committee - 20 June 2017

Key Decision: No

The Executive Summary: The Order makes it a legal requirement for all lettings agents and property managers in England to join a Government-approved redress scheme by 1st October 2014. Enforcement and the setting of the level of penalty charge applicable for a breach of the Order is the responsibility of the Council.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer James Cox, Ext. 7312

Recommendation to Advisory Committee: To recommend to Cabinet to approve a penalty charge of £5,000 for breaching the order, unless following representation extenuating circumstance applies.

Recommendation to Cabinet: To approve a penalty charge of £5,000 for breaching the order, unless following representation extenuating circumstance applies.

Reason for recommendation: To determine the amount of monetary penalty applicable in each case of a breach of the Order. Without such a determination enforcement activity will not be possible.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014, SI 2014/2359 became operative on 1st October 2014.

As a result of the Order tenants, prospective tenants, landlords dealing with commercial lettings agents in the private rented sector; as well as leaseholders and freeholders dealing with property managers in the residential sector can complain to an independent person about the service

Agenda Item 5

received. This will make it easier for tenants and landlords to complain about poor service and prevent disputes escalating.

3. The 'Enforcement Authority' for the Order is the Council.
4. The Council can impose a fine of up to £5,000 where it is satisfied, on the balance of probability that someone is engaged in letting or management work and is required to be a member of a redress scheme, but has not joined.
5. The three government approved redress schemes are:
 - i. Ombudsman Services Property (www.ombudsman-services.org)
 - ii. Property Redress Scheme (www.theprs.co.uk)
 - iii. The Property Ombudsman (www.tpos.co.uk)
6. Enforcement process is prescribed by the Order and is set out below.

Step 1: Notice of Intent
When it is proposed to impose a monetary penalty, the authority must serve on that person a written notice of what is proposed.
Step 2: Representations and Objections
A person on whom the notice is served may within 28 days make written representations to the proposed imposition of a monetary penalty.
Step 3: Final Notice
After 28 days the Council will decide on whether to impose a monetary penalty, if it does then at least 28 days must be given before payment is required. When imposing a monetary penalty a final notice must be issued explaining <ol style="list-style-type: none">i) why the fine is being imposed;ii) the amount to be paid;iii) how payment may be made;iv) the consequences of failing to pay;v) that there is a right to appeal against the penalty to the First-tier Tribunal and that any appeal must be made within 28 days after the imposition of the fine.
Step 4: Appeals
An appeal can be made by the letting agent or property manager to the First-tier Tribunal, who can agree with the enforcement authority's notice to

issue a penalty or may decide to quash or vary the notice and fine.
Step 5: Recovery of the penalty
If the lettings agent or property manager does not pay the fine within the period specified the authority can recover the fine with the permission of the court as if payable under a court order.

A flow chart is attached as an appendix.

7. Guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government states ‘The expectation is that a £5,000 fine should be considered the norm and that a lower fine should only be charged if the enforcement authority is satisfied that there are extenuating circumstances’. Following this guidance it is envisaged that the full £5000.00 penalty would be applied.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

8. Option 1 - Do nothing, given the determination of Central Government to ensure rogue elements in the private rented sector either improve their service or leave the sector, option 1 is unrealistic.
9. Option 2 - To agree a different penalty charge, Central Government has specifically expressed a wish for the imposition of the maximum monetary penalty.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no significant financial implications in terms of additional administrative or staff costs. It is expected there will be a very limited number of penalty notices issued.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Determining the monetary penalty is required before the penalty charges are enforceable. Processes associated with issuing of a penalty charge, payment and appeals are clearly described within the Order.

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.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the maximum level of monetary penalty, (£5,000) is applied to those who breach the requirements of the Order.

Agenda Item 5

Appendices

Flowchart - Letting Agent and Property Manager
Redress Enforcement Process

Background Papers:

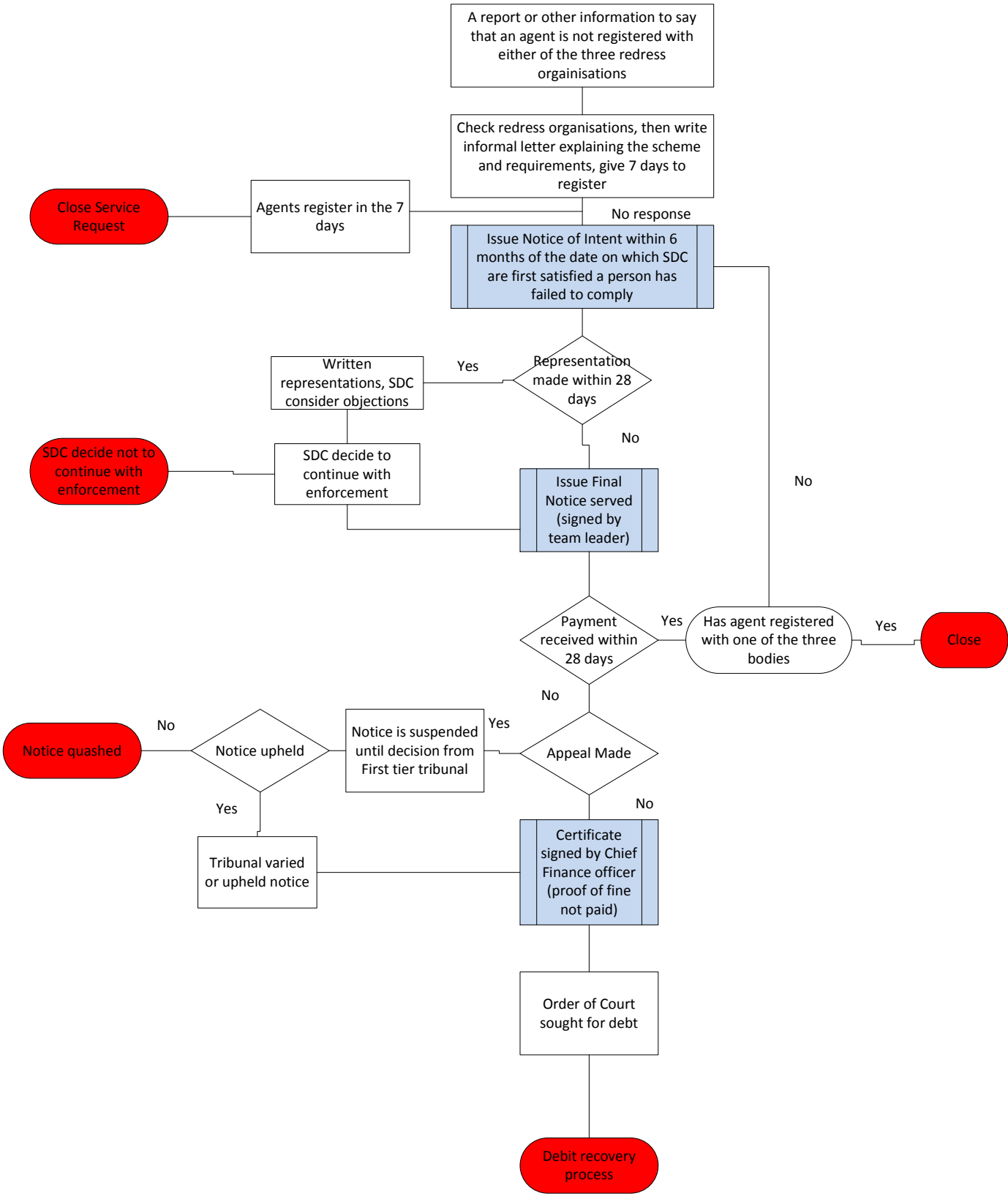
The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work
and Property Management Work (Requirement to
Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014,
SI 2014/2359

Annex C: Improving the private rented sector and
tackling bad practice.

Richard Wilson

Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services

Letting Agent and Property Manager Redress Enforcement Process



This page is intentionally left blank

Item 6 - Housing Strategy 2017

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 20 June 2017. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

This page is intentionally left blank

HOUSING STRATEGY 2017

Cabinet - 13 July 2017

Report of	Chief Planning Officer
Status	For consideration
Also considered by	Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 20 June 2017 Planning Advisory Committee - 22 June 2017 Council - 18 July 2017 (decision)
Key Decision	No

This report supports the Key Aim of housing, health and wider community strategy as set out in the District Council's Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Gavin Missons, Ext. 7332

Recommendation to the Housing and Health Advisory Committee (HHAC): That Members recommend approval of the Draft Housing Strategy.

Recommendation to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC): That Members recommend approval of the Draft Housing Strategy.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That, subject to comments from the HHAC and PAC, Members recommend approval of the Draft Housing Strategy to Full Council.

Recommendation to Full Council: That Members approve the Draft Housing Strategy as District Council policy.

Reason for recommendation: To agree new approaches to the delivery of housing, health and wider community strategy in the District.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Back in 2016, the District Council's Housing and Health Advisory Committee agreed to review its existing housing strategy with a view to developing an updated version which would better integrate housing and health services.
- 2 The Council's elected members were invited to a housing strategy development workshop led by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and

Agenda Item 6

Health. Participating members were able to agree a short-list of preferred options and this subsequently formed the general direction of travel for a new Housing Strategy. This was then presented to a wide-ranging audience at the Council's housing forum with Marcus Jones MP and Minister for Local Government as keynote speaker.

- 3 In order to progress the project, a Local Housing Needs Study (LHNS) was commissioned to build on evidence contained in the District Council's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). **As part of the study a wide ranging survey was sent to every household in the District in order to understand local needs and aspirations and how these might differ around the District. An impressive 18% response rate was achieved which adds strength to the LHNS as an important evidence base.**
- 4 Whereas the aim of a SHMA is to provide high-level data in order to balance the housing market, the LHNS is intended to qualify housing aspirations and provides much more detailed housing intelligence presented at place-making level (six geographically grouped ward areas).
- 5 The key findings of the LHNS are, as follows:
 - Lower quartile house price to lower quartile income ratio of 13.4;
 - Limited private rented sector - lower quartile and median rental prices more expensive than the county, region and England as a whole;
 - House prices and access to deposits will be major stumbling blocks, particularly as there are relatively few intermediate housing products;
 - Skilled middle-income groups excluded from affordable rented housing but struggle to access home ownership;
 - Affordable housing delivery should be more focussed towards sale rather than rent (aspirational, however; LHNS recommends further investigations on economic viability, local income, savings and newly-introduced intermediate housing products etc);
 - A need for smaller social sector and a demand for larger private sector dwellings;
 - A growing need for disabled adaptations and other assistive technologies to support independent living;
 - The majority of older people want to stay put in their own homes with housing-related support and other in situ solutions;
 - A wide-range of housing types and tenures required for older people that *do* intend to down-size to more suitable housing; and

- A continuing need to improve the private sector housing stock condition.
- 6 The completed LHNS has subsequently informed the new Draft Housing Strategy (Appendix A). The strategy sets out a series of strategic priorities, many updated from the previous housing strategy, under the following three headings:
- Providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures
 - Improving the quality and use of existing housing stock
 - Meeting the needs of vulnerable and low income households
- 7 The Draft Housing Strategy has been made available for three weeks for public comment. The consultation period runs until 9 June 2017 and comments received will be considered when finalising the Draft Housing Strategy.
- 8 In addition to providing an evidence base to the housing strategy, the LHNS is also a key part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan and has also helped to inform its Issues and Options document.

Next steps

- 9 If approved, the District Council will prepare more detailed action plans (where required) to deliver on the agreed strategic priorities as contained in the Draft Housing Strategy. Once complete, these will be made available to Members as internal working documents.
- 10 The District Council will formally launch the published Housing Strategy at a housing forum which is currently planned for late 2017. Members will be formally invited to the event and a copy of the final document will be provided.

Key Implications

Financial

The Housing Strategy will be delivered with existing resources and by bidding for additional external funding, where required.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The District Council has certain statutory duties related to this Draft Housing Strategy and it is good practice to set out its approach to strategy in this respect.

Equality Assessment

The Draft Housing Strategy has been developed taking into account all residents in the District and with the aim of improving housing conditions, tackling health

Housing Strategy

Consultation Draft

May 2017



DRAFT

For more information:

Call **01732 227000**

Visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/

Email housingpolicy@sevenoaks.gov.uk

This document is available in large print and can be explained in other languages by calling 01732 227000

Contents	
- Foreword (TBC)	
- Why housing matters - Cllr Michelle Lowe, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health	4
Context	
- The journey so far	5
- Key policy context and supporting evidence base	6
- Current housing profile	8
- Strategic housing priorities and vision statement	11
Providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures	
- Land and design	12
- Affordable housing	14
- Private rented sector	20
- Market housing	22
- Modern methods of construction	23
Improving the quality and use of the existing housing stock	
- Housing stock condition (inc. energy efficiency)	26
- Housing use	30
Meeting the needs of vulnerable and low-income households	
- Housing options and homelessness prevention	39
- Supporting people to remain independent in their own homes	42
- Supported housing	45
- Vulnerable groups	48
- Impact assessments	58
- Governance and monitoring	
- Consultation arrangements	
- Key links	61
- Placemaking area map (referenced p15, Table 4)	62

Glossary of terms

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BRE	Building Research Establishment
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CLT	Community Land Trust
DFG	Disabled-Facilities Grant
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HERO	Housing, Energy and Retraining Options
HMO	House in Multiple-Occupation
HIA	Home Improvement Agency
HHSRS	Housing, Health and Safety Rating System
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
MoD	Ministry of Defence
OMR	Open Market Rents
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
S106	Section 106
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Housing association	Also known as registered provider, registered social provider (RSL) or social housing provider. A provider of affordable housing which is registered with Government's Homes and Communities Agency.
Affordable housing	Also known as social housing. Generic term for all social housing tenures.
Social rented housing	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need. Rents are set through the national rent regime but are generally around 50-60% of market rents.
Affordable rented housing	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need. Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.
Intermediate housing	Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants can have a household income of up to £80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District. Intermediate housing includes shared equity, shared ownership and intermediate rented housing.

Why housing matters

Housing and health are intrinsically linked. The home where we live and the location of that home has a massive impact on our overall health and wellbeing. Good housing policy that is strongly underpinned by planning creates strong and healthy communities. Our Housing Strategy's overarching aim is to try to meet the District's housing need. Whether that means home adaptations for older or vulnerable people; more purpose-built older people's accommodation; or more family-sized affordable and starter homes – and to try to ensure they are built where they are needed.

Whether a home has been neglected and is cold, damp and full of hazards; whether a home is under-occupied or over-crowded; or whether it is isolated or in an unsustainable location – it will have a negative impact on our lives. This Housing Strategy aims to tackle these issues. We also aim to continue to combat homelessness by tackling the root causes of it: whether it is debt, mental health or domestic abuse to list some – we aim to help people before they face eviction and a life of rough sleeping on the streets.

We know that our District is very expensive to live in – with house prices up to thirteen times higher than average wages it is almost impossible for younger people to step onto the housing ladder. Yet home ownership is their ambition. Our Housing Strategy aims to support as many innovative schemes from 'Starter Homes' and shared-ownership to micro-homes as we can to give our young people the chance to own their own home in the District where they grew up. We need to make sure we have enough older people's supported housing and accommodation for vulnerable people such as people with mental or physical ill health issues, or military personnel re-adapting to civilian life.

We want to enable as many local people that grew up in this District and who want to remain in this District to be able to do so. We will support local connection criteria for all affordable homes that we are able to in order to comply with Government policy. We believe that local connection policies help to keep families and communities together – which also promotes overall wellbeing and is a major part of the solution in preventing isolation and loneliness.

This Housing Strategy is based on policies devised by the elected members of this Council combined with a comprehensive Local Housing Needs Study that has examined the housing needs of all of our residents. We are sure it will make a major difference to ensuring people are living in the best possible accommodation to meet their needs, thereby promoting their overall health and wellbeing.

– Councillor Michelle Lowe, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health

The journey so far

Back in 2016, the Council opted to review its existing Housing Strategy with a view to identifying more effective approaches to the provision of housing and related services within the District.

In order to kick-start the process, the Council's elected members were invited to participate in a housing strategy development workshop and which was led by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health. Through that process participating members were able to agree a short-list of preferred options and this subsequently formed the general direction of travel. This was all then presented to a wide-ranging audience at the Council's last housing forum and with Marcus Jones MP and Minister for Local Government as its keynote speaker. At that point, and with the support of its partners, the Council committed to develop a full new Housing Strategy with the key aim of better integrating housing and health services.

A Local Housing Needs Study was subsequently commissioned and this provided a wealth of information on a wide-range of housing needs down to individual District ward level. The Council was then able to cross-reference its updated housing intelligence with feedback from members, partners and the wider community in order to develop a more detailed understanding of the District's housing requirements. At that point, the Council was able to determine its strategic priorities going forward and develop a wide-range of contributory actions - all of which are now set out in this Housing Strategy.

If required, a second edition of this Housing Strategy will be issued in order to take into account developing policy and with particular regard to the Council's emerging Local Plan, elements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and Government's Housing White Paper (February 2017): 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market'.

With a significant proportion of existing and long-established housing strategy continuing to be effective, this new document only focuses on areas where updated evidence needs to be reviewed and/or a change in approach is required. Therefore, this Housing Strategy should be read in conjunction with individual housing sub-strategies and action plans.

Key policy context and supporting evidence base

With several local, county and national policies in place and a wide-range of supporting evidence, the following is just a summary of those that are key and most topical in the development of this Housing Strategy.

Sevenoaks District Community Plan Priorities 2016-19

Updated in 2016, the Council's Community Plan Priorities 2016-19 sets out a number of priorities which have helped to guide this Housing Strategy. This includes the provision of affordable housing, support for older and vulnerable people to live more independently, and wider health-related issues such as social isolation and loneliness.

Existing and emerging Local Plan

The Council is intending to update and adopt a new Local Plan by 2019 and this will set its strategic priorities through to 2035. With scope for a new policy direction through the emerging Local Plan, this Housing Strategy will be inform that process.

Housing White Paper 2017

Government has set out its proposals for future housing legislation over four chapters in its latest Housing White Paper. These are: 1) Planning for the right homes in the right places; 2) Building homes faster; 3) Diversifying the market; and 4) Helping people now. Although much of the detail is still to be agreed, this Housing Strategy broadly reflects these Government priorities.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015

Completed in 2015, the Council's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment was undertaken as part of a wider West Kent analysis and underpins the development of housing, economic development and regeneration policies. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment is a key evidence base for this Housing Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.

Local Housing Needs Study 2016

Whereas the Strategic Housing Market Assessment aims to balance the housing market, the Local Housing Needs Study was undertaken to qualify housing aspirations and provides much more detailed housing-related data down to individual ward level. This provides information across all housing types and tenures as well as a wide-range of client groups, including older and vulnerable people. Again, the Local

Agenda Item 6

Housing Needs Study is a key evidence base for this Housing Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.

West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Being updated in 2017, the West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy sets out common areas of work and related sub-regional housing aims and objectives. In the new edition, and for the first time, the strategy will also include some general housing objectives in addition to what has previously been a document focused solely on homelessness.

Better Homes: Localism, Aspiration and Choice - A Housing Strategy for Kent and Medway

The Housing Strategy for Kent and Medway sets out several objectives, including the delivery of key infrastructure to support managed growth and housing delivery, regeneration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, providing housing choice and affordability, retrofitting of the existing housing stock and supporting vulnerable people through good housing and support services.

West Kent Integration Deal

The West Kent Integration Deal has been created to implement the King's Fund¹ recommendations by creating a person-centred approach to the health and wellbeing of the population. This also ties in with the Kent Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Live Well Kent and the Council's own Health Inequalities Action Plan.

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 positions housing as central in the overhaul of the care system in England. The Act encourages providers to establish and develop services that: 1) Promote people's independence, connections and wellbeing; 2) Prevent or postpone the need for care and support; 3) Put people in control and ensuring that services respond to what they need; 4) Give carers a right to assessment for support; and 5) Promote the integration of health and social care.

¹ The Kings Fund: kingsfund.org.uk

Current housing profile

As at 01/04/16, there were 49,820 dwellings in the District and with a split of 85% private and 15% social sector tenures. Within the private sector, 73% of dwellings were owner-occupied and 12% private rented.

Market housing

With the supply of new housing nowhere near matching growth in demand, local property prices have continued to rise steeply. The ratio of median house price to median gross annual salary has increased by nearly ten times the rate of average annual salaries across Kent in the last twelve-years and with the District seeing the largest increase of all local authority areas. Undertaken by the National Housing Federation, research has found that the District is now the fourth most expensive local authority area in the whole of the South-East outside of London.²

	House price (£)		Income to be affordable (£)*		Actual household income (£)
	2000	2016	2000	2016	2016
Lower quartile	96,500	272,000	24,125	68,000	19,500
Median	143,250	355,000	35,813	88,750	32,500

Table 1 (Source: Local Housing Needs Study) * (Based on x3.5 household income and 10% deposit)

As demonstrated in Table 1, the District's lower quartile and median house prices have grown significantly in the period 2000-2016. The results of this growth are clearly evident when compared alongside actual household income.

Taking into account the diverse nature of the District and breaking down average area-based values, properties are found to be less expensive in Swanley and Edenbridge than, say, in Sevenoaks Town, though affordability still remains an issue across the District as a whole. With housing need and supply being that much more acute in the District's rural areas, property prices can be even greater and particularly in the south of the District.

Private rented sector

The District's private rented housing accounts for just 12.6% of the total housing stock. Combined with high rents across the District, the private rented sector does not provide a great deal of viable options for low and middle-income households. For instance, the Local Housing Needs Study found that an income of at least £43,248 would be required for an average lower-quartile private rented property in the

² Home Truths 2016/17, National Housing Federation

Agenda Item 6

District. As a result, and as evidenced in several studies, there is a continuing out-migration of younger and economically-active people in search of cheaper housing elsewhere.

Private rents (mean) per calendar month		
	2010 (£)	2016 (£)
1-bed	668	835
2-bed	889	1,135
3-bed	1,246	1,458
4-bed	2,555	2,678

Table 2 (Source: gov.uk)

LHA rates per week: High Weald (£) ³		LHA rates per week: NW Kent (£)	
Shared-accommodation	77.39	Shared-accommodation	70.84
1-bed	135.36	1-bed	124.69
2-bed	176.56	2-bed	153.02
3-bed	223.19	3-bed	174.43
4-bed	336.82	4-bed	242.40

Table 3 (Source: gov.uk)

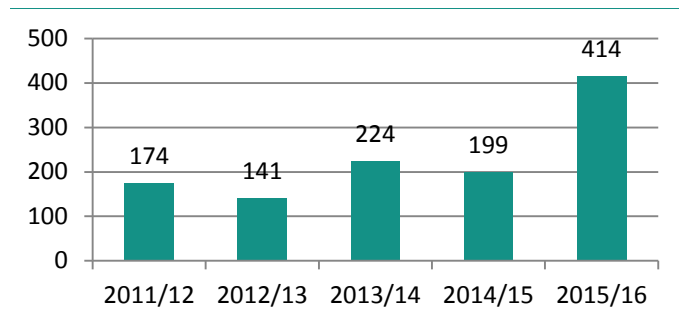
Affordable housing

There are currently 7,733 affordable housing dwellings of all types and sizes in the District and these are owned and managed by several different housing associations, with West Kent Housing Association holding the majority of the stock. Of that housing, around 91% is rented and 9% intermediate housing. In addition, there is a wide-range of supported housing for older and vulnerable people situated throughout the District. By far, the majority of the District's affordable housing is of social rented tenure and, at around 60% of open market rents, the cheapest form of subsidised housing. Since 2011, the majority of new-build rented housing has been designated as affordable rented, however, which is typically set at up to 80% of open market rents.

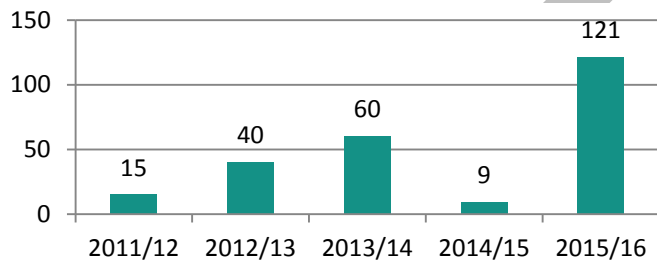
³ Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates – the maximum housing benefit which can be paid in each respective area

Housing supply (2011/12 - 2015/16)

- Total housing completions (new-build only)



- Affordable housing completions (including new-build and change of tenure)



Strategic housing priorities

Having taken into account findings from the recent Local Housing Needs Study and a wide-range of other local housing and health intelligence, the Council has established the following three strategic housing priorities for the coming years.

1. Providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures

2. Improving the quality and use of the existing housing stock

3. Meeting the needs of vulnerable and low-income households

Housing Vision

'To enable a good supply of quality housing that meets the needs of residents of the District and which is located in safe and sustainable communities to support and promote the economy and health and well-being of all'.

Who we consulted:

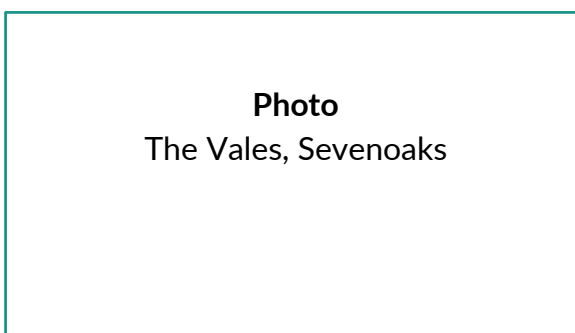
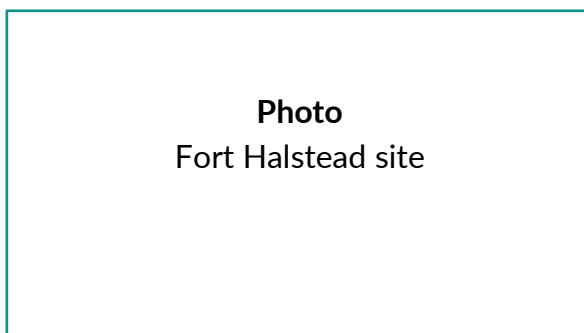
Priority 1: Providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures**Land**

The District is designated 93% Green Belt and with 60% in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, land and property values are typically the highest in Kent and amongst the most expensive in the UK. This presents a number of challenges in the delivery of new housing and particularly affordable tenures. In such a high value area, developable land is mostly secured by private developers able to pay more than housing associations. As a consequence, land-led affordable housing schemes are very few and far between and the majority of new affordable housing is consequently secured via planning agreements on private developments.

The District Council's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment has found an unconstrained need for 12,400 homes over the period 2015-35. With a Government focus on securing development through non-Green Belt land, the Council will need to adopt an approach that focusses on supply within settlements and brownfield land. In doing so, the majority of housing is likely to come forward in the top-tier settlements of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge and with a particular urban regeneration focus on Swanley. There will also need to be limited growth of lower-tier settlements in the District's rural areas. The Council's recent Call for Sites process will enable it to evaluate additional development opportunities across the District into the future.

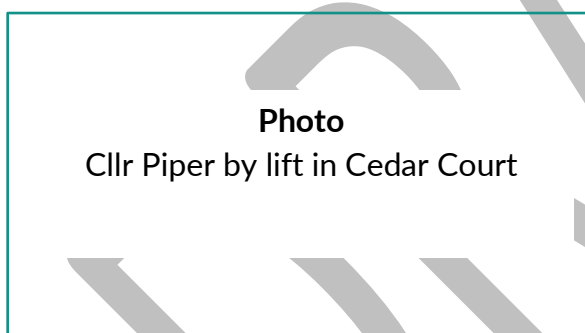
With limited land, the Council will also need to continue to encourage creative development whilst continuing to maximise every opportunity for affordable housing through the planning process. For example, a good use of land could be to enable alternative employment space on a smaller footprint of an existing commercial site which is not performing a function any longer and to then utilise the rest of the site for housing. Another option could be for potential air-space development above an existing shop, station, office or other building, though this would be subject to a building's structure. These and other more creative approaches will need to be increasingly considered in the future.

Agenda Item 6



Design

New housing must be designed to ensure that it meets the needs of an ageing population and remains fit for purpose long into the future. For instance, the inclusion of assistive technologies in new-build properties can help to enable a person to live independently as they become less mobile. An example would be the inclusion of a lift in a flatted development to enable an older person to continue to occupy a home as they age and become less mobile. The creation of wheelchair accessible or adaptable step-free housing is another means to support those with disabilities. As recently provided in the new supported housing scheme for adults with learning disabilities in Edenbridge, other relatively simple measures such as adjustable cookers and sinks can enable people to continue to live independently as they age.



With the recent removal of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Building Regulations are now the key standard for affordable housing. Space standards in the social sector are set by Government's Homes and Communities Agency, though these are set to be reviewed following the issue of Government's Housing White Paper and its intention to see more housing built through increased density. A balance will be required, however, to achieve density aims whilst still enabling housing with additional space for wheelchair use.

With a rapidly increasing requirement for digital services and home working, the Council must also seek to enable the building of technology-ready housing. Latest statistics show that 5.44% of the District's population works from home compared to a figure of 3.47% for England. Not surprisingly, home working is expected to grow significantly in the coming years and the Council must step up its activity in this area

by building housing fit for the twenty-first century as well as being adaptable for future technologies.

The Council now requires that all new housing developments should have fibre broadband to pavement level in order that housing can be connected as and when the service becomes available in each area. Alongside its work to improve broadband connectivity across the District, the Council will be increasingly able to take advantage of IT-based assistive technologies in the coming years. This will better enable people to remain living independently in their own home whilst generating significant efficiency savings across sectors in the process. Building the right housing will also support the move from analogue telecommunications to fully digital infrastructure.

New housing must also be much more efficient in energy and water use. By building more efficient housing, the District can play its part in protecting the environment whilst also contributing to the Kent Environment Strategy and wider national carbon reduction targets. Costs can also be minimised for households as the price of utilities increase and this will help with overall housing affordability in the future.

Strategic priorities

The Council will consider its surplus land for housing.

The Council will seek to develop sites to maximise land use and inform future housing strategy.

The Council will promote housing that is technology-ready and with space to enable home working.

The Council will aim to pilot emerging IT-based assistive technologies as part of its emerging strategy and feed this into its new affordable housing work programme.

The Council will aim that all new affordable housing developments will be fit for life.

The Council will consider local space standards for new housing development.

Affordable housing

Agenda Item 6

Government's Affordable Homes Programme has switched from a capital to revenue-based model and housing associations are required to maximise revenue on which to borrow against. To support this change in approach, Government introduced an 'Affordable Rent' tenure which enables housing associations to increase revenue by setting rents at up to 80% of open market rents. In areas such as the Sevenoaks District, however, rents at 80% typically far exceed Local Housing Allowance (otherwise known as LHA) rates and affordability issues consequently arise. To address this, the Council has generally supported housing associations to set rents at up to 80% but to a threshold of the respective LHA. In doing so, this has provided a protection net for those fully reliant on welfare benefits.

This approach has worked well though further cuts have seen housing associations increasingly struggle to achieve a financially viable position on capped rents and particularly now the freeze on inflation-indexed rent increases has taken effect. In response, the Council has agreed to relax its cap if a particular scheme is found to unviable when applying the respective LHA threshold. It is recognised, however, that the flip-side of this new approach will be a proportion of future affordable housing units being less affordable for those taking up any uncapped tenancies. That said, the District's existing affordable housing stock will continue to be subsidised at 60% of open market rents, and well within LHA levels, so the vast majority of affordable housing relets in the future will continue to be offered at the most affordable option available. By adopting this change in approach, the Council is now better able to support its housing association partners to continue to develop affordable housing in the District. However, the Council will continue to review its position in respect of capping as more information emerges about Government's proposed new rent standard which may see a return to inflation-linked rent increases when the current freeze comes to an end in 2020.

Net affordable housing imbalance by Placemaking area 2016/17 - 2020/21⁴						
Place-making area	General needs		Older persons		Total	% by area
	1/2 bed	3+ bed	1 bed	2+ bed		
Darent Valley	40	0	3	0	43	7.1
North East	121	10	22	5	158	26.2
North West	80	10	9	0	98	16.2
Sevenoaks Urban and Surrounds	129	13	23	1	166	27.5
South	65	2	12	0	78	12.9
Upper Darent Corridor	28	26	3	3	60	9.9
Total	463	62	71	8	604	100
% by size and designation	76.7	10.3	11.8	1.3	100	

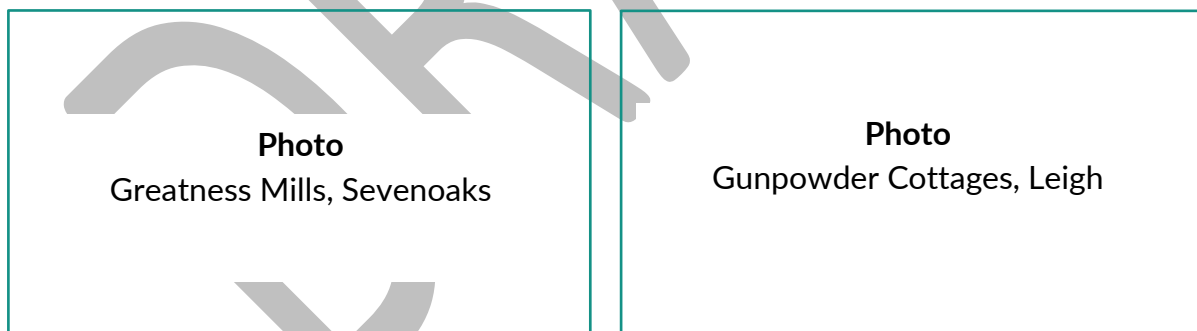
Table 4 – Sources: Local Housing Needs Study; CORE Lettings and Sales

⁴ See page 62 for the District's Placemaking areas

Intermediate housing

Intermediate housing, and particularly shared-ownership, has been an effective means to enable low to middle-income households in the District to access home ownership. In addition, the Zone Agent waiting list for shared-ownership is consistently overly-subscribed for the District and demonstrates an ongoing demand despite rising values. Intermediate housing can also enable existing affordable housing tenants to access home ownership and, in doing so, help to free-up much needed rented housing for others in need. The shared-ownership model is flexible and allows households to staircase up in stages to outright ownership or to maintain their share and rent the remainder for an indefinite period. With the housing market being volatile at present, this allows households to minimise the risk of running into negative equity and so can also provide a safety net for those already just about managing.

Recent research has highlighted that a significant proportion of shared-ownership resales are at the cheapest end of the market and a good and often cheaper option to buying similar products on new-build developments. Where existing shared-ownership properties are to be marketed, applicants on the Zone Agent waiting list are given first refusal in order to help others in need before being sold on the open market. As a result, and to make best use of this opportunity, the Council has started to actively market resales itself to raise awareness of this particular housing option for low-income households.

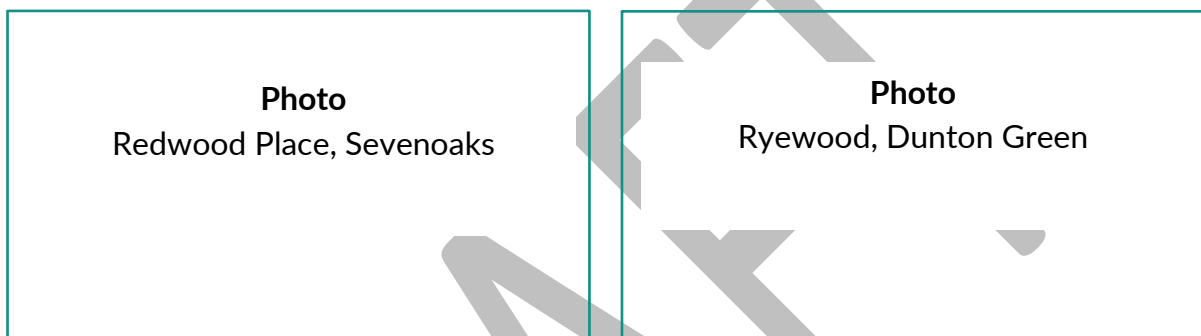


Government has set out its intention to increase home ownership through a mix of tenures and with a 10% target of all sites to include affordable home ownership. This is now to include a percentage of 'Starter Homes' set by local authorities as opposed to a previously planned mandatory 20% across all sites. The length of time before any homes could be sold on the open market has also been increased from five to fifteen-years. The Homes and Communities Agency is now exploring joint venture arrangements by purchasing land for 'Starter Homes' development and this presents a new opportunity for the Council to explore in the future. With a property value threshold of £312,500 before any discount is applied, however, the Council will be

Agenda Item 6

limited in the areas it can seek to provide this product due to such high property values.

Moving forward, and to help prevent further out-migration of the District's existing and emerging workforce, the Council will work to provide a mixed package of intermediate affordable housing that can respond to local needs and sub-area markets. In doing so, this will also contribute to wider economic development strategy as set out in the Council's Community Plan. With a greater emphasis on intermediate tenures nationally and Government's Affordable Homes Programme reflecting that approach, the likelihood of creating viable schemes at maximum contribution levels will also be that much greater in the future.



Strategic priorities

To enable a better understanding of local recruitment and retention issues with local employers and to help identify any potential joint ventures for the provision of affordable housing with larger employers, an employer study will be commissioned (to be funded through S106 affordable housing planning gains).

To maximise take-up of new shared-ownership housing for those with a local connection to the District, the Council will undertake a wide-range of early promotional activity to raise local awareness.

The Council will encourage housing associations to work towards the Chartered Institute of Housing's Shared-Ownership: Charter for Housing framework to promote the benefits of shared-ownership housing.

The Council will seek to increase its list of preferred affordable housing providers including specialist providers and those with access to a wide-range of finance options, including private institutional investment and other cross-subsidy models.

To help unlock unviable affordable housing projects, the Council will consider the use of S106 affordable housing funding to supplement projects in lieu of low or zero grant availability and/or where other viability issues may exist.

Through its company, the Council will seek to deliver a proportion of affordable housing on its own private developments as part of its growing property portfolio and objectives contained in its Economic Development Strategy.

Through the 2016-21 affordable homes programme, the Council will work with the Homes and Communities Agency in order to identify any sites suitable for it to purchase directly for 'Starter Homes' provision.

The Council will seek new investment opportunities for affordable housing through the Kent & Medway Economic Partnership.

Affordable rural housing

With limited opportunities for housing development in the District's rural areas, the Council seeks to deliver the majority of rural affordable housing through its rural exceptions site policy. If a local housing need exists and is evidenced through an independent study, affordable housing can potentially be built on Green Belt land for those in housing need and with a local connection to the respective village. To

Agenda Item 6

evidence need in the District's rural areas, the Council part-funds Action with Rural Community in Kent to undertake housing needs surveys. Being a typically contentious area of housing strategy, the provision of affordable housing is lengthy and involves a great deal of community and parish council involvement. Key to the successful delivery of affordable housing is the guarantee that all exceptions housing remains for local people and in perpetuity. Government has also announced that local connection rules can apply to 'Starter Homes' provision on rural exceptions sites and this is seen as a positive for the Council's affordable housing work programme by introducing another intermediate product.

In early 2017, the Council was successful in receiving funding from Government to develop affordable housing in its rural areas through the setting up of Community Land Trusts (otherwise known as CLTs). In order to maximise this funding, the Council will work with Action with Rural Communities in Kent and its West Kent local authority partners to create a West Kent hub to promote rural housing development across the wider area and through measures including the sharing of expertise, resources, training, publicity and promotional events.



Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference data from the Local Housing Needs Study and undertake a review of its future approach to the provision of affordable housing in the District's rural areas having regard to the revised Kent Rural Housing Protocol 2017.

The Council will review its remaining land in order to identify any possible development opportunities and any potential joint ventures with partners by combining sites.

Where values permit, the Council will aim to provide an element of 'Starter Homes' on future rural exceptions sites.

Through the Community Housing Fund, the Council will work with Action with Rural Communities in Kent, and Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells borough councils to develop a West Kent community-led housing hub to promote development in rural areas and encourage the creation of CLTs.

Additional action to be considered in the Local Plan review:

To adopt a rural policy that allows specialist housing on exceptions sites.

Private rented sector

With significant local demand, private rents in the District are typically high and do not offer many options for other than higher income households. The District's private rented sector is also one that now caters for a much more diverse range of people than ever before. For instance, the Local Housing Needs Study has found that higher income households in the District are often renting privately whereas in other parts of the country they would typically purchase. In addition, the two Local Housing Allowance (otherwise known as LHA) rates in the District do not reflect the actual cost of local lower-quartile private rents. With higher earners being able to pay and being perceived as less risky in terms of arrears, there is very little incentive for the District's private landlords to consider LHA rates when marketing their homes.

As a result, welfare-dependent households are often prevented from accessing the private rented sector due to affordability issues. In many cases, shortfalls can be considerable and way beyond the scope of most low-income households unless a top-up is made via Discretionary Housing Payment. As evidenced in several studies,

this contributes to a continuing out-migration of younger and economically-active people in search of cheaper housing elsewhere. As a result, the District is seeing a diminishing local workforce at a time when the local population is also ageing at a rapid rate. In order to improve housing options across the private rented sector, the Council needs to offer a range of landlord incentives to better encourage private landlords at the lower end of the market to accept welfare-dependent households. Although several incentives are already in place, the Council will consult the District's private landlords to identify other possible incentives to encourage take-up.

Institutional private rented sector

The emerging institutional private rented sector has been identified as a potentially significant means to tackle the District's housing crisis. This has also been recognised as a national priority with Rent-to-Buy housing featuring in Government's White Paper. Being a tenure which is typically purpose-built and with good management standards, this could also help to drive up standards in the existing private rented sector by pressuring private landlords through what would be a new and highly competitive product. With Government's intention to introduce more family-friendly tenancies of up to three-years as opposed to six to twelve months, institutional providers would also likely be well placed to deliver on this objective.

Several housing associations across the UK have started to develop private rented housing in order to generate a rental income surplus in lieu of low or zero grant and to cross-subsidise the delivery of affordable housing. Although this has not yet occurred in the District, the Council will need to increasingly explore this option with its partners in the future and as part of a wider package of affordable housing products.

Strategic priorities

In partnership with the South East England Council's group, the Council will request that Government reviews the District's Local Housing Allowance rates with a view to an increase across its two broad market rental areas.

The Council will review related data down to ward level in the Local Housing Needs Study and feed this into the review of the Local Plan.

To support the delivery of high standard private sector rented housing, the Council will work with providers to create policy-compliant schemes at the lower end of the market and seek to negotiate nominations agreements whereby those with a connection to the District will be prioritised.

The Council will work with its housing association partners to explore suitable cross-subsidy projects with an element of private rented housing.

The Council will consult private landlords to identify other potential incentives and seek to develop a more attractive landlord package.

Through its company, the Council will explore direct provision of private rented housing.

Market housing

The District's market housing requirements are very different to that of affordable housing. The Local Housing Needs Study has been able to compare demand with the existing housing stock profile in order to identify any mismatches between availability and aspirations. Whereas a need exists for additional one and two bed dwellings in the social sector, the Local Housing Needs Study has found that 72.1% of owner-occupied households intending to move in the next 5-years would like 3-bedrooms or more. In addition, 55.3% of those households have stated a preference for a detached house. It should be noted that a proportion of those intending to move will be looking to do so outside of the District, however.

Although generally high across the District, property values are that much higher in the District's commuter towns and villages as well as in areas with good quality private and state primary schools. As a whole, the local housing market reflects the generally affluent nature of the District. Through consultation as part of the Local Housing Needs Study, local estate agents have all confirmed that the District's housing market remains strong and with demand far outstripping supply.

Agenda Item 6

With a growing population and a far greater proportion of older and retired households anticipated to stay put in larger housing as time goes by, demand for larger and executive housing will likely increase into the future. That said, the Council will also need to enable the delivery of smaller and more appealing housing for those wishing to downsize to more suitable housing.

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference local market intelligence with data from the Local Housing Needs Study and feed this into the Local Plan review and with a particular emphasis given to the need for market housing for older people.

Modular housing and micro-homes

Government has recognised the part that modular housing has to play in a move towards wider construction methods. Having looked at several modular housing products, the Council has identified this form of construction as a good opportunity to enable the delivery of low-cost housing. By using off-site construction methods, development times can be significantly reduced and this would allow for rental income to be generated much more quickly. In doing so, this would create efficiencies through much shorter forward-funding timeframes.

Modern micro-homes have also been identified as having the potential to deliver high density development through creative design and good use of land. In doing so, this could also result in a much more affordable and increasingly fashionable housing solution and particularly for the District's younger people and first-time buyers. Micro-homes could also be developed as 'Starter Homes' or shared-ownership products and create a more affordable housing solution. With a higher than average anticipated turnover rate, this could also be a potential recycling solution through shared-ownership and open market resales, thereby multiplying the positive effects of related housing strategy well into the future.

In its latest Affordable Homes programme 2016-21, the Homes and Communities Agency has stated that it will expect to see an increasing quantity of innovative housing construction within its programme and with advantages matching its core criteria relating to value for money and speed of delivery.⁵ There is significant potential for this form of housing in the District, therefore, though the availability of suitable mortgage finance will need to be closely monitored as the sector develops.

⁵⁵ HCA Shared-Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 Prospectus (April 2016)

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference specific Local Housing Needs Study data on micro-homes with wider market research and feed this into local housing strategy and the emerging the Local Plan.

Through its company, the Council will aim to develop a pilot micro-homes scheme on one of its housing developments and use this as a blueprint for similar development elsewhere in the District.

Should a pilot prove to be successful, the Council will also seek to work with the Homes and Communities Agency, housing associations and other partners to deliver additional micro-homes schemes.

The Council will explore external funding opportunities for modular housing, including Government's Accelerated Construction initiative.

The Council will explore other larger modular products with a view to widening its enabling role through alternative construction methods and related business models.

The Council will share any consequent best practice in this new area of modular housing provision.

Self-build and custom housebuilding

Regulations now require that local authorities operate self-build and custom housebuilding registers for those seeking to acquire serviced plots of land and to enable a sufficient supply of land suitable for self and custom build housing to meet demand on the respective register. The Council is also required to consider expressed need when developing its housing strategies and considering plans for new housing on its own land. As at 01/05/17, the Council had received 31 expressions of interest and this will be used to inform the ongoing review of the Local Plan.

Being a Government priority and another potential solution to the District's growing housing need, the Council will need to increasingly consider this form of housing in developing housing strategy. Delivery of self-build housing will also contribute to meeting the objectively-assessed housing need as set out in the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Agenda Item 6

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference data from the Local Housing Needs Study with self and custom build registers and other local intelligence in order to determine the true level of need and develop a subsequent plan of action.

The Council will also seek to work with the Homes and Communities Agency, housing associations and other partners to explore the delivery of self-build and custom-build housing.

The Council will work with the Right to Build Taskforce to further develop its current database and to prepare plans for land identification and allocation.

Through its recent Community Housing Fund and additional Self and Custom Build Housing funding allocations, the Council will explore the potential to develop a joint West Kent approach with its partner local authorities.

The Council will share any consequent best practice in this developing form of housing provision.

DRAFT

Priority 2: Improving the quality and use of the existing housing stock

With such a high level of local housing need, the Council must continue to develop housing strategy which helps to improve, preserve and make best use of the District's current housing stock. In doing so, there will be less pressure on new development and local housing strategy will be that much more effective. As well as preserving the District's housing stock for future use, improvements can also contribute to a wide-range of health outcomes and reduce housing costs. For example, low-carbon retrofit can improve the condition of a property whilst helping to tackle health inequalities and reducing living costs in the process.

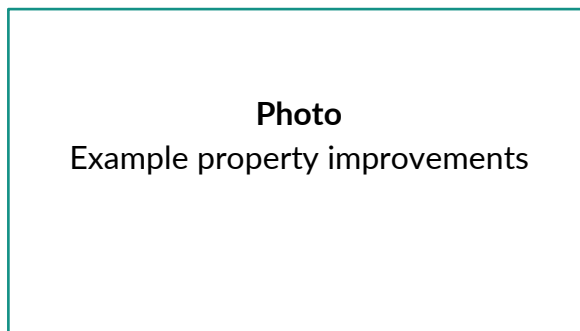
Housing stock condition

Undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in 2016, the Council's latest private sector housing stock condition survey has estimated that 19% of properties in the private sector have category one hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The total cost of mitigating those hazards is estimated to be £19.4 million. As would be expected, the District's affordable housing stock is generally in a better condition on indicators relating to hazards, disrepair and energy efficiency. This is, in part, due to wide-ranging improvement programmes to the affordable housing stock in the years leading up to the 2010 Decent Homes Standard.⁶ The District's affordable housing stock is now maintained at that level or beyond through several ongoing improvement and maintenance programmes.

As per the national picture, private dwellings perform the worst across key hazard indicators including excess cold, fuel poverty, fall hazards and disrepair. With housing condition being a key determinant of health and contributing to health inequalities, there is a continued need for provision of assistance in housing renewal. With limited renovation grant availability, the Council must seek to improve the District's housing stock through a combination of support, advice and enforcement powers. The Council is due to review and update its Housing Renewal Policy and this will set its private sector renewal policy moving forward.

⁶ Decent Homes Standard - minimum standard of housing conditions for all those who housed in the public sector

Agenda Item 6



Strategic priorities

The Council will review and update its Housing Renewal Policy placing much greater emphasis on health outcomes.

The Council will review its enforcement role to identify any further potential regulatory interventions to improve the private sector housing stock condition.

The Council will monitor progress on the Decent Homes Standard and also work with providers to explore a potential local housing standard.

Energy efficiency and fuel poverty

The Council's latest private sector housing stock condition survey has found an average SAP rating of 54⁷, which is a measure of the property's thermal performance. This is almost on a par with the national level of 55. The survey also found that 14.3% of owner-occupied and 21.3% of private rented dwellings in the District are estimated to have Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)⁸ ratings below band E, which is a poor rating. Again, the private sector housing stock fares worse than the social sector and is reflective of generally poorer standards in the sector nationally.

Low-carbon energy retrofit measures are essential to tackle fuel poverty and positively contribute to a wide range of health outcomes. In doing so, this also helps to maintain and improve the housing stock whilst reducing the District's carbon footprint to contribute towards a targeted 34% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020. Around 9.92% of the District's residents suffer fuel poverty, which is slightly below the county average of 9.85%. With a higher level of solid-walled properties in the District's rural parishes and several areas not having access to mains gas, more people tend to experience fuel poverty. Not surprisingly, older people are more at

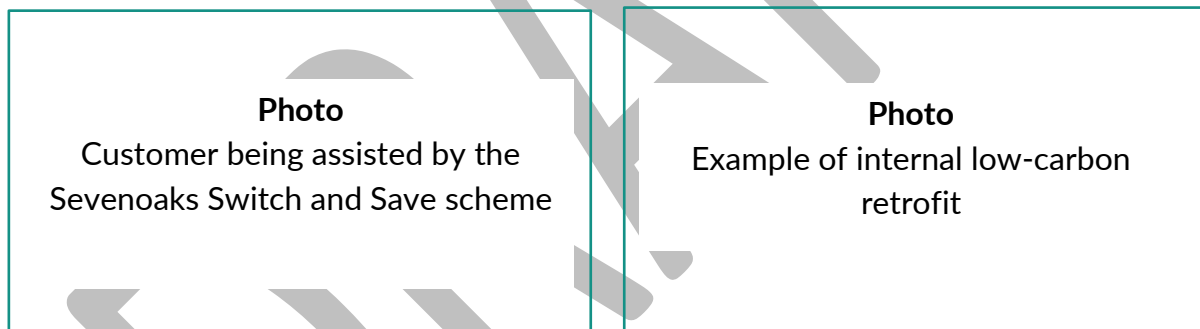
⁷ SAP – Standard Assessment Procedure: quantifies a dwelling's performance in terms of energy use per unit floor area

⁸ EPC: Energy Performance Certificate – rates the thermal efficiency of a building

risk of fuel poverty with the most common category one hazard found in homes of older people in the District being excess cold.

This can have serious knock-on effects such as chest complaints and increased risks of slips, trips and falls. In turn, this can result in older people spending lengthy periods in hospital and, as a direct consequence, become more infirm over time. More worryingly, research has found that there is a 23% increase in deaths from heart attacks and strokes during the winter months.⁹ Children can also suffer the consequences of cold housing with increased risk of respiratory problems, low weight gain and slower developmental progress.

In order to assist those struggling with energy bills, the Council has created an energy comparison and switching service to help people onto cheaper tariffs. The Sevenoaks Switch and Save service is available through an online facility and freephone service which can enable a person to compare and switch providers. Periodic energy switching surgeries are also offered and have been found to be particularly beneficial by enabling the Council to identify wider issues of concern and where support can be given. To date, the Council has enabled 163 switches and achieved combined savings of £46,950 in first year savings alone.



Funded by £4.02m grant from Government's Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the Council was also part of a joint project with Dartford Borough Council and Kent County Council to deliver external wall insulation and other low-carbon retrofit measures on hard-to treat properties. As well as improving thermal efficiency of the housing stock, the project also tested new technologies for efficiency by measuring positive health impacts through a subsequent monitoring programme. The Council was also successful in securing grant funding to test new IT-based retrofit technologies and this is part-way through completion. This will all help to inform future low-carbon retrofit strategy, both locally and nationally.

⁹ Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales – Office for National Statistics (GB)

Agenda Item 6



With Government's Green Deal programme now withdrawn and no replacement scheme at the time of writing this Housing Strategy, the Council must tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty in other ways and until such time as a new national grant programme is introduced. In the interim period, the Council is working with its partners through the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership in order to develop local strategy that prioritises the most vulnerable people in need.

For instance, the Warm Homes scheme provides a one-stop shop for those looking for insulation measures such as cavity and loft insulation or new energy efficient boilers. This is focussed on vulnerable and low-income groups experiencing high energy costs. Key priorities are set out in the Council's Climate Local Sevenoaks document. The Council has also recently submitted its latest biennial report to Government which sets out progress in this area of its work in the past two-years and also includes key objectives for the next two.¹⁰

Strategic priorities

The Council will develop local energy efficiency and fuel poverty strategy in the interim period and until such time as a new national initiative is introduced.

The Council will analyse results from its testing of modern retrofit technologies as part of its strategy to health-proof housing and produce an options report for the Housing and Health Advisory Committee to consider as potentially new energy initiatives.

The Council will, where required, integrate energy strategy with health strategy through the Health Action Team.

Once received, the Council will review EPC data from its recent stock condition survey and develop strategy to tackle properties with low ratings.

The Council will undertake another campaign to help raise awareness of the Sevenoaks Switch and Save scheme.

¹⁰ Home Energy and Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) report

As per the national picture, there is a high level of under-occupation across the District. The Council's key area of influence in this work programme is the social sector, however, and particularly in respect of older people. As would be expected, evidence has shown that older people tend to stay put if there are no suitable options in the local area where friends, family and support networks exist. This can result in many people remaining in homes that become unsuitable as they age and increase the risk of accidents and ill health. Local estate agents have indicated that the main drivers for older people looking to downsize are seeking more age-suitable accommodation, releasing equity for the future and, as is becoming more common, to provide a substantial deposit for their children.

In order to aid the downsizing process, the Council works with housing associations to help people to downsize into more manageable housing and can offer or signpost to a wide-range of support services such as the arranging of removal companies, house and loft clearances, through to setting up utilities accounts or appointing lawyers. Part-funded by the Council, the Small is Beautiful scheme has assisted 82 social tenants to downsize to more suitable housing in the last 3-years. For those wishing to stay put, the Council can offer disabled-facilities grants (otherwise known as DFGs) and other assistive technologies to support independent living, but this is not always the best and safest option. In such cases, the Council and its partners will work with the household in order to identify a wide-range of other support services.



If the Council is to make any great strides in this area of housing strategy, it must seek to enable housing which is much more appealing to those considering a move and in the areas where people already live. In doing so, demand for long-term care would be reduced with occupants being in more accessible and adaptable housing. With limited developable land, this is an ongoing challenge and the Council will need to expand its enabling role to one that is much more flexible.

Over-crowding

Conversely, the Council must continue to tackle overcrowding as this can have a negative effect on the health and wellbeing of those living in such circumstances. Overcrowding can also indicate hidden homeless people through sofa-surfing, for

Agenda Item 6

instance. The Local Housing Needs Study has found that a total of 1,922 households in the District are classed as overcrowded according to the national Bedroom Standard.¹¹ With such a high mismatch in households to housing, this is a key area which needs to be tackled in a variety of ways through developing housing strategy.

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference data relating to under-occupation in the Local Housing Needs Study and update its existing Under-Occupation Action Plan.

The Council will cross-reference data relating to over-crowding in the Local Housing Needs Study and undertake an options appraisal for future strategy.

The Council will undertake further investigations with estate agents in order to identify any ward-specific limitations and/or issues for older people wishing to downsize.

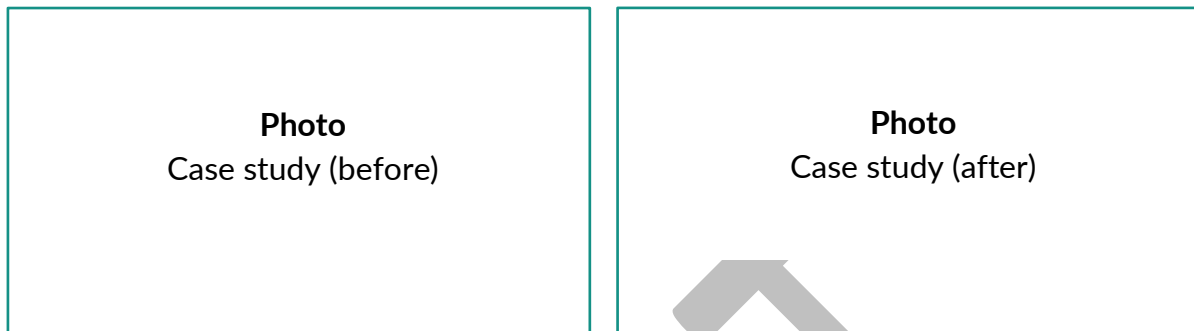
Long-term empty homes

Returning long-term empty homes back into use is part of the Council's wider strategy to tackle local housing affordability. As at 01/04/17, there were 324 long-term empty homes in the District. Long-term empty homes are defined as those having been vacant for 6-months or more and this is the point at which the Council will seek to intervene. Housing can remain empty for a number of reasons with examples being periods of probate, projects for future occupation or property owners seeking any uplift in property values and not wanting tenants in the meantime.

The Council provides support to property owners in several ways and this can range from simple advice and signposting through to repayable grant assistance to bring a property back up to a marketable standard. Being a key and existing housing resource, the Council will continue to focus local housing strategy on reducing the number of long-term empty homes in the District. In doing so, this will not only provide housing which is typically at the lower end of the market but also help to address any related anti-social behaviour or environmental impact that may occur as a result of properties sitting empty for lengthy periods.

¹¹ Section 325 of the Housing Act 1985

In its White Paper, Government has also indicated that it will continue to support local authorities in making best use of the existing housing stock by proving the same level of New Homes Bonus for bringing an empty home back into use as that of a new-build property. There is an added incentive to consider in this work programme, therefore.



Strategic priorities

Through developer contributions, the Council will explore the potential for a new bespoke product to provide repayable grant assistance for first-time buyers to purchase long-term empty homes at the lower end of the housing market.

The Council will link up its long-term empty housing and commercial work programmes to identify joint solutions to return back to use premises such as empty shops with vacant accommodation above.

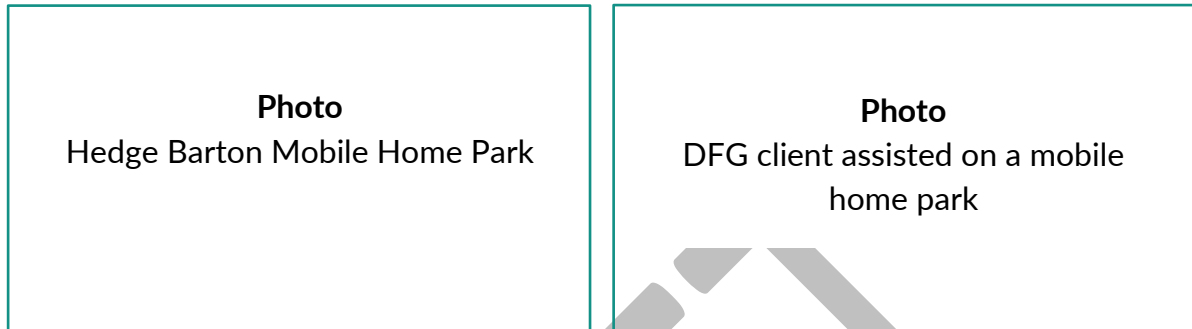
The Council will review and update its Empty Homes Action Plan when it expires at the end of 2017/18.

Mobile homes

With over 600 permanently-occupied mobile homes situated on twelve mobile home parks and several other single plot pitches, the District has the highest level of provision in Kent. In the main, mobile homes are occupied by those aged 55 and over and typically provide for an appealing retirement option. As would be expected, mobile homes can quickly deteriorate and, in the process, also lose value. This can often create a situation whereby an occupier is living with serious disrepair and no means to fund essential works. In turn, this can render the occupant at risk of accidents and poor health. Thermal efficiency is also seriously compromised as a mobile home deteriorates and residents can suffer fuel poverty and ill health as a direct consequence. With heating systems typically fuelled by electric or LPG, energy costs are also higher and this can see a greater proportion of mobile home residents suffering fuel poverty in comparison to those in conventional housing.

Agenda Item 6

Through its site licensing powers, the Council monitors the District's mobile home parks as part of its routine inspection programme. With a growing older population and mobile homes consequently occupied for that much longer, it is likely that disrepair levels will grow over the coming years. As a result, the Council will need to monitor the situation and, if required, consider additional positive interventions to help to maintain the condition of mobile homes as they age.



Strategic priorities

The Council will track occupancy to disrepair rates and review housing and health strategy accordingly.

The Council will actively promote Disabled-Facilities Grants (DFGs) on mobile home parks to raise awareness.

The Council will actively promote its Sevenoaks Switch and Save Service on mobile home parks to help reduce energy costs amongst older occupiers.

Houses in Multiple-Occupation (HMOs)

Commonly known as HMOs, houses in multiple-occupation typically include several separate households in one building. There are currently seven 3-storey HMOs situated in the District and a further 250 smaller HMOs with 2-storeys or below. At present, only those HMOs with 3-storeys or above fall within national licensing requirements and the majority of the District's HMOs are not licensed, therefore. Instead, the Council inspects non-licensable properties through the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System and this helps to maintain standards across the sector. Government is currently reviewing legislation with a view to potentially extending licensing to HMOs with 2-storeys and five or more people sharing facilities. Being high-risk housing, the Council must continue to focus its efforts on raising standards across the District's HMO stock and work to prevent the creation of any new sub-

standard HMO accommodation as demand for low-cost housing increases in response to restricting welfare reform.

Strategic priorities

The Council will monitor developments with the potential extension of licensing and, if required, introduce a new inspection programme for the District's smaller HMO stock.

The Council will set up a multi-agency network to help raise awareness and report any new sub-standard HMO accommodation being set up in the District.

Preserving the existing affordable housing stock

Where it can, the Council must work to preserve the District's existing affordable housing stock in order to provide affordable housing solutions long into the future. With housing associations increasingly looking to dispose of housing stock in peripheral areas and with low supply to support business operations elsewhere, the Council must continue to negotiate transfers to other more local housing associations. With the removal of the consents regime and housing associations no longer needing the Homes and Communities Agency's approval to dispose of stock as part of deregulatory measures, this will become an increasingly difficult challenge, however.

The Council also recognises the importance of the District's smaller housing associations and how these organisations can be important in meeting the housing needs of older and vulnerable people. This is particularly the case with many having a detailed knowledge of the local area in which their housing is situated. To demonstrate its support, the Council has assisted a number of almshouse providers to undertake essential maintenance works and upgrade facilities in line with the Decent Homes Standard. The Council has also assisted local organisations to introduce rent restructuring programmes as part of a move towards self-sufficiency.

Quote from Margaret Hyde Almshouse Trust:

"The Housing Department of the Council has played a significant and valuable role in their support of the Margaret Hyde Almshouse Trust based in Chiddingstone. In particular, their financial generosity has meant we have been able to carry out essential work thus ensuring long-term sustainability."

Quote from Sevenoaks Almshouse Charity:

“After many years of very frequent repairs to the slate roofs at Sevenoaks Place Trustees were keen to completely refurbish the roofs, and during 2013 this work was undertaken by local contractors. Financially the project was huge for us, and without the financial support of the Sevenoaks District Council the Sevenoaks Almshouse Charity would have had to delay the work significantly. Maintaining these grade 2 properties is inevitably expensive and the Charity is committed to providing good quality comfortable semi-sheltered housing for elderly folk in the Sevenoaks area. We are very grateful for the involvement and support of the Council.”*

Photo
SDC-funded works at Margaret
Hyde Almshouses

Photo
SDC-funded works at Sevenoaks
Almshouses

Strategic priorities

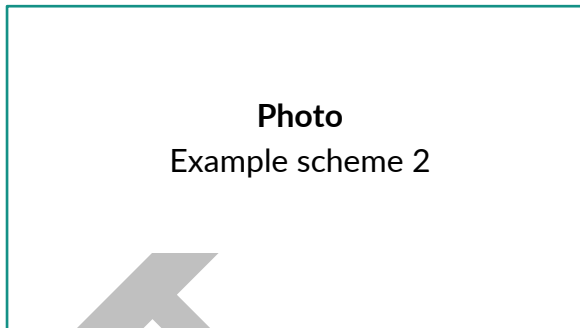
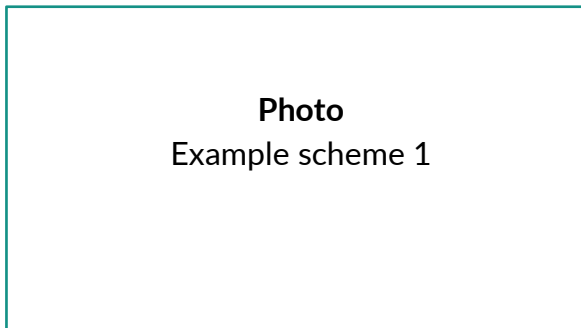
The Council will expand its support to almshouses charities and other small providers through a variety of means in order to improve the housing stock condition and create more effective business operations.

The Council will hold a forum for almshouses and other small affordable housing providers to create a support network and share good practice with those organisations that have already benefitted from its assistance.

Fixed-term tenancies

Developed in response to the Localism Act 2011, the Council’s Tenancy Strategy recommends the use of fixed-term tenancies to ensure that the District’s future affordable housing stock is occupied by those in most need. With the Council having no power to require the use of such tenancies, however, this is a recommendation only and the majority of housing associations retain lifetime tenancies. With recent deregulation measures, however, the use of fixed-term tenancies is once again under discussion. As a result, the Council will once again recommend fixed-term tenancies to make best use of its limited affordable housing stock by addressing under-

occupation and tackling low-level anti-social behaviour. To support this approach, the Council will increasingly look to work with housing associations with fixed-term tenancy policies on new developments and through relets of the existing affordable housing.



Strategic priorities

The Council will review its Tenancy Strategy with a view to working towards fixed-term tenancies on new affordable housing developments and on relets of the existing affordable housing stock. This will include the option to support selective use for high demand areas, adapted properties and encouraging higher income households into tenures such as shared-ownership.

The Council will work with housing associations to address low-level anti-social behaviour through improved tenancy procedures and monitor progress of the Government review into housing associations' powers in relation to anti-social tenants.

Right-to-Buy

Government has set out its intention to introduce a new Right-to-Buy scheme which will include, for the first time, properties owned by housing associations. Having transferred its housing stock back in 1989, all of the District's affordable housing is now owned and managed by housing associations. With far greater discounts being proposed through the new Right-to-Buy scheme, the Council is anticipating an increase in take-up and further consequent loss of much-needed affordable housing. Any loss of stock through this scheme would have an obvious effect on strategic housing management with there being no control as to where stock is sold. As such, this initiative has the potential to undo any positive steps achieved through the years to provide more balanced housing provision in the District.

The new Right-to-Buy scheme could also potentially see District's rural areas affected

Agenda Item 6

the most with those communities having already lost much of their affordable housing stock through the original Right-to-Buy programme. With the lengthy and often highly contentious rural exceptions site route already a challenge, the replacement of any stock would be far from straightforward. As currently proposed, portable discount arrangements would also likely be impractical. If Government does extend Right-to-Buy in rural areas, therefore, this will be at odds with local housing and wider community strategy in relation to rural sustainability.

Government has also advised that it intends to prevent local authorities from excluding the Right-to-Buy in their affordable housing stock delivered through private housing companies. As a result, the Council will need to consider its position with any future affordable housing development plans through its company.

Strategic priorities

The Council will lobby Government for stronger exclusions to the Right-to-Buy in rural areas.

The Council will review its position with regard to affordable housing on projects delivered through its company as and when Government clarifies its position on Right-to-Buy.

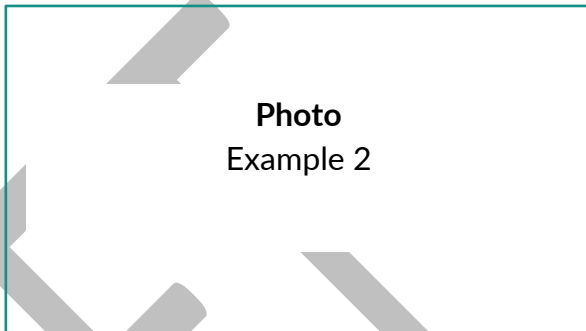
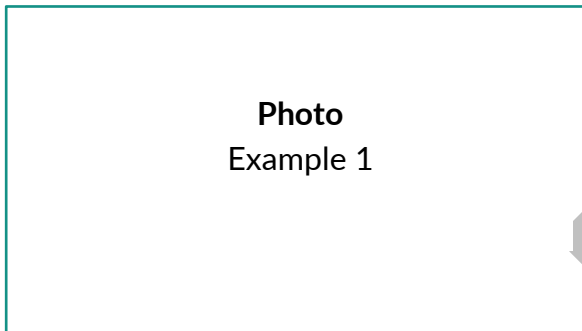
Pay-to-Stay

Under recent deregulatory measures, housing associations now have the option to introduce pay-to-stay schemes whereby those earning over £30,000 can be charged up to near-market rents on an incremental scale. In doing so, this can generate additional revenue to be reinvested in new affordable housing whilst also encouraging higher earners to consider more suitable forms of housing such as shared-ownership. As with fixed-term tenancies, the pay-to-stay initiative is a key opportunity to ensure best use of the District's limited housing stock and one which would support the delivery of housing strategy. As with fixed-term tenancies, however, the Council will have no control as to whether housing associations introduce such a scheme and it is not currently known if this is likely to be used by its partner providers.

Sub-letting and unlawful housing

With the District and wider UK housing market as it is, there is a growing demand for cheap and sub-standard housing for those who cannot secure a property elsewhere. As can be regularly seen in town and cities across the UK, properties are being crudely and dangerously sub-divided into multi-occupancy housing and also illegal

premises such as sheds or shipping containers set up as a form of low-cost housing. Although not currently a significant issue in the District, the Council has identified a small number of cases in the area and it is anticipated that this will grow over time if not tackled effectively. As a result, the Council must seek to raise awareness of these issues and highlight the risks involved to encourage those living in such accommodation, or in the vicinity, to come forward and make it aware. Again, and in order to tackle this issue, the Council must seek to provide affordable and low-end market housing solutions for households typically at risk of taking up such accommodation.



Strategic priorities

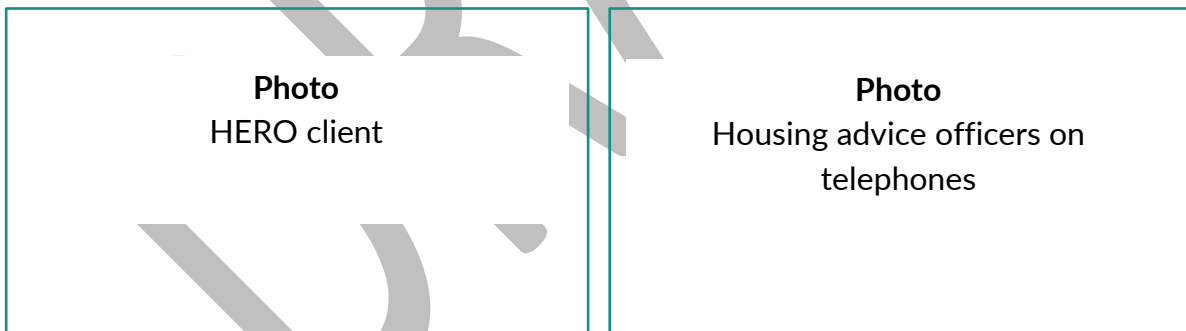
The Council will set up a multi-agency network to help raise awareness and encourage the reporting of any new illegal and/or sub-standard premises being set up in the District that it can then tackle.

Priority 3: Meeting the needs of vulnerable and low-income households

Housing options and homelessness prevention

The Council is legally required to assess and prevent homelessness in the District as part of a Government focus on homelessness prevention. With growing affordability issues and fewer consequent housing options, preventing homelessness is an increasingly difficult challenge and one that needs to be tackled in several different ways. For instance, the Council currently offers rent-in-advance, deposit bonds, tenancy sustainment services, the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), welfare benefits support and wider financial appraisals.

The Council has developed a holistic approach to housing options in recent years and this helps to identify solutions bespoke to the household or individual in need. For instance, the Council's HERO officers will consider wider issues associated with housing need including employment, training and debt matters. In doing so, specific plans of action can be developed and ones which will often result in the client being supported into employment or training as well as housing. Already an award-winning scheme which has been rolled-out to West Kent Housing Association, Kent County Council and local children's centres, the HERO service has transformed the Council's housing options approach and helped it to deliver wider community strategy in several different priority areas.



Following a successful bid for Government's Trailblazers' Funding, the Council is currently developing and expanding its HERO service. New and improved, the service will also now include wider health assessments as part of the Making Every Contact Count ambition. Delivered through targeted community outreach services and in partnership with GP surgeries, children's centres and housing associations, this project will help to minimise a wide-range of negative impacts on both physical and mental ill health associated with poor housing situations.

For those in emergency need, the Council has access to 55 units of temporary accommodation and with plans to increase its supply. In the past, however, there

have been several cases of tenants in temporary accommodation falling into arrears and finding their ability to move into permanent occupation consequently restricted. As a result, the Council's housing staff work with affected households to try to reduce arrears and prepare for a tenancy in conventional housing. Following a successful bid for grant through the Behavioural Insights Project, further support is now to be offered in relation to tenancy sustainment.



The availability of good quality housing advice is essential to enable people to make informed decisions about their housing options. The Council provides a wide-range of housing information and in several formats. With a growing older population, and the vast majority wishing to live independently, there will be an increasing demand for information in larger text and other formats. In order to ensure that housing-related information can be received, read and understood by the groups for which it is intended, the Council is working with partners to achieve the NHS England 'Accessible Information Standard' which aims to ensure that people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss can access suitable information in order to effectively communicate with support services.¹²

The Council is exploring a wide-range of activities to better interact with and support private landlords to take on clients through its private sector lettings scheme. In partnership with Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells borough councils, the Council also holds regular landlords' forums and these are aimed at encouraging private landlords to take on clients in housing need through a number of incentives such as grants, landlord insurance and ongoing tenancy support. Periodic joint housing forums are also held and these help to provide up-to-date information on housing legislation and standards, tax and finance issues, and energy efficiency options.

¹² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/08/accessible-information-standard/>

Agenda Item 6

Photo
Landlords' forum

Photo
Housing information event

Strategic priorities

The Council will develop and launch its new Super-HERO service.

The Council will work with its West Kent partner local authorities to adopt and implement the new West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

The Council will monitor developments with the Homelessness Reduction Act and undertake a full review of its homelessness services when related associated guidance is issued.

The Council will undertake a survey of private landlords to identify potential incentives to encourage take-up as part of a new landlord package.

The Council will evaluate the GP housing advice pilot with participant outcomes and feedback to determine future models for delivering targeted holistic advice services as part of an integrated health hub.

The Council will implement a tenancy sustainment training programme through the Behavioural Insights Project.

The Council will monitor developments relating to the Renters' Rights Bill and Housing (Tenants' Rights) Bill and, where approved, promote additional related rights to those seeking and occupying the District's private rented housing.

Sevenoaks District Housing Register

As at 01/04/17, there were a total of 803 households registered on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register and with the majority requiring 1- or 2-bed properties. With just 249 relets in the year 2016/17, need is typically growing. With growing levels of in-migration, particular pressure points can be created in the local housing

market and those with a long-established local connection to the District can find themselves having to out-migrate in search of cheaper housing elsewhere. This can then result in a loss of essential workers important to the economic development of the District's towns and villages. Although the Council actively promotes mobility in the housing market, and particularly to support the wider economy, there is a need to prioritise local people as part of its work to prevent the breaking up of families, support networks and wider communities – all of which is occurring at an increasing pace. This approach ties in with several objectives, including the aim to tackle social exclusion and loneliness amongst older people.

With a rapidly-changing policy environment, a review of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register is being undertaken to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. In doing so, income thresholds are also to be reviewed in order to ensure that they remain pitched at the correct local income levels.

Total housing association lettings (through Council nominations)			
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
383	327	338	249

Table 5 - Source: ELASH data

Households on register as at 01/04/17	
1-bedroom	456
2-bedrooms	260
3-bedrooms	65
4-bedrooms +	21
Total	803

Table 6 - Source: Sevenoaks District Housing Register

Strategic priorities

Following the review of the Sevenoaks District Housing Register, and if required, the Council will make adjustments to its policy to better meet local housing needs.

Supporting people to remain independent in their own homes

Evidence consistently shows that the vast majority of older and vulnerable people wish to continue living independently in their own homes. As a result, adaptations and floating support will be increasingly important as time goes by and a key objective of local housing and wider health strategy is to enable that to happen.

Agenda Item 6

Setting the budgetary framework for housing-related support in future years, the Kent Supporting People Strategy is key to the future delivery of floating support services in the District. Key objectives of the strategy are to prevent long-term occupation of supported housing by better supporting transitions back into conventional housing, redressing the balance between accommodation-based services and floating support, and redesigning services for other client groups where a greater need arises. Again, the Council's Local Housing Needs Study will be fed into the ongoing review of Supporting People services as part of the cross-agency assessment process.

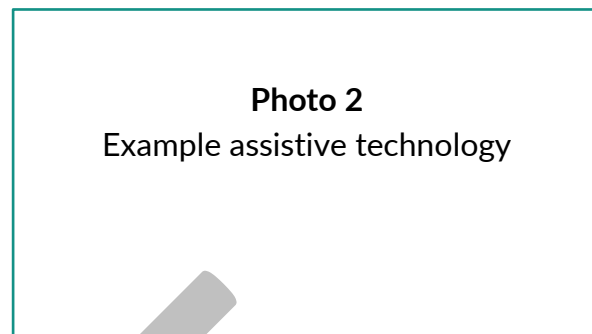
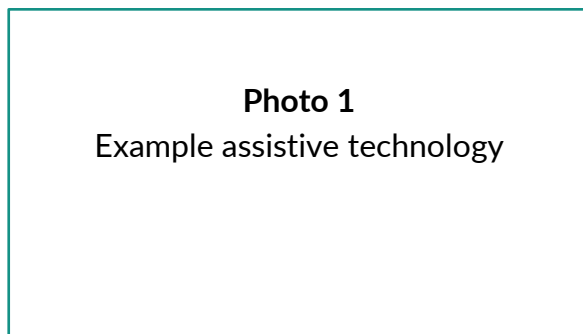
In partnership with Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells borough councils, an innovative hospital-based service has been introduced in an effort to help patients ready for discharge to return home more quickly. In doing so, this will help to free-up hospital bed spaces whilst reducing pressure on a wide-range of acute services and helping to avoid relocation-induced loneliness. As part of this project, the Council will also explore the possibility of setting aside a small number of extra care units as temporary accommodation for those leaving hospital and in preparation for a safe return home.

Evidence shows that the effects of a forced move can significantly affect a person's overall health and wellbeing. In addition, care and support costs for specialist housing can be significant and place further strain on already stretched care budgets. The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (otherwise known as DFGs) and other assistive technologies can mean the difference between a person staying put in their own home or having to move into specialist accommodation. Assistive technologies can also help to save money across health and social care services. It makes sense to continue to invest in this area of the Council's work, therefore, and to build on the work programme as the local population ages.

In order to maximise funding to best effect, the Council must continue to work with Clinical Commissioning Groups (otherwise known as CCGs) and other health and social care professionals to develop integrated strategies and to consider the pooling of resources if more can be achieved. Being linked to the Council's hospital discharge scheme, there is significant scope to achieve positive outcomes across community strategy as well as there being a clear business case for such an approach. This area of the Council's work has already been stepped up in the last year with its DFG budget being significantly increased to £977k in 2017/18.

A multi-agency referral form has also been developed and provides a checklist of issues across housing, health and wider well-being services as part of the Council's developing housing and health strategy. Through this work, officers will be trained to

identify and prescribe health improving measures and/or refer clients on to specialists across a range of disciplines. This will help the Council to better contribute to a wide-range of health outcomes through a developing out-of-hospital care system.



Strategic priorities

The Council will feed results from the Local Housing Needs Study into the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership and its sub-groups to determine group priorities going forward.

The Council will cross-reference Local Housing Needs Study data with the Supporting People needs analysis and subsequently work with Kent County Council, the NHS and other care providers to identify common priorities.

The Council will cross-reference Local Housing Needs Study data and related priorities with a wide-range of third-sector partners, including but not limited to the Sevenoaks Seniors' Action Forum, Mencap and Age UK as part of the strategy development process.

As Part of its strategy to health-proof housing, the Council will seek to utilise new plug-and-place IT-based assistive technologies to improve support packages for older and vulnerable people remaining independent at home.

The Council will seek to maximise DFG funding through the Integration and Better Care Fund.

The Council will work with extra care housing providers to explore the possibility of allocating a small number of units as temporary accommodation for older people leaving hospital.

Supported housing

Supported housing can assist a wide range of groups, including younger and older people, those with physical and mental ill health, sensory disabilities, people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse, victims of domestic abuse and those at risk of offending or re-offending. The provision of supported housing is also key to prevent delayed transfers of care by creating a better functioning social care system. Being such a wide-ranging area of housing strategy, the Council works with a number of partners across the housing, health and social care sectors to ensure that supported housing is developed, refurbished and remodelled in line with evidenced need and as identified by the Kent Commissioning Body.

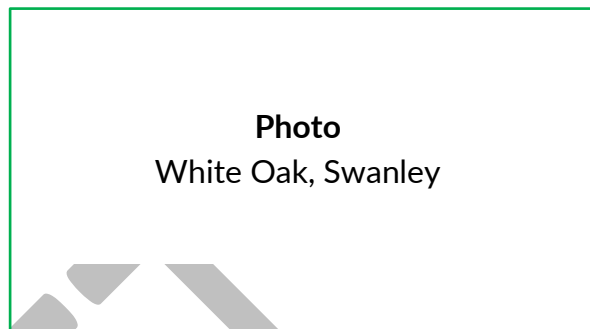
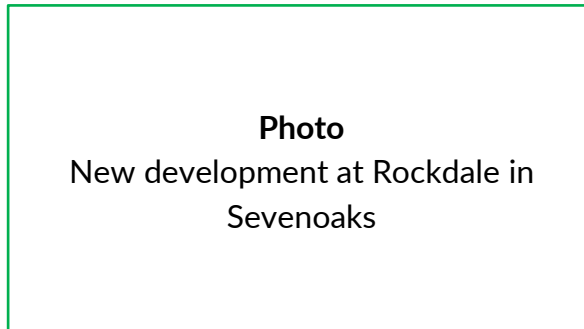
Setting out the policy and budgetary framework for supported housing in the coming years, the Kent Accommodation Strategy is key to the future delivery of supported housing in the District. Several local priorities have been identified, including the need for additional supported housing for a range of client groups including those with learning disabilities, mental health needs and vulnerable younger people. As would be expected, accommodation for older people is identified as needed and particularly extra care housing as part of a reduction in the reliance of care home places. That said, the phasing out of old care home provision will need to run in tandem with the development of more modern and purpose-built care homes with en-suite facilities and other space and design standards, including dementia-friendly measures.¹³ To demonstrate a need, there is an average of thirteen clients moving into residential care in West Kent each month and who would otherwise be suitable for extra care housing.

The Kent Accommodation Strategy also sets out the County Council's intention to review existing provision across all accommodation types in order to identify any schemes which would benefit from remodelling to cater for other client groups in greater need. As part of a cross-agency needs assessments approach, and to support this work, the Council's Local Housing Needs Study covers need across all vulnerable client groups. All related evidence will be fed into this ongoing review and to support the future provision of supported housing with a clear evidence of need in the District.

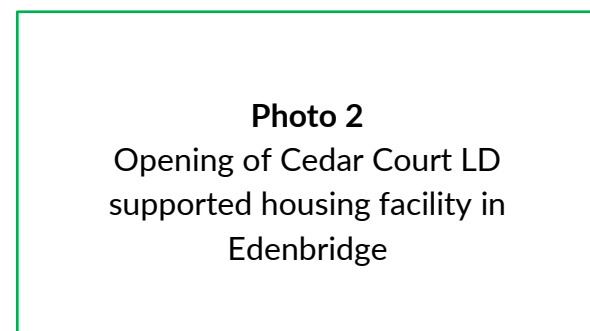
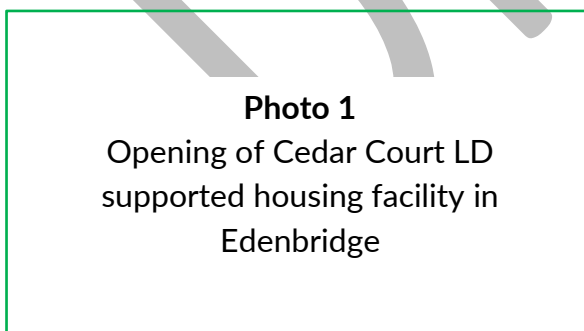
The Council also supports housing providers to remodel existing facilities to extra care, where possible, with White Oak Court in Swanley and Hollybush Court in Sevenoaks being recent examples of good practice. The Rockdale scheme in Sevenoaks is another good example of a housing scheme for older people which provides a choice of high and low-level supported housing options and is located

¹³ KCC Accommodation Strategy Older Persons' Care Home Design Principles, Oct 2015

central to the town in easy reach of a range of services. Rockdale has also recently managed to improve and increase its stock numbers to provide additional housing for local older people and all within its existing boundaries. Again, and through more efficient use of the existing housing stock, the Council is less reliant on land and new development.



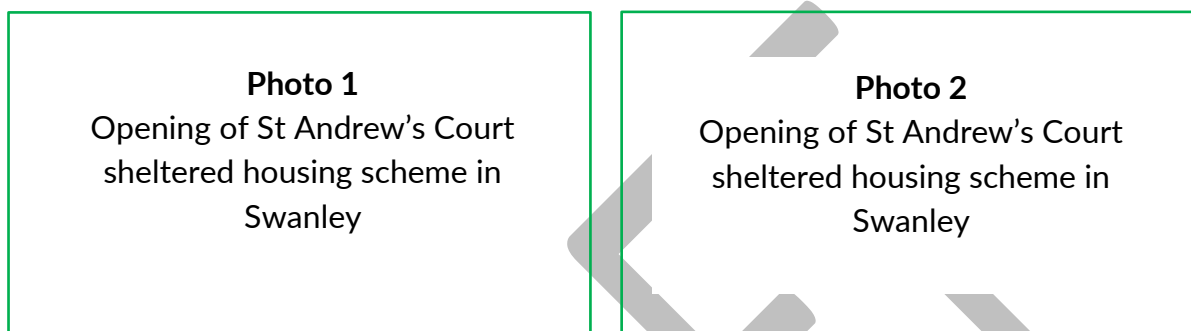
Completed in March 2017, West Kent Housing Association's new housing facility for adults with learning disabilities is another good example of enabling new supported housing through the development of existing land or by remodelling the existing stock. Part refurbishment and part new-build, this new facility provides nine self-contained apartments and a range of communal services. In order for the project to go ahead, the Council contributed £100,000 from developer contributions towards project costs totalling around £1-million. Through its partner, Mencap, the Council was also able to provide the housing association with an additional £5,000 to purchase a wide-range of equipment to help improve life skills for the new occupiers. This project is an example of how the Council and its partners are contributing to the Alternative Models of Care project as well as the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group's Mapping the Future programme.



Key to supported housing provision is the creation of well-designed and appealing schemes. Older people, for instance, increasingly resist supported housing schemes with a more institutional-type feel and instead favour modern products which are more akin to conventional housing. Opened in March 2017, the new £3.8m Moat Homes sheltered housing scheme in Swanley has provided 28 one and two-bed

Agenda Item 6

apartments for those aged 55 and over. Demolished to make way for this new facility, the old St Andrew's Court's bedsit units fell below modern space standards with no lifts and several corridors too narrow for wheelchair use. The new scheme has been designed to 'Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation' (HAPPI) principles.¹⁴ In addition, the scheme has shared gardens and courtyards and is situated just 5-minutes from the town centre and in easy reach of a wide-range of services. Such design standards will be key when working up new supported housing projects in the future and the Council will continue to consult end-users to ensure it enables the right type of housing through the emerging Local Plan.



In 2019, Government will introduce a new funding structure for supported housing which will be linked to the Local Housing Allowance (otherwise known as LHA). With the LHA not taking into account the types of buildings and associated facilities required for supported housing and complex and costly service charges, there is a growing concern that the new funding structure will not only cause issues for existing schemes but prevent providers from delivering any new schemes. In fact, there is local evidence of this occurring already and there is much caution across the sector. Government has indicated that it intends to introduce a ring-fenced budget to top up any shortfalls, but this will likely be prioritised by geographical area and client group. The end result could be that some client groups and/or areas may lose out to others, as with the Kent Supporting People programme. With older people's accommodation accounting for around 70% of all supported housing and conventional sheltered housing not being commissioned, there is an additional concern as to the future workings of the proposed system in relation to older people.

¹⁴ HAPPI - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378171/happi_final_report_-_031209.pdf

Strategic priorities

The Council will feed evidence from the Local Housing Needs Study into the Kent Accommodation Strategy as part of the cross-agency assessment process and as part of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme.

The Council will work with the Kent commissioning bodies and a range of providers to seek to establish additional provision to complement existing services and in line with latest evidence from the Local Housing Needs Study.

The Council will seek to ensure that a proportion of outdated social sector care home provision is replaced with modern purpose-built care homes which also provide specialist dementia care and extra care schemes (in line with need identified in the Local Housing Needs Study and KCC Accommodation Strategy).

The Council will work up bids for supported housing grant under the Homes and Communities Agency's 2016/21 grant programme and taking into account the non-mainstream housing guidance Housing Our Ageing population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles.

The Council will maintain contact with Government as the Local Housing Allowance supported housing review progresses to ensure that local issues are fully considered as a part of that process.

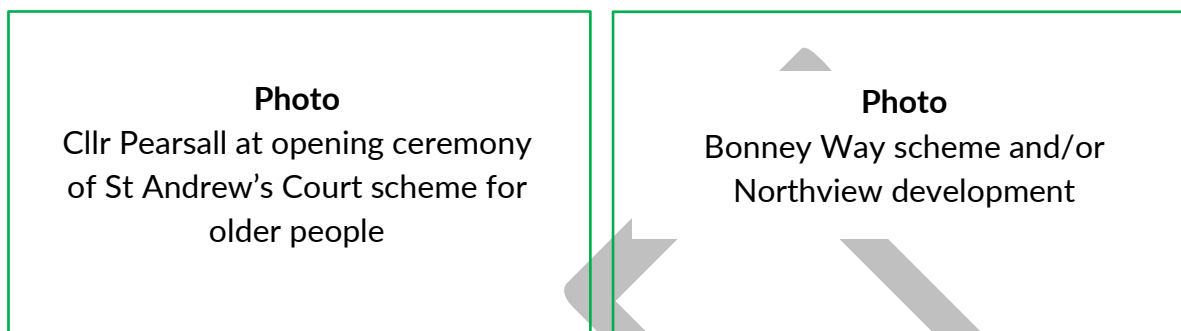
Older people

In the next few years, the District will see a significant increase in the number of over 65s and particularly the over 75s. It is essential that the Council further develops housing and health strategy to assist older people to live fully independent lives for as long as possible, therefore. The Council will work to achieve this by enabling the right mix of housing and communities such as dementia-friendly towns and villages and through the increasing use of a wide-range of digital and non-digital assistive technologies. For example, simple devices which act as reminders to detect falls or inactivity and fires can be significantly contribute to independent living.

There is also clear evidence of need for more housing which can be adapted as people's needs change, including Lifetime Homes and wheelchair-accessible homes. In doing so, people can remain in housing as they age and become less mobile. Building more purpose-built older people's accommodation to 'Age Friendly' neighbourhood principles will also help to combat loneliness and prevent slips, trips and falls, especially if homes are step-free and in accessible locations close to existing

Agenda Item 6

communities. The use of temporary modular housing units could also be a quick and ready-made solution by allowing older relatives to be situated adjacent to relatives' houses, for instance, and be cared for by their families. The Council will not be able to meet older people's housing needs solely by focussing on the District's four towns, however, and older people's accommodation or retirement villages could work well in rural locations if providing their own amenities and integrated with health and care services to support positive ageing.



Housing and Dementia

With a growing older population and predicted rise in diagnosis rates of dementia, the Council needs to continue developing positive interventions to support those affected. The Council considers cognitive impairment in both its existing housing schemes and new developments. Emily Court, for instance, which is the Council's first purpose-built extra care facility, was designed to cater for those with memory issues and to aid navigation. When designing new housing developments, the Council must create housing that encourages public interaction and in easy-to-navigate physical environments that feel safe. With improving digital technologies, the Council will increasingly explore additional support systems to enable people living with dementia to remain safe at home.

The Council provides a housing officer once a month at each of its five dementia cafes to provide a wide-range of housing advice and support. Swanley is also working towards being a 'Dementia Friendly Community' and two of the District's villages, Eynsford and West Kingsdown, are doing similar in partnership with Age UK. The next step in this work is to develop a toolkit which can be rolled out across the District. The Council is also a member of the Sevenoaks Area Dementia Friendly Community Forum and works closely with partners including Age UK and The Good Care Group to support those living with dementia. The Council was awarded the 'Most Dementia-Friendly' organisation in Kent in 2016 and is now a Dementia Champion mentoring other councils to become dementia-friendly.

Photo

1970s reminiscence room at Emily Court extra care housing scheme

Photo

Opening of new dementia café at Knole House, Sevenoaks

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference related data in the Local Housing Needs Study and feed related evidence into the Local Plan review to ensure the right housing is built for older people.

The Council will work with providers to identify a suitable site for a Help to Buy project specifically for those aged 55 and over.

In partnership with town and parish councils, the Council will develop housing elements of a toolkit to work towards Dementia-Friendly Communities.

The Council will work with the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board's Dementia Action Allowance Housing Sub-Group to develop good practice in related housing strategy.

Additional actions to be considered in the Local Plan review:

To permit modular housing units on garden land on a non-permanent basis to allow households to care for older relatives.

Younger people

National research has found that 37% of those aged 25–34 are mortgagees against 59% just a decade ago. The Council of Mortgage Lenders has also predicted that just 25% of those aged 30 will own their own home by 2020.¹⁵ Due to acute local affordability issues, it is likely that this figure is even lower in the District. The District's younger people are increasingly finding housing options limited or, for those on low-incomes, almost non-existent. This has been further exacerbated by the

¹⁵ Sellhousefast.uk

Agenda Item 6

introduction of single-room rates for those aged 35 and under and single claimants aged 18 – 21 completely excluded from housing benefit, save for certain exemptions. With a limited supply of bedsit and multi-occupancy housing in most areas of the District, younger people are finding it increasingly difficult to find any form of affordable housing. This can often result in younger people having to stay in the family home, sofa-surf or, as has been found in recent studies, out-migrate to other areas in search of cheaper housing elsewhere.

This can all prevent younger people from typical life progression and, in many cases, contribute to health conditions such as anxiety and depression. In order to assist the District's younger people, the Council must develop housing solutions which can support younger people into suitable housing. For example, this could be through micro-homes designated as 'Starter Homes' products or professionally operated lodgings schemes. A more recent example is that of co-housing whereby occupiers have independent studios which typically include an en-suite room and a kitchen. Residents will then have access to shared communal kitchens and communal spaces which include work areas, libraries and games rooms. These schemes are proving to be popular with millennials and such a model could potentially be replicated as an affordable solution in the District. An additional option, and one which has been identified as a priority in the Kent Supporting People Strategy, is to develop a supported housing scheme for vulnerable younger people in one of the District's key towns.

Through the Behaviour Insights Project, the Council is exploring a project to assist under-35s to rent a room in shared houses and this is potentially a future solution for the District's younger people. Government is looking to redesign its rent-a-room relief with a view to increasing affordable long-term lodgings for younger people and this could create new opportunities for the Council in an enabling role. The Council must continue to work with the County Council to help deliver the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme in relation to vulnerable 16-25 year olds by redesigning and aligning accommodation and support pathways as part of the development of integrated strategies.

Photo

HERO officer assisting a client

Photo

HERO surgery

Strategic priorities

The Council will cross-reference relevant data from the Local Housing Needs Study and develop an action plan to respond to younger people's housing accommodation and related support needs.

The Council will monitor the effects of changes to Housing Benefit and seek to develop supporting housing strategy to tackle any negative effects.

The Council will cross-reference relevant data from the Local Housing Needs Study and review its criteria for a suitable site for the development of a new town centre supported housing scheme for vulnerable younger people.

The Council will develop a housing information pack for younger people seeking housing.

The Council will consider an enhanced enabling role following the national rent-a-room review.

The Council work with Government's Behavioural Insights Team to take forward a potential shared-lodgings project for under-35s.

The Council will work with partners to deliver the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme in relation to vulnerable 16-25 year olds.

The Council will explore a co-housing project for younger people.

The benefit cap

With a growing tension between housing and welfare policy, it is becoming increasingly difficult for low-income households to find and keep a home in the District. The benefit cap has been further reduced to £20,000 per annum and, as a consequence, a wider demographic has been affected. With slowing wage growth and a predicted 10% in the cost of living by 2020, all of which will be made worse with cuts to tax credits, this is a growing concern and one which must be tackled in the early stages to minimise future household crises.

In order to support and prepare households, the Council's HERO service has made direct contact with those likely to be affected and offered a wide-range of advice on housing, budgeting and employment. In doing so, it is hoped that the Council will be able to better support people into employment and either remove the need for

Agenda Item 6

welfare benefits altogether or, where a top-up is still required, enable an exemption to the cap through active employment status.

Housing associations are also increasingly tightening up their affordability criteria in order to ensure that those seeking affordable housing can afford the property whilst helping to safeguard housing associations against arrears at a time when revenue is already significantly reduced as part of the rent freeze. With a potential relaxation of social sector rent setting rules on the horizon, the Council will need to ensure that adequate controls are in place to minimise any potential negative knock-on effects of such a change.

Strategic priorities

Through the HERO service, the Council will work to identify those likely to be affected by future welfare reform and offer proactive advice and support.

The Council will extend its shared-ownership housing surgeries to include wider housing advice for those affected by the benefit cap and wider welfare reform or seeking more general housing, budgeting and employment advice.

Domestic abuse

Back in 2012, and as a result of a need identified in the Kent Supporting People Strategy, the Council worked with a partner housing association to create a new domestic abuse refuge for females fleeing domestic abuse. If deemed safe to do so, the Council can also offer security works in existing properties through various security measures and in partnership with agencies, including Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue. Key to future domestic abuse provision, however, is supporting victims back into conventional housing when the time is right. On occasions, victims can remain in refuge accommodation for two or years or more. In doing so, this can make it more difficult for those households to return to normal life whilst also blocking up much needed space for others fleeing domestic abuse. As a result, the Council will seek to work with specialists across agencies to identify better ways to improve this area of its work and for the benefit of domestic abuse victims and their families.

Strategic priorities

The Council will work with Kent Adult Social Services and Kent Supporting People to develop a process to better support refuge occupiers back into general needs housing and to free-up limited local refuge places in the process.

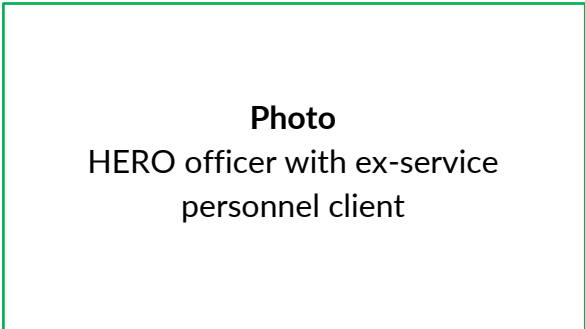
Through the Community Safety Partnership, the Council will work across departments and with external partners to identify additional measures to better support transitions back into general needs housing.

The Council will cross-reference evidence from the Local Housing Needs Study and feed this into the Kent Accommodation Strategy and Kent Supporting People Strategy as part of the cross-agency assessment processes.

Ex-service personnel

Ex-service personnel can often find themselves in a housing crisis when returning to civilian life. In order to better understand the nature and scale of the problem in the District, the Council included specific provision for this group within its Local Housing Needs Study. This has shown a total of 252 current or ex-service personnel with a connection to the District, which is a greater number than anticipated.

The Council's HERO service now offers in-house expertise for both current and ex-service personnel and has already supported several ex-service personnel to access housing, financial, employment, training and health services. A housing information pack is currently being developed and this will be added to as and when additional housing products are made available. The information pack will be launched by Council's Chairman and Member Champion for the Armed Forces to help raise awareness of the wide-range of housing options for current and ex-service personnel as part of a focus on the military in the coming year. The Council is also proud to be a signatory of an Armed Forces Covenant which aims to redress disadvantages that the armed forces community may face in comparison to other citizens and to recognise sacrifices made.



Strategic priorities

The Council will work with its Member Champion for the Armed Forces to develop and formally launch a housing information pack for current and ex-service personnel.

The Council will explore the possibility of a pilot project with the MoD whereby those leaving the Armed Forces are automatically referred to local authorities for housing advice.

The Council will work to deliver suitable housing for older ex-service personnel by providing a number of dedicated places in any future extra care housing schemes.

Filthy and verminous premises

In recent years, the District has seen a growing trend of filthy and verminous properties. This can typically include accumulations of waste and hoarding, infestations of rats and mice, and unsightly properties which may also be in a poor state of repair. The reasons behind such situations are wide and varied, but can typically include older people suffering with Diogenes Syndrome or other mental health conditions. As a consequence, the Council adopts a multi-agency approach to all filthy and verminous cases and with key partners across health, social and fire services. With a growing older population, the Council will need to step up its response to this concerning trend.



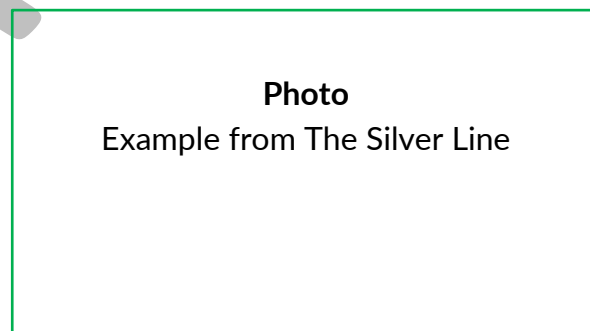
Strategic priorities

The Council will monitor trends in this area by client group, and particularly the growing older population, in order to identify any early potential interventions.

Pet policies

For those living alone, and particularly older people, a pet can provide good company and significantly contribute to the owner's physical and mental health and wellbeing. With loneliness and social exclusion being a growing phenomenon, or at least more apparent, the Council must work with providers to develop policies which could allow pets in supported housing schemes. Homeless people can also find themselves having to give up a pet in order to take up emergency or short-term accommodation. With a pet often being a significant part of a vulnerable person's life and consequent well-being, this can prevent many from doing so. Again, this needs to be considered in the future to try to ensure, where possible and practical, that homeless people may not have to give up their pet in order to secure a roof over their head. That said, the Council does accept that this can be impractical at times and potentially have a negative effect on other residents or the management of the scheme in question. As a result, the Council will seek to develop a pet policy supporting and seeking a balanced approach to the allowance of pets in housing schemes.

With dog fouling being a key issue in the District and this likely to have a bearing on whether certain housing schemes allow pets, this is another area where Council intervention could potentially bring about positive benefits – not only in addressing a public health issue but also by encouraging providers to allow pets if the situation were better controlled. As recently trialled by a local authority in London, the introduction of a dog DNA scheme could help to identify offending pet owners that do not clear up after their dogs and, in the process, encourage more responsible pet ownership. In doing so, this could also encourage housing providers to permit pets.



Strategic priorities

The Council will develop a database of housing providers' pet policies in order to be able to offer advice to older and vulnerable clients looking for pet-friendly housing.

The Council will develop a pet-friendly policy with its recommendations for affordable and supported housing providers.

Where pets are not permitted, the Council will signpost to services such as the pet fostering scheme.

The Council will promote the Cinnamon Trust and its pet walking services for older people and those suffering from ill health.

The Council will explore a dog DNA scheme to encourage pet-friendly housing policies.

Within any new housing that the Council develops through its company, it will aim to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard pet policy.

DRAFT

Health, sustainability and equality impact assessments

All key objectives have been subject to related impact assessments in the development of this Housing Strategy and, where necessary, adjustments made to address any potentially negative effects. As and when more detailed action plans are developed, and where required, these assessments will be repeated.

Governance and monitoring

In order to ensure that the Housing Strategy is as effective possible, biannual progress reports will be taken to the Housing and Health Advisory Committee. Where adjustments and/or new actions are required and which fall outside of the approved policy framework, reports will be produced setting out any associated recommendations for consideration. A series of performance measures will also be developed as more detailed action plans are drawn up and in order to gauge success of work programmes across the remit of this Housing Strategy.

Consultation arrangements

In the development of this draft Housing Strategy, the Council has consulted partners across sectors and taken into account a wide-range of legislation, policies, strategies and good practice at local, sub-regional, county and national level. Every household in the District was also given the opportunity to provide comments as part of the recently completed Local Housing Needs Study. If you wish to provide any comments and/or suggestions on this draft Housing Strategy, please do so in one of the following ways:

Online questionnaire:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/housingstrategy>

Email:

housing.policy@sevenoaks.gov.uk

By post:

FAO: Gavin Missons (Housing Policy Manager)
Strategic Planning
Sevenoaks District Council
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 1HG

Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy Consultation

1) Providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures.

Do you agree that these are the right approaches to better deliver a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures and do you have any suggestions to help us deliver on this objective?

[Empty response box for objective 1]

2) Improving the quality and use of the existing housing stock.

Do you agree that these are the right approaches to improve the quality of and make more effective use of the District's housing stock and do you have any suggestions to help us deliver on this objective?

[Empty response box for objective 2]

3) Meeting the needs of vulnerable and low-income households.

Do you agree that these are the right approaches to better meet the needs of vulnerable and low-income households and do you have any suggestions to help us deliver on this objective?

[Empty response box for objective 3]

Do you have any further comments and/or suggestions in relation to this Draft Housing Strategy?

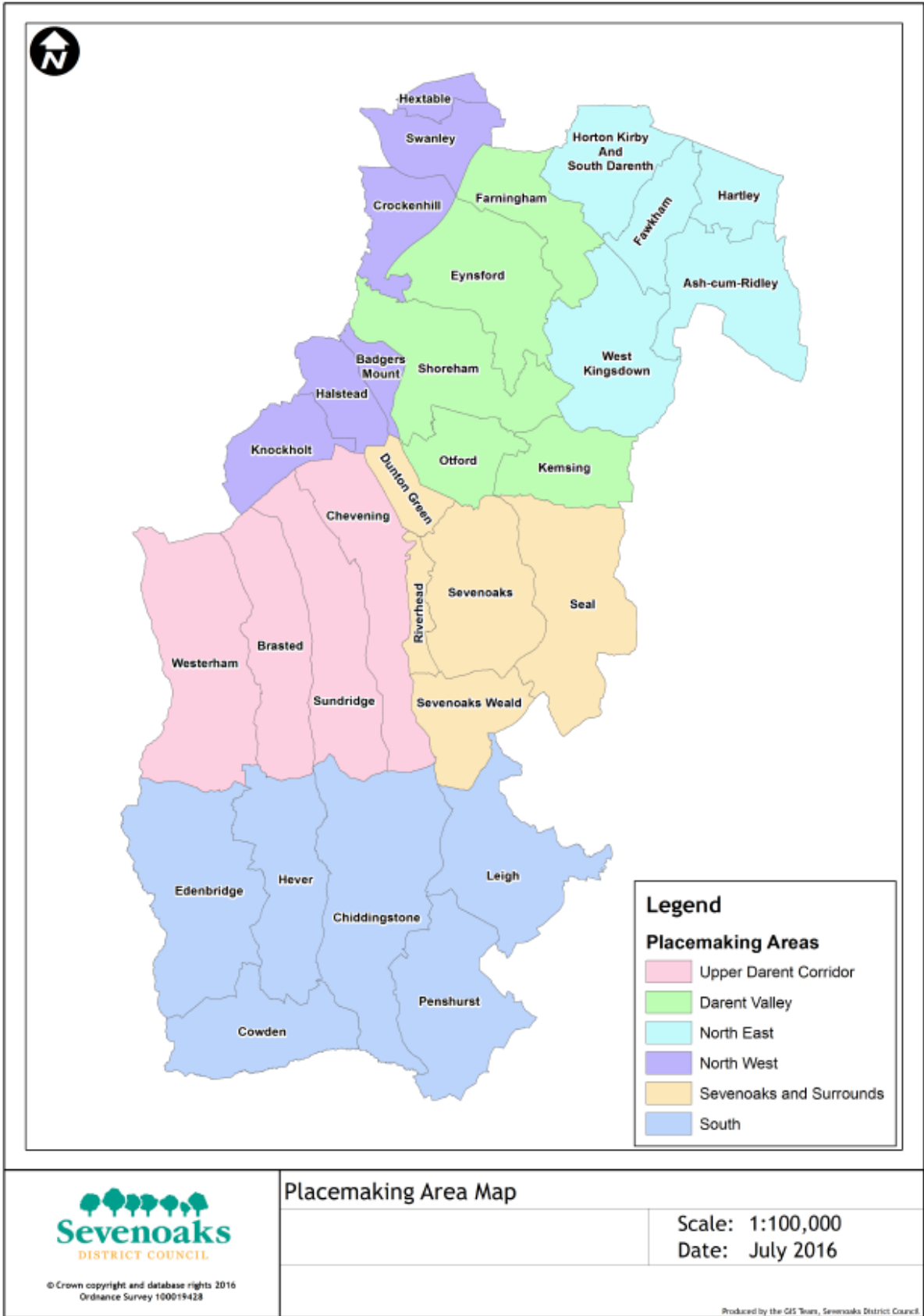
Thank you for your input.

Please provide contact details for our records.

DRAFT

Agenda Item 6

KEY LINKS	
Authority Monitoring Report	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20014/planning_policy/257/authority_monitoring_reports
Climate Local Sevenoaks	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/download/87/climate_local_sevenoaks
Community Plan	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20026/your_community/290/community_plan
Empty Homes Action Plan	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/170/empty_homes_action_plan
Kent Accommodation Strategy	http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/adult-social-care-policies/accommodation-strategy-for-adult-social-care
Kent Environment Strategy	http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kent-environment-strategy
Local Housing Needs Study	
Local Plan	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20014/planning_policy/247/new_local_plan_2015-35
Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/Data/Services%20Select%20Committee/200804151900/Agenda/Report%20-%20Item%2009%20-%20Private%20Sector%20Housing%20Assistance%20Programme%20-%20Appendix.pdf
Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocation Policy	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/directory_record/1910/housing_register_allocation_policy/category/30/housing
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s31097/09%20SHELAA%20report.pdf
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/699/strategic_housing_market_assessment_shma_september_2015
Tenancy Strategy	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/directory_record/138/tenancy_strategy/category/30/housing
Under-Occupation Strategy	https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/760/under-occupation_strategy



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016
Ordnance Survey 100019428

Placemaking Area Map

Scale: 1:100,000
Date: July 2016

Produced by the GIS Team, Sevenoaks District Council

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 7 - Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Policy

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 20 June 2017. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

This page is intentionally left blank

**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME
POLICY**

Cabinet - 13 July 2017

Report of	Chief Officer Communities & Business
Status	For Consideration
Decision by	Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 20 June 2017
Key Decision	Yes

Executive Summary: This report sets out this Council's Policy for participating in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) in Kent.

This report supports the Key Aim of safe and caring communities and healthy environment

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officers Hayley Brooks, Ext. 7272

Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee: For consideration and to note the content of this report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- a) to adopt the Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Policy set out in Appendix A;
 - b) to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to make decisions relating to the Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Policy.
-

Reason for recommendation:

This Council has been asked to support to resettle Syrian refugee families as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme in Kent. This report sets out a Policy to enable further properties to be used, if affordable and suitable accommodation and support services are identified in the future.

Introduction and Background

- 1 In response to the current crisis in Syria, the Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) in February 2014. This

Agenda Item 7

scheme involves taking identified vulnerable refugees straight from the Middle East and resettling them in the UK. The refugees are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain and as such are able to work and claim benefits and other public funds from day one.

- 2 On 7 September 2015, the Prime Minister announced that SVPRS will be expanded so that 20,000 people will be assisted under the scheme by the end of the Parliament in 2020. Local authorities are key to the delivery of this offer.
- 3 The national SVPRS is currently voluntary and dependent on local authorities agreeing to take part. Every local authority is being asked by the Home Office to support this Scheme. To date, around 32 families have been resettled by district councils in Kent, in partnership with Kent County Council.
- 4 On 28 February 2017, Members approved for Officers to work with West Kent Housing Association to make available one vacant six bedroom adapted social housing property in Eynsford as part of the Kent SVPRS. This work continues to be progressed in partnership with the housing association, Home Office and Kent County Council to find a suitable Syrian refugee family.
- 5 Housing Syrian refugee families in rented accommodation relies mainly on local private landlords willing to offer a property to this Council and the Home Office as part of this Scheme, when no local need has been identified for the property. This Council has not yet been approached by any private landlords or other organisations offering suitable family sized properties to resettle refugee families.
- 6 The recommendation set out in this report asks Members to adopt the Sevenoaks District SVPRS Policy, as set out at Appendix A, to enable this Council to participate in the national scheme when suitable and affordable properties are identified.
- 7 The Policy provides for this Council to work closely with local partners including Kent County Council, and the contracted support provider. Any property put forward for approval under the Policy would have to be assessed as affordable and suitable by the appropriate Officers in consultation with Kent County Council and the local health provider.
- 8 When making a decision under the Policy, the Council will have regard to a number of national strategic policies and procedures, already in place as part of the national SVPRS, including the Strategic Partnership for Migration's Statement of Outcomes and the setting up of a Sevenoaks District SVPRS Steering Group including appropriate representatives from this Council and Kent County Council.

Key Implications

Financial

- 9 If this Council were to support the resettlement of families in this District under the SVPRS, the Council would receive the local authority tariff from the Home Office to cover the support and associated costs relating to the work. Additional Home Office funding may be available for exceptional circumstances such as home adaptations.

Resource (non financial)

- 10 If this Council supports the resettlement of families in this District, existing Officer and partner resources would be required to meet the support and housing requirements. This Council's existing strong partnerships with local key agencies, the voluntary sector and local community groups would be needed to support the families and this work.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 11 This Council has a Memorandum of Understanding with Kent County Council outlining the responsibilities of both parties as part of the SVPRS. This is already in place as it was needed for the property approved by Members on 9 March 2017.

Equality Assessment

- 12 Members are reminded Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) the Council must have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 13 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. The decisions recommended through this paper will assist vulnerable families.

Conclusions

- 14 Members are asked to adopt the Sevenoaks District SVPRS Policy to enable this Council to support the resettlement of Syrian refugee families, if suitable and affordable housing is identified. This Policy includes delegating powers for this work to the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing, in consultation with local Members.

Appendices Appendix A - Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Policy and Policy appendices 1-4

Agenda Item 7

Background Papers [Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement \(VPR\) Programme - Guidance for local authorities and partners \(28 October 2015\)](#)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/472020/Syrian_Resettlement_Fact_Sheet_gov_uk.pdf

Lesley Bowles
Chief Officer Communities & Business

Sevenoaks District Council
Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) Policy

V1: 150517

1. This policy sets out how Sevenoaks District Council acting in their capacity as the local Housing Authority will support the resettlement of refugee families within the Sevenoaks District, as part of the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.
2. When making a decision under this Policy the Council will have regard to:
 - a. South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) Statement of Outcomes (at pages 2-3);
 - b. Syrian VPRS Memorandum of Understanding (at page 4-8);
 - c. Sevenoaks District Council Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Flowchart Summary (page at 9).
3. Any identified properties, which may be suitable for refugee families as part of the Kent SVPRS, will be inspected and considered by this Council for suitability and other local needs. Only properties that are unable to meet a local need will be considered for use under the SVPRS. An assessment of affordability will be made by Sevenoaks District Council against Local Housing Allowance rates when considering the suitability of properties.
4. Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing, following consultation with local Members, has delegated powers to offer properties to the Home Office.
5. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding (pages 4-8), we will form a Sevenoaks District Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Steering Group which will include appropriate representatives from Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council.
6. The Steering Group will ensure compliance with the SESPM Statement of Outcomes (at pages 2-3) and co-ordinate support and communication across Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council when involved in:
 - a. Decision making on accepting cases
 - b. Pre-arrival planning
 - c. Financial planning
 - d. Post arrival support
 - e. Ongoing support
 - f. Planning for years 2-5 and exit

South East Strategic Partnership for Migration – Statement of Outcomes

1. Section 1 – Delivery Outcomes

1.1 The SRP is made up of two elements:

1.1.1 **Pre arrival** – Provision of medical and travel services enabling the migration of accepted Beneficiaries to the UK; and

1.1.2 **Post arrival** – Housing provision, initial reception arrangements, casework and orientation support including English language provision.

1.2 This Statement of Outcomes describes the **post arrival outcomes** to be achieved.

2. Post Arrival Outcomes

Provision of accommodation:

2.1 The Recipient will arrange accommodation for the arriving Beneficiaries which meets local authority standards and which will be available on their arrival and is affordable and sustainable.

2.2 The Recipient will ensure that the accommodation is furnished appropriately. The furniture package should not include luxury items. This means that funding received through this Instruction should be used for food storage, cooking and washing facilities but should not include the provision of other white goods or brown goods, i.e. TV's, DVD players or any other electrical entertainment appliances. This shall not preclude the Recipient from providing Beneficiaries with additional luxury, white or brown goods through other sources of funding.

2.2.1 The Recipient will ensure that the Beneficiaries are registered with utility companies and ensure that arrangements for payments are put in place (no pre pay/card accounts).

2.2.2 The Recipient will provide briefings on the accommodation and health and safety issues for all new arrivals including the provision of an emergency contact point.

Initial Reception Arrangements:

2.3 The Recipient will meet and greet arriving Beneficiaries from the relevant airport and escort them to their properties, briefing them on how to use the amenities.

2.4 The Recipient will ensure that Beneficiaries are provided with a welcome pack of groceries on their arrival – the content of this pack should take into account the culture and nationality of the Beneficiary(ies).

2.5 The Recipient will provide an initial cash allowance for each Beneficiary of £200 – this is to ensure they have sufficient funds to live on while their claim for benefits is being processed.

Casework Support:

2.6 The Recipient should ensure that Beneficiaries are provided with a dedicated source of advice and support to assist with registering for mainstream benefits and services, and signposting to other advice and information giving agencies – this support includes:

2.6.1 Assisting with registration for and collection of Biometric Residence Permits following arrival

2.6.2 Registering with local schools, English language and literacy classes

- 2.6.3 Attending local Job Centre Plus appointments for benefit assessments
- 2.6.4 Registering with a local GP
- 2.6.5 Advice around and referral to appropriate mental health services and to specialist services for victims of torture as appropriate
- 2.6.6 Providing assistance with access to employment.
- 2.7 The Recipient shall develop an overarching (or framework) support plan and bespoke support plans for each family or individual for the first 12 month period of their support to facilitate their orientation into their new home/area.
- 2.8 The Recipient shall undertake an assessment with each Beneficiary of their English language capability to determine appropriate support arrangements through provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or equivalent. The purpose of the language tuition is to ensure that each Beneficiary is able to carry out basic transactions within the communities in which they have been placed. Beneficiaries should be able to access such classes within one month of their arrival and they should be made available until such time as suitable mainstream provision becomes available or until 12 months after arrival (whichever is sooner).
- 2.9 Any language support provision should be delivered by an accredited provider.
- 2.10 Throughout the period of resettlement support the Recipient will ensure interpreting services are available.
- 2.11 The above outcomes will be provided through a combination of office based appointments, drop in sessions, outreach surgeries and home visits.
- 2.12 The Recipient shall collate such casework information as is agreed to enable the Authority to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Programme's delivery.

Requirements for Beneficiaries with special needs/assessed community care needs:

- 2.13 Where Beneficiaries are identified as potentially having special needs/community care needs the Authority will ensure, as far as possible that these needs are clearly identified and communicated to the Recipient six (6) weeks prior to the arrival of the Beneficiaries.
- 2.14 Where special needs/community care needs are identified only after arrival in the UK, the Recipient will use its best endeavours to ensure that care is provided by the appropriate mainstream services as quickly as possible.
- 2.15 Where sensitive issues (including safeguarding issues or incidents of domestic abuse, violence or criminality) are identified pre-arrival by the Authority, the Authority will notify the Recipient immediately, and not longer than 24 hours, after its receipt of the information.
- 2.16 Where sensitive issues such as the above are identified post-arrival by the Recipient, the Recipient shall notify the Authority within 24 hours, setting out what procedures are to be put in place to mitigate the situation.

SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN**

- (1) Kent County Council, whose principal office is at County Hall, Sessions House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ AND
- (2) Sevenoaks District Council, whose principal office is at Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

1. Purpose of the Memorandum

To set out clearly the basis on which the two local authorities will work together to deliver the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme in the Sevenoaks area.

2. Background

As part of its response to the current situation in Syria, the Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) in February 2014. This scheme involves taking particularly vulnerable refugees straight from the Middle East and resettling them in the UK. The refugees are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain and as such are able to work and claim benefits and other public funds from day one.

On 7 September 2015 the Government announced that the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme will be expanded so that 20,000 people will be assisted under the scheme by the end of the Parliament in 2020. The scheme is currently voluntary and dependent on local authorities agreeing to take part.

The scheme is based on need. Working closely with the UNHCR, it prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin, including:

- women and girls at risk
- survivors of violence and/or torture
- refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs
- refugees with medical needs or disabilities
- children and adolescents at risk
- persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity

Individuals accepted onto the scheme are able to bring their immediate family with them. Once cases have been assessed and referred from the UNHCR, the Home Office checks that the individual meets the eligibility criteria, carries out medical and thorough security checks and arranges the necessary visas. The cases are then passed to a local authority that has agreed to participate in the scheme. The referral will include details on family make up, age and specific needs, including a full medical health assessment report. If accepted the local authority (both district and county in two-tier areas) will need to arrange housing, school places and any additional support that is required. An arrival date is agreed with the Home Office.

3. Responsible Authority

In two-tier areas it is the Housing Authority that is treated as the responsible authority by the Government. Any delegation of functions and/or funding to Kent County Council (KCC) has to be with the agreement of the relevant Housing Authority.

4. Kent Response

Following a meeting of Kent Leaders on 23 September 2015 and Kent County Council on 22 October 2015 it was agreed that KCC would work with district Housing Leads (through the Kent Housing Group) to determine the best way to set up the scheme in Kent.

Several meetings have been held with district housing leads and other key partners and it has been agreed that KCC should co-ordinate and commission a service in partnership with those districts that wish to take part. This memorandum sets out the basis on which the County Council will work together with Sevenoaks District Council. There will be a separate Memorandum of Understanding for each area of Kent that wishes to take part.

5. Governance Arrangements

A local District Steering Group will be set up to cover arrangements for families to be resettled in Sevenoaks. This will include representatives of:

- Sevenoaks District Council (where the refugees will be settled);
- Kent County Council Commissioning;
- Kent County Council Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance;

The District Steering Group will hold regular planning meetings before and after arrival bringing in other partners as needed, including the resettlement support provider. The District Steering Group will be responsible for ensuring that all activities pre and post arrival are carried out, although many of these will be delegated to the resettlement support provider, various functions within KCC and other partners including Health.

The steering group can meet in person or via teleconference as appropriate. Meetings must always include at least one representative of Sevenoaks District Council and KCC.

It will be the responsibility of individual partners to update their own senior management and elected Members.

6. Information Sharing

Parties to this agreement must sign up to the Kent and Medway Information Sharing Agreement.

Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council will be Joint Data Controllers (as defined in the Data Protection Act) for the purposes of information governance. The support provider will also be classed as a Joint Data Controller as they will receive and disseminate information to Sevenoaks District Council and KCC. This means that the following information will be treated as belonging equally to both parties to this agreement and the relevant support provider:

- Referral details provided by the Home Office/UNHCR;
- Advice and service arrangements made by various partners (e.g. Education, Social Care, Jobcentre Plus etc);
- Information gathered by the support provider in the process of their work with the family. This includes Integration Support Plans and updates on progress in specific areas.

The families will have signed a consent form for information to be shared by the UNHCR and Home Office before they arrive. This gives authority for the initial sharing of

information with other bodies, including the support provider, Health, Jobcentre Plus etc. Once arrived they will be:

- Provided with a document (Privacy Notice) explaining who now holds their information and what will be done with it.
- Asked to sign a consent form for the continuation of sharing of specific information more widely to named organisations (e.g. Jobcentre Plus, schools, colleges etc). The consent will apply to all the Joint Data Controllers.
- The consent form will include a reference to the fact that information will be shared with the British Government about how a family's resettlement is progressing, when requested. This will cover the routine monitoring carried out by Government. However if a more detailed report is required on an individual family, additional specific consent will be required.

7. Security of Personal Data

Both the Sevenoaks District Council and KCC have responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and it is essential that all staff are trained in this regard and understand their responsibilities to ensure personal and organisational compliance in this area. Sevenoaks District Council and KCC have exchanged copies of appropriate information handling policies and both parties are satisfied that there are appropriate policies in place for handling and processing of personal data and Information Security, including the handling of information security breaches.

Data Protection training is in place at both the Sevenoaks District Council and KCC and regularly rolled out to all staff.

In the event of a security breach involving beneficiary information originating from the Home Office/UNHCR it must be reported to the Home Office immediately (within the first 24 hours of becoming aware), in the first instance through Strategic Regional Leads and notifying the Home Office's Corporate Unit at: HOSecurityenquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

The Home Office will provide direction on the appropriate steps to take about the best approach in terms of containment of the breach and any requirements to report the breach to the Information Commissioner's Office. Each bodies Senior Information Risk Owner can decide to report a breach by their own body (while simultaneously discussing this with the other body and the Home Office). If one body's SIRO becomes aware of a breach by the other body, they should raise it with the other body straightaway, but will reserve the right to report the breach to the Home Office even if the other body's SIRO decides not to.

8. Funding for the scheme

Funding from the Home Office for local authorities is as follows:

Year one

Adults:	£8,520
Children 5-18:	£8,520 plus £4,500 for education
Children 3-4:	£8,520 plus £2,250 for education
Children under 3:	£8,520

This funding is ring-fenced to the scheme.

It is important to note that the above figures do not include the Housing Benefit and other DWP benefits (which will be paid in the usual way) or the health care costs (which will be paid direct to the CCGs - £2,600 per person).

Extra payments may be available for education for refugees under the age of 18. There will also be a Special Cases Fund to provide extra support for the most vulnerable refugees.

Years two to five

Year 2 - £5,000 per person.

Year 3 - £3,700 per person.

Year 4 - £2,300 per person.

Year 5 - £1,000 per person.

There will also be support for education and health in years 2-5, which will be funded separately to the local authority tariff.

The funding is to be drawn down in stages from the Home Office, following submission of forms stating what has been spent to date.

Sevenoaks District Council agrees to inform the Home Office that the funding will be sent to Kent County Council in the first instance and that KCC will be the official budget holder for the scheme. This has to be done annually. The funding will then be distributed as follows:

- Payments to providers including the resettlement support provider, bodies providing furniture, interpreting services, transport provider etc.
- Sevenoaks District Council for any expenses they have incurred.
- Specified amounts to KCC Education to then pass on in full to schools.
- Other ad hoc expenses as they occur.

The above arrangement, whereby KCC administers the funding, can be reviewed if either party to this agreement is not satisfied with the way it is working.

9. Identification and management of properties used for the scheme

It will be the responsibility of Sevenoaks District Council to find, inspect and secure suitable properties for the scheme. They should also ensure that landlords/agents have brought the properties up to a habitable standard, that the properties are clean, any necessary repairs have been carried out and they are ready to be furnished and set up by KCC (see next section).

If the rent is above Housing Benefit (LHA) rates, it may be possible in exceptional circumstances for the Home Office Syrian VPRS funding to be used to cover any shortfall for a period. However, using the SVPRS funding for this purpose must be mutually agreed by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council.

Any necessary and reasonable costs needed to secure the property will be reimbursed out of the funding for the scheme. This includes:

- Void costs before the family arrive or after they leave if necessary
- Deposits (if it is not possible to use the Housing Authority's Rent Deposit Scheme)
- Rent in advance – if required by the landlord before Housing Benefit is paid

Any deposit, rent in advance paid must be returned at the end of the tenancy to whichever body has paid it (whether that is KCC or Sevenoaks District Council).

10. Furnishing and setting up of the property prior to the arrival of the family

It will be the responsibility of KCC to arrange for the furnishing of the property and to ensure that all essential items are in place before the family arrives. They will also deal with any appropriate requests for additional items. Funding for this will come from the money available through the Syrian VPRS and claimed as part of the process set out in section 8.

11. Pre-arrival liaison with the Home Office and South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) and coordination of pre-arrival arrangements

KCC will be responsible for the liaison with Sevenoaks District Council, the Home Office, SESPM and relevant partners such as Health and Education over which families can be accepted under the scheme.

KCC will also oversee the process whereby the relevant services and support have been put in place before/shortly after the families arrive. This includes, but is not limited to, Health, Education, ESOL provision, Benefits, Adult Social care, Children's Services etc. The majority of this will be carried out via the commissioned support providers (Centra).

12. Resettlement support provision

The two local authorities (Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council) will agree which body will be appointed to carry out the provision of intensive resettlement support for the first year (from the KCC list of providers approved for use on the scheme or another body or section of the two councils if this is felt to more appropriate). Once this has been decided any commissioning arrangements will then be the responsibility of KCC Commissioned Services.

13. Monitoring and review

KCC Commissioned Services will be responsible for regularly reviewing the operation of the chosen support provider and dealing with any day to day issues that arise in the course of the provider's work with the family. They will make available to the rest of the District Steering Group (i.e. KCC SPRACA and Sevenoaks District Council) the Integration Support Plan and further regular up-dates on the progress of the family.

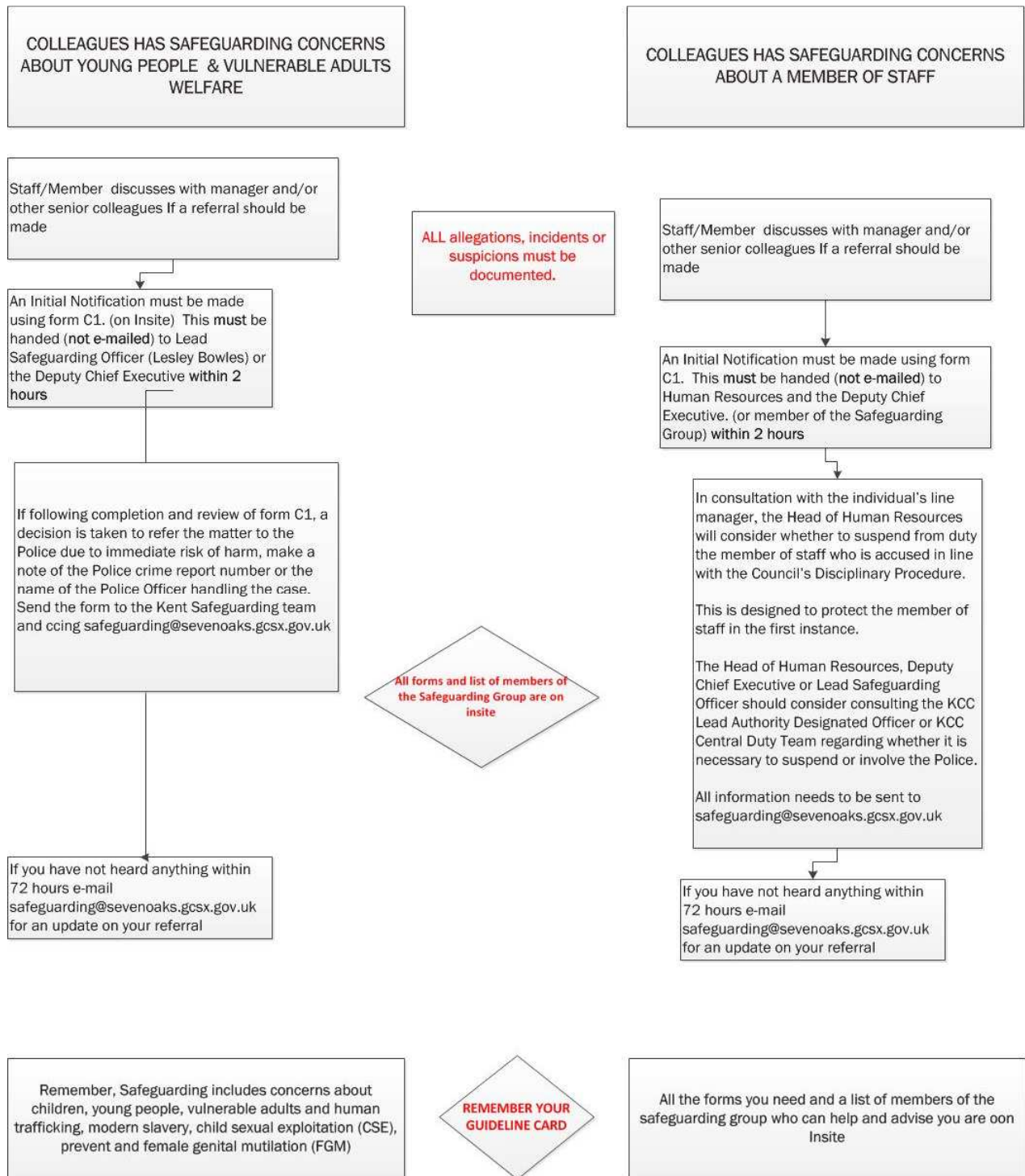
At specific points, to be determined, both Sevenoaks District Council and KCC will visit the family (without the Support Provider) to review the progress of the family.

In addition, specified officers from Sevenoaks District Council have the right to visit the family on occasion (provided with an interpreter where necessary) and request information from the Resettlement Support Provider on the progress of the family. Sevenoaks District Council also has the right for any expenditure (if reasonable and agreed) they have had to incur to be reimbursed out of the funding for the scheme.

14. Review of this Memorandum of Understanding

The terms of this Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed if either party believes it is no longer fit for purpose. A minimum of two months' notice should be given if this applies.

Sevenoaks District Council Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Flowchart Summary)



For full details please see the Sevenoaks District Council's Safeguarding Policy and related forms at: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/3/safeguarding_policy_for_children_and_vulnerable_adults

Alternatively email the Safeguarding Leads: safeguarding@sevenoaks.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 8 - Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 20 June 2017. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of this agenda and will follow when available.

This page is intentionally left blank

VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME (VPRS) - COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME RESETTLEMENT PLAN ASSESSMENT

Cabinet - 13 July 2017

Report of	Chief Officer Communities & Business
Status	For consideration
Decision by	Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 20 June 2017
Key Decision	Yes

Executive Summary: This Council may be asked by local charities, who apply to resettle families as part of the Home Office Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) Community Sponsorship Programme, to agree their application to operate as a community sponsor in this District. Sponsoring organisations need the agreement of their local authority in order to be able to apply to the Home Office for the scheme.

At its meeting on 15 October 2016, Cabinet resolved that Officers work on and implement a process to consider applications from potential Community Sponsors under the Government's Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) Community Sponsorship Programme.

Members asked Officers to bring back the assessment matrix once it was developed. This report sets out the proposed Assessment Form.

This report supports the Key Aim of safe and caring communities and healthy environment

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officers Hayley Brooks, Ext. 7272

Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:

For consideration and to note the content of this report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- a) to approve the assessment form for this Council's response to Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan applications as set out at Appendix A;
 - b) to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, following consultation with local Members, to make decisions relating to the VPRS
-

Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan assessment.

Reason for recommendation:

This Council may be asked by local charities, who apply to resettle families as part of the Home Office VPRS Community Sponsorship Programme, to give consent to approve their application to operate as a community sponsor in this District.

Introduction and Background

- 1 In response to the current crisis in Syria, the Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) in February 2014. This scheme involves taking identified vulnerable refugees straight from the Middle East and resettling them in the UK. The refugees are given five years Humanitarian Leave to Remain and as such are able to work and claim benefits and other public funds from day one.
- 2 In July 2016, a Community Sponsorship Programme was launched by the Home Secretary. This scheme enables local registered charities or Community Interest Companies to act as a Sponsor to apply directly to support the resettlement of refugees as part of the Government's Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS).

Sevenoaks District Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment

- 3 The Sponsor must have written evidence from local authorities in which they wish to place a resettled family, which supports the approval of their Resettlement Plan application. In two-tier areas, consent must be sought from both the County and District Councils. The application is then considered by the Home Office and other Government agencies.
- 4 On 15 October 2016, Members asked Officers to develop a process to consider applications from potential Community Sponsors so that this Council can assess whether it should consent the approval of the applicant to operate as a Community Sponsor in this District.
- 5 The Sponsor must be able to demonstrate that they have suitable and sustainable accommodation for a resettled family, and that it will be available for a resettled family to use for a minimum of two years.
- 6 The Home Office guidelines state that a local authority might object to a Resettlement Plan application based on:
 - a) insufficient capacity to accommodate a family in the proposed housing area (e.g. lack of school places);
 - b) concerns about community tensions in the proposed housing area;
 - c) where they have reason to believe that the community organisation is not suitable to undertake the resettlement of vulnerable adults and children; or

- d) another appropriate reason.
- 7 The proposed Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan assessment form is attached at Appendix A. This will enable Officers to assess any proposed Plans submitted by potential local Sponsors against a set scoring criteria.
- 8 Members are asked to approve this assessment form and delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, in consultation with local Members, to make decisions relating to this work.

Key Implications

Financial

- 9 The Community Sponsor will need to demonstrate sufficient resources (financial, housing and personnel) and a detailed plan, backed by relevant experience of supporting communities. They will be responsible for meeting and welcoming the family, providing housing for the first two years, supporting access to services and support towards employment, language tuition and self-sufficiency.
- 10 If an approved Community Sponsor fails in their responsibilities, additional costs may be required to put in place alternative support. However, additional funding may be available on a case by case basis.
- 11 In the event that a family becomes homeless the local authority would be expected to house the family in accordance with their normal procedures.

Resource (non financial)

- 12 Officer time will be required to undertake the assessment process.
- 13 If this Council supports the Sponsors’ Resettlement Plan, some existing Officer and partner resources may be required as part of the standard service delivery requirements which support local residents and communities.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 14 Beneficiaries have the same entitlements as any UK citizen. Successful community sponsors will be required to sign an agreement with the Home Office, setting out the responsibilities of the sponsor and the Home Office.

Risk	Mitigation
Suitability of the sponsor	Both the District and County Council are required to assess the sponsor before they consent to an application being made to the Home Office.

Failure of the sponsor to perform	The Home office may terminate the contract with the Sponsor
Security and Safeguarding	Beneficiaries will be assessed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as being exceptionally vulnerable. The final decision on acceptance of cases is taken by the Home Office. The Sponsor is required to demonstrate to the Home Office that they have a robust safeguarding policy and procedures in place.
Family becoming homeless after the first two years	A meeting would be held between the sponsor and the housing authority towards the end of the two year period to allow for any housing issues to be discussed and solutions agreed in advance of the two year period.

Equality Assessment

- 15 Members are reminded Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) the Council must have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 16 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. The decisions recommended through this paper will assist vulnerable families.

Conclusions

- 17 It is necessary to have in place a system of assessment in case the council is approached by a potential community sponsor. Members are asked to approve this assessment form to enable this Council to consider whether it should consent the approval of the applicant to operate as a Community Sponsor for a refugee family in this District. The Sevenoaks District Community Sponsorship Resettlement Plan assessment is attached at Appendix A.
- 18 Members are asked to delegate powers for this process to the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing, following consultation with local Members.

Appendices Appendix A - Community Sponsorship Resettlement Plan Assessment

Background Government's Full Community Sponsorship:

Papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>

Lesley Bowles
Chief Officer Communities & Business

This page is intentionally left blank

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
1. Resettled family has a home in which to settle in the UK, with adequate space and facilities to live in comfort and safety.	What accommodation has been identified?		5
	Has local need been considered for this property?		5
	When will it be available?		5
	What size and composition of family could be accommodated, consistent with Sevenoaks District Council guidance on occupation levels?		5
	Will the property be available for use by the resettled family for a minimum period of two years?		5
	Will the cost of rent be fully covered by the Local Housing Allowance? If not, does the sponsor have sufficient funds to cover the difference for at least two years?		5
	What will happen after two		5

Page 111

Agenda Item 8

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 112	years? If the accommodation will no longer be available to the resettled family after two years, how will their transition (if required) be supported to alternative sustainable accommodation?		
	How will sponsor ensure that the resettled family be able to raise issues about their accommodation with the landlord, bearing in mind the potential language barrier?		5
	TOTAL SCORE SECTION 1		
2. Resettled family members feel welcome in the UK and are able to quickly acclimatise to living in the UK	Who will meet and greet at the airport?		5
	Will there be an interpreter there?		5
	Has transport to and from the airport been considered?		5

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 113	Has the family’s privacy and dignity been considered, so as not to overwhelm them on arrival at the airport?		5
	On arrival at the accommodation, how will the sponsor ensure that the family is able to cook and look after themselves?		5
	How will the sponsor help the family to settle/acclimatise to their new environment over the following days?		5
	Will the sponsor provide a welcome pack of groceries that take into account the culture and nationality of the resettled family? What will they provide and what has informed this decision?		5
	Sponsors should provide £200 per person (adults and children) in		5

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 114	cash on arrival for initial expenses. Has the sponsor considered providing the appropriate cash?		
	Has the sponsor thought about supporting the family with access to local shopping and transport?		5
	TOTAL SCORE SECTION 2		
3. Resettled family are able to make a life for themselves in the UK, through accessing community activities, medical care, language skills, education and employment.	Will the sponsor ensure the family gets their Biometric Residence Permits within 7 days of arrival in the UK?		5
	Will the sponsor assist with registering children with local schools within two weeks of arrival?		5
	How will the sponsor provide formal ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) tuition?		5

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 115	Has the sponsor factored in the costs of ESOL tuition?		5
	How will the sponsor provide additional conversational English language support?		5
	How will the sponsor monitor the family’s progress with learning English?		5
	What additional steps in the sponsor prepared to make to ensure that the family makes progress with learning English?		5
	How will the sponsor support the family with attending local Job Centre appointments for benefit assessments? Has the sponsor familiarised themselves with the available benefits?		5
	How will the sponsor assist the family with signing up with a GP?		5

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 116	How will the sponsor advise on accessing appropriate mental health services and specialist support services e.g. for victims of torture, as appropriate?		5
	How will the sponsor provide assistance with access to employment, including development of CV and education?		5
	How will the sponsor assist with access to digital media and services, including providing support where a lack of digital skills is a barrier to independence?		5
	How will the sponsor make the family aware of and support attendance at local community activities, including playgroups, local clubs, events etc?		5
	Will the sponsor provide		5

Sevenoaks District Council
 VPRS - Community Sponsorship Programme Resettlement Plan Assessment Form

Criteria Description	Detail	Summary of Application	Points Available
Please use the following scoring chart to assist you when allocating points: 1 - Poor; 2 - Fair; 3 – Good; 4 – Very Good; 5 - Excellent			
Page 117	interpreting services from arrival for 12 months? Have they identified a suitable interpreter?		
	Have they considered the costs of an interpreter?		5
	What is the interpreter’s availability?		5
	Has the sponsor considered the likely need for intensive interpretation services in the first few days and weeks?		5
	Will resettled individuals have access to telephone or text support for interpretation?		5
	TOTAL SCORE SECTION 3		
TOTAL POINTS ALLOCATED (out of a possible 175)			

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 9 - Local Plan Issues and Options

The attached report was considered by the Planning Advisory Committee on 22 June 2017. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Planning Advisory Committee (22 June 2017, Minute 17)

The Chairman had agreed to exercise her discretion and allowed a member of the public to address the Committee.

The Strategic Planning Manager presented a report detailing the Issues and Options document which represented the first public consultation in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the adopted Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. The document reflected other strategic documents of the Council in particular, the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and the housing and economic development strategies. Evidence for the consultation had been assembled over a two year period. An eight week consultation will be followed by a period when responses would be assessed and a draft Local Plan prepared for further public consultation.

Members discussed how the Place-Making areas would work and sustainability and infrastructure requirements for the District. In response to concerns raised Members were advised that the consultation would provide views of the public, secondary schools and stakeholders and a special edition of InShape in August would provide an easy to read non-technical summary of the Issues and Options document inviting a public response.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options document be agreed for public consultation.

This page is intentionally left blank

LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 22 JUNE 2017

Report of	Chief Planning Officer
Status	For consideration
Also considered by	Cabinet - 13 July 2017 (for decision)
Key Decision	Yes

This report supports the Key Aim of Protecting the Green Belt.

Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Robert Piper
Contact Officers	Antony Lancaster, Ext. 7326 Hannah Gooden, Ext. 7178

Recommendation: That the Planning Advisory Committee recommend to Cabinet that the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options document be agreed for public consultation.

Recommendation to Cabinet: To

- (a) agree the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options document for public consultation; and
 - (b) delegate the finalisation of consultation questions and any non-substantive text amendments required in the document to the Chief Planning Officer following consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder and Chairman of Planning Advisory Committee.
-

Reason for recommendation: To enable progression of the first stage of public consultation for the new Local Plan

Introduction and Background

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council is preparing a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) 2015. The first document in this process, the Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options document is attached as appendix A to this report. The requirement for producing a new Local Plan stems from a change in Government planning policy via the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012.

Agenda Item 9

- 2 Over the past ten years, 2,509 homes have been completed (or 250 homes per year) against a target of 165 homes per year in the Core Strategy and last year 115 affordable homes were completed (against a target of 66 per year), In addition, the Council's planning department is the busiest in Kent, with 2,101 planning applications received in 2016. The plan has been successful in protecting the Green Belt.
- 3 Local Plan work since 2015 has focussed on the preparation of a substantial evidence base to help inform policy making. This evidence is supplemented by the strategies, plans of other authorities and agencies together with views acquired through early consultations in putting the evidence together, via workshops with Town and Parish Councils, landowners, agents and via other stakeholders (particularly those identified as prescribed bodies under the Duty to Co-operate). The next stage towards the new Local Plan is to identify key issues arising out of the early work and the options for addressing them.
- 4 **The Issues and Options document is strategic in nature, focussing on getting 'high level' objectives agreed and a strategic approach to addressing issues by topic and by location. It is therefore not driven by the identification of sites for housing. Details of appropriate sites will naturally follow as part of the draft Local Plan consultation in early 2018 once the strategic approach is confirmed. It sets out Council preferences for dealing with issues whilst welcoming comments on all considerations that should be taken into account.**
- 5 In assembling the Issues and Options document views expressed by the portfolio holders for housing and health, economic development as well as planning have been co-ordinated and represented. In particular, meetings held in early April and early May have helped ensure alignment with emerging Council strategies for housing and for economic development. More specifically the Local Plan Issues and Options and the Housing Strategy have been timetabled for consideration at the same Planning Advisory Committee and Cabinet meetings. The strategies set out 'high level' priorities and actions whilst the eventual Local Plan policy will facilitate, as far as possible, delivery through the planning system.
- 6 To allow for the summer holiday period it is being recommended that an extended eight week consultation be undertaken. The summary details for proposed public consultation are as follows:

Thursday 3rd August 2017 Issues and Options Consultation Starts

w/c 14th August 2017 Agents Forum (including any commercial agents)

w/c 21st August 2017 Duty to Co-operate sessions

w/c 4th September 2017 Place-making workshops (6 events to be organised across the District)

w/c 11th September 2017 Public “drop-in” sessions organised in key District locations (Sevenoaks/Swanley/Edenbridge/Westerham)

w/c 18th September 2017 School consultation sessions (Years 9-13 at state secondary schools)

Thursday 28th September 2017 Issues and Options Consultation Finishes

- 7 The July edition of In Shape will contain a page highlighting the forthcoming consultation. A Local Plan special edition of In Shape in August will provide an easy to read non-technical summary of the Issues and Options document together with easily understood questions inviting a public response. It will also provide full details of public engagement opportunities during September and set out how the main Issues and Options document and more technical questions can be viewed.
- 8 Consultation will be in accordance with the Council’s adopted Statement of Community Involvement. A high response rate will be encouraged and consultants employed to record responses and analyse data. Following public consultation responses will be assembled and assessed and will help in forming the draft Local Plan timetabled for further public consultation in the Council’s Local Development Scheme for early 2018.

Executive Summary

- 9 The Local Plan is clear that the Green Belt will continue to be protected. In order to do so, new housing will need to be accommodated , at higher densities, within existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) other than in the following cases:
 - Where the development will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land in the Green Belt (use of the term brownfield for Local Plan purposes goes wider than the NPPF definition and is being set out in the glossary to the Local Plan).
 - Where a convincing ‘exceptional circumstances’ case can be made. The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.
- 10 Evidence for potential supply of housing land estimates that about 5,000 new homes can be built in existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) and 1,500 new homes built on brownfield land in the Green Belt.
- 11 Current potential exceptional circumstance cases undergoing separate consultation processes are at Sevenoaks Northern, as part of the Sevenoaks (Town) Neighbourhood Plan (area regeneration, brownfield land in the Green

Agenda Item 9

Belt and approximately 800 new homes (within the plan period)) and at Westerham as part of the privately led Which Way Westerham initiative (a new relief road and approximately 600 new homes). Sevenoaks District Council currently remains neutral on this initiative. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to endorsement through examination and local referendum.

- 12 At Edenbridge, whilst there is also a Neighbourhood Plan process ongoing it is not currently promoting an exceptional circumstance case for Green Belt release for housing. Provision of new health and secondary education are likely to be important if any case were to be made. At Swanley, the potential for a new garden village has been fully explored as a potential option via extensive Master Vision public consultation and Cabinet have agreed this option will not form part of Swanley's regeneration. Work on the Hextable Neighbourhood Plan is now continuing again and the Local Plan will consider any exceptional circumstance cases arising through this work. The Ash Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing any exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt land release.
- 13 **The objectively assessed housing need for the District is 12,400. In paragraph 10 above, evidence of potential supply identifies sites for 6,500 new homes (This excludes any emerging exceptional circumstances where cases still need to be made and/or finalised numbers confirmed). Providing for 6,500 new homes over 20 years would represent a doubling of existing required delivery in the adopted Core Strategy but still well short of meeting identified need.**
- 14 Alongside continuing engagement with emerging potential 'exceptional circumstances' cases cooperation with other local planning authorities will continue in order to explore capacity options in other less constrained areas of the sub-region.
- 15 Choices for housing are strongly influenced by the new housing strategy. Priorities include measures for balancing the housing market via more 1-2 bedroom affordable houses, particularly for young people and first time buyers, more 2-3 bedroom market units, more options for older people including opportunities to right-size, extra care housing and allowing more opportunities for other forms of low cost housing such as custom and self build. Differences emerge for place-making areas. Provision to meet identified need for Gypsies and Travellers can be identified on existing sites or via small extensions without the need for new sites. The report for the Housing Strategy elaborates further on housing choice.
- 16 Economic priorities from the emerging economic development strategy have been represented in the Local Plan. Of high importance are ensuring that new development is 'technology ready' and that lobbying of Government and relevant infrastructure providers leads to substantial improvement in high speed broadband coverage. The rural and visitor economies are highlighted as key areas of focus for the future ensuring that the District's tourism assets are promoted and new visitor accommodation is provided.

- 17 Options for finding additional employment land include intensifying uses and small expansions of existing employment areas. In total about 11ha of new employment land needs be identified, 7ha of which is to be for offices. New land and premises will need to be attractive to both inward investment and cater for the growth and expansion plans of local businesses. Ensuring new premises actually get built on allocated employment land and that they remain in employment use is a particular issue.
- 18 Evidence identifies over 30,000m² of new retail provision being needed during the plan period in order to ensure the District's High Streets remain competitive with other nearby centres, particularly Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells. The location of new provision is likely to be particularly influenced by progress with the regeneration of Swanley town centre.
- 19 Further work will be required to ensure that the requirements for housing, employment and retail are in balance when the final plan is being drafted.
- 20 Having sufficient infrastructure is identified as one of the most important issues for the new Local Plan. The plan is accompanied by an infrastructure plan (previously reviewed by planning advisory committee) which identifies the items that are either desirable or more importantly critical to delivery of the Local Plan. Key items relate to transport, education and health. Whilst Council officers continue to meet with partners responsible for different items of infrastructure (particularly Kent County Council, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups) the Local Plan and infrastructure Plan will themselves provide important evidence for Members when lobbying Government and relevant infrastructure providers for the funding needed by the District.
- 21 The Issues and Options document sets out the District Council's preferred options for addressing needs and issues, but in order to ensure all reasonable options are considered, representations on alternatives will be invited as part of the public consultation and these will be assessed prior to drawing up a draft Local Plan.

Structure of the Local Plan

- 22 The Issues and Options consultation document has the following structure:
 - A District Profile
 - B Sub-regional/Cross Boundary issues
 - C Vision of the District in 2035
 - D Local Plan Objectives (for achieving the Vision)
 - E Strategic Spatial Options
 - F Issues and Policy Options by Topic
 - G Issues and Policy Options by Area
 - H Delivery Targets and Monitoring
- 23 The **District Profile** provides a context and summary of the current state of the District, using updated Census information, local data and the evidence

Agenda Item 9

base gathered so far. This represents a starting point from which Sevenoaks District will be developing and growing over the next twenty years.

- 24 The consideration of **Sub-regional/Cross Boundary Issues** references key influences likely to be impacting on the District either currently or over the plan period. These include:
- Ebbsfleet - a new garden town of 15,000 homes
 - Paramount development at Swanscombe peninsula
 - Bluewater - growth of a major retail and leisure attraction
 - Housing provision and London's growth
 - Significant growth south of the River Thames from Greenwich to Medway - over 120,000 new homes and 100,000 new jobs
 - Green Belt role in separating London and major growth in mid Kent
 - Employment provision (including links to Bromley)
 - Transport infrastructure
 - Lower Thames crossing
 - M25 - serious congestion and no eastbound option at junction 5
 - Gatwick expansion
 - Rail services, particularly into London
 - Health provision
 - Education provision
 - Flood Risk - upstream flood storage areas on the River Eden for Tonbridge
 - Ashdown Forest - wider development impacts on an internationally important area
- 25 The **Vision** seeks to provide an aspirational, locally-specific and concise picture of what Sevenoaks District will be like in 2035 by responding to the key issues identified for the District. The Vision will be further refined and shaped by local stakeholders as part of the public consultation. It sets the scene for a direction of travel summarised through objectives.
- 26 The scope of the Local Plan is very wide ranging. Having a small number of strategic objectives helps to provide a clear structure and sets the scene for positive outcomes for the district. The objectives can be readily monitored to see if the eventual agreed Local Plan is effective. The six **Objectives** being put forward for the Plan are derived from the three strands of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) as set out in the NPPF. Importantly they also align with the Councils Corporate Plan, the Community Plan, new housing strategy and emerging economic development strategy in order to be locally relevant. Again, these will be open to public comment. They are:
1. **Provide housing choice for all.** Includes housing need, housing supply and accommodation types - including affordable options, singles, families, older

people, vulnerable people, people with disabilities, Gypsies and travellers and a specific focus on rural housing.

2. Promote well designed, safe, places and safeguard and enhance the District's distinctive high quality natural and built environments. Includes Green Belt, Landscape and natural environment, Nature Conservation, Biodiversity, Design and Heritage/ Conservation.

3. Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural. Includes needs by use class, employment land supply, measures to support skills improvement, the rural economy, the visitor economy and super fast broadband.

4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure. Includes infrastructure priorities, retail provision and the leisure uses of town centres.

5. Promote healthy living opportunities. Includes open space and leisure.

6. Provide for a greener future. Includes climate change mitigation, water usage, climate change adaptation, flood risk, pollution issues (including air quality) and responses to new technology.

27 The **Strategic approach** has two strands The first of these considers ways in which the identified needs of the District, including land for housing, employment, retail, community facilities and infrastructure may be met, or partially met. The constrained nature of the District very much sets the context for the strategy and means that genuine options are limited. Whilst options for meeting key needs for employment land and retail uses can be readily set out and explained, options for providing new homes are much more challenging.

28 The second strand is concerned with ensuring local identity is maintained or enhanced. To help achieve this, place-making areas, comprising small groupings of adjoining parishes or towns have been identified and used in the gathering of evidence. A series of workshops have been held at which Town and Parish Council representatives have discussed what is important to their different areas and what could be better. The Local Housing Needs Study 2017, which is an evidence base to both the new housing strategy and emerging Local Plan provides data at place-making level.

29 Having such a comprehensive strategic approach should help to ensure that the eventual plan:

- Is appropriate within the sub-regional setting of south-east London, Kent and the Surrey and Sussex borders;
- Provides a clear direction for the sustainable development of Sevenoaks District up to 2035;

Agenda Item 9

- Allows for local ambitions to be recognised in different parts of the District and where appropriate treated differently in policy.
- 30 The main part of the Issues and Options document is therefore concerned with considering issues by both topic and area and the key issues are summarised in the Executive Summary section above.
- 31 The Local Plan will need to be supported by information on **delivery, targets and monitoring**. This will help ensure that the policies are deliverable and that the effectiveness of policy can be monitored (through the annual Authority Monitoring Report).
- 32 A **Sustainability Appraisal** is also in preparation, starting with a scoping report, to support and inform the production of the Local Plan. This will be used to evaluate alternatives and select preferred options. It enables plans and policies to be tested to see how well they perform against economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 33 The Local Plan will also be accompanied by assessments of **Health Impact and Equalities Impact**. When submitted for examination the Local Plan must be accompanied by a Duty to Cooperate Statement. At this stage it is intended that a progress report accompanies the Issues and Options consultation documenting dates of meetings held and summarising the main cross boundary matters arising through Duty to Cooperate processes so far.
- 34 Finally the Local Plan must also undergo **Appropriate Assessment** under the Habitat Regulations. This is to ensure that any new development being considered through the Local Plan has no adverse impacts on sites of international importance or that sufficient mitigation measures can be guaranteed. Whilst there are no such sites in Sevenoaks District there are a few in areas nearby and one, the Ashdown Forest, currently impacts on the extreme south of Sevenoaks District (an area where virtually no development is currently envisaged).

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 23 The option not to progress a new Local Plan would leave the Council open to reputational damage and likely Government intervention to produce a Local Plan for the District Council.

Key Implications

Financial

Production of the Local Plan will be funded from the Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan

making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment.

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The preparation and adoption of a Local Plan will directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusion

The Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options document represents the first public consultation in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the adopted Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015. The document reflects other strategic documents of the Council in particular the Corporate Plan, Community Plan and the emerging housing and economic development strategies. It is backed by a substantial evidence base assembled over a two year period. An eight week consultation will be followed by a period when responses are assessed and a draft Local Plan prepared for a further round of public consultation.

Appendices

Appendix A - Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015 - 2035 Issues and Options

Background Papers

[PAC key progress reports](#)

7 July 2015	Local Plan Work Programme
19 April 2016	Local Plan Work Programme
21 June 2016	Local Plan Update
22 September 2016	Local Plan Update
16 May 2017	Local Plan Update

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

This page is intentionally left blank

Sevenoaks District Local Plan 2015-35

Issues and Options consultation

Images of the District

DRAFT

DRAFT

Foreword from Cllr Piper, (Portfolio Holder for Planning). (photo)

I am delighted to be able to introduce the first public consultation document for the emerging Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It represents the first stepping stone in a process that we hope will lead to a new plan being examined and adopted during 2019. This will replace the existing Core Strategy adopted in 2011 [and the Allocations and Development Management Plan \(2015\)](#). It is also the first of several public consultations that we anticipate being undertaken between now and 2019 so there will be plenty of opportunity to make your views known and help frame what we intend to be an ambitious and appropriate plan for the district over the next 15 to 20 years; running to 2035.

As we all know Sevenoaks District represents one of the most attractive areas of the country. Its Kent Downs and High Weald 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' landscapes are recognised as being of national importance and make up over 60% of the District. Green Belt land forming a buffer to the outward growth of London represents 93% of the district, one of the highest percentages of any district in the country. It is important to protect our best countryside. Yet the district also lies within the most densely populated region of the country and pressures to meet housing and employment needs remain relentless. Clearly these distinct characteristics represent very significant challenges for us all, **but it is important to state early on that we only intend to consider the Green Belt in exceptional circumstances with a focus on the sustainable reuse of brownfield sites.**

This Sevenoaks District Local Plan Issues and Options document is based on one of the most comprehensive and up to date evidence bases ever assembled for any plan in Sevenoaks District. It takes as its starting point the current state of the district and suggests a vision for the future that aims to protect and enhance the existing qualities of places whilst creating new settings to help meet future needs. The plan will also help identify the provision of new and improved infrastructure to make places function better, albeit recognising that in most cases funding will be dependant on the Government, their agencies or other infrastructure providers. 'Place making' is a central theme being put forward in the new plan and, in particular, place making that responds to differences in localities around the District; for instance the qualities of Edenbridge are very different to those of settlements in the Darent Valley and will remain so going forward.

Please be aware that we will particularly welcome contributions that help to achieve a genuinely shared and visionary plan with a focus on meeting the needs of all who live and work in the district.

Over to you.

Agenda Item 9

Executive Summary

The Local Plan is clear that the Green Belt will continue to be protected. In order to do so, new housing will need to be accommodated, at higher densities, within existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) other than in the following cases:

- Where the development will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land in the Green Belt (use of the term brownfield for Local Plan purposes goes wider than the NPPF definition and is set out in the glossary to the Local Plan).
- Where a convincing 'exceptional circumstances' case can be made. The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.

Evidence for potential supply of housing land estimates that about 5,000 new homes can be built in existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) and 1,500 new homes built on brownfield land in the Green Belt.

Current potential exceptional circumstance cases undergoing separate consultation processes are at Sevenoaks Northern, as part of the Sevenoaks (Town) Neighbourhood Plan (area regeneration, brownfield land in the Green Belt and approximately 800 new homes (within the plan period)) and at Westerham as part of the privately led Which Way Westerham initiative (a new relief road and approximately 600 new homes). We currently remain neutral on these initiatives. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to endorsement through examination and local referendum.

At Edenbridge, whilst there is also a Neighbourhood Plan process ongoing it is not currently promoting an exceptional circumstance case for Green Belt release for housing. Provision of new health and secondary education are likely to be important if any case were to be made. At Swanley, the potential for a new garden village has been fully explored as a potential option via extensive Master Vision public consultation and Cabinet have agreed this option will not form part of Swanley's regeneration. Work on the Hextable Neighbourhood Plan is now continuing again and the Local Plan will consider any exceptional circumstance cases arising through this work. The Ash Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing any exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt land release.

The objectively assessed housing need for the District is 12,400 over the period 2015-2035. Evidence of potential supply identifies sites for 6,500 new homes (this excludes any emerging exceptional circumstances where cases still need to be made and/or finalised numbers confirmed). Providing for 6,500 new homes over 20 years would represent a doubling of existing required delivery in the adopted Core Strategy but still well short of meeting identified need.

Alongside continuing engagement with emerging potential 'exceptional circumstances' cases, cooperation with other local planning authorities will continue in order to explore capacity options in other less constrained areas of the sub-region.

Choices for housing will be strongly influenced by the new housing strategy. Priorities include measures for balancing the housing market via more 1-2 bedroom affordable houses,

particularly for young people and first time buyers, more 2-3 bedroom market units, more options for older people including opportunities to right-size, extra care housing and allowing more opportunities for other forms of low cost housing such as custom and self build. Differences emerge for place-making areas. Provision to meet identified need for Gypsies and Travellers can be identified on existing sites or via small extensions without the need for new sites. The ~~report for the~~ Housing Strategy elaborates further on housing choice.

Economic priorities from the emerging economic development strategy have been represented in the Local Plan. Of high importance are ensuring that new development is 'technology ready' and that lobbying of Government and relevant infrastructure providers leads to substantial improvement in high speed broadband coverage. The rural and visitor economies are highlighted as key areas of focus for the future ensuring that the District's tourism assets are promoted and new visitor accommodation is provided.

Options for finding additional employment land include intensifying uses and small expansions of existing employment areas. In total about 11ha of new employment land needs be identified, 7ha of which is to be for offices. New land and premises will need to be attractive to both inward investment and cater for the growth and expansion plans of local businesses. Ensuring new premises actually get built on allocated employment land and that they remain in employment use is a particular issue.

Evidence identifies over 30,000m² of new retail provision being needed during the plan period in order to ensure the District's High Streets remain competitive with other nearby centres, particularly Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells. The location of new provision is likely to be particularly influenced by progress with the regeneration of Swanley town centre.

Further work will be required to ensure that the requirements for housing, employment and retail are in balance when the final plan is being drafted.

Having sufficient infrastructure is identified as one of the most important issues for the new Local Plan. The Plan is accompanied by an infrastructure plan (~~previously reviewed by planning advisory committee~~) which identifies the items that are either desirable or more importantly critical to delivery of the Local Plan. Key items relate to transport, education and health. Whilst we continue to meet with partners responsible for different items of infrastructure (particularly Kent County Council (~~education, social care and transport~~), the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups) the Local Plan and infrastructure Plan will themselves provide important evidence for Members when lobbying Government and relevant infrastructure providers for the funding needed by the District.

~~This~~ Issues and Options document sets out our preferred options for addressing needs and issues, but in order to ensure all reasonable options are considered, representations on alternatives will be invited as part of the public consultation and these will be assessed prior to drawing up a draft Local Plan.

Table ~~x~~ provides a summary of key issues arising set out under the six objectives being proposed for the new plan.

Agenda Item 9

Table x Summary of key issues

Objective 1. Promote housing choice for all	
What are the main issues and challenges?	The pressing need for new housing Affordability of homes in both urban and rural areas Providing the right homes for all accommodation needs, including for older people, as evidenced in the 2017 Housing Strategy Housing density Highly constrained District with 93% Green Belt and 60% AONB
Which areas are affected?	Urban areas – these areas are under significant pressure to deliver high density housing development. Rural areas – with virtually all rural areas subject to Green Belt designation, delivering new and much needed affordable housing and homes suitable for older people is a key challenge.
Cross-boundary issues?	Future housing pressures from London Housing pressures from elsewhere in the South East
Objective 2: Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District's distinctive high quality natural and built environments	
What are the main issues and challenges?	Protecting the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Protecting the distinctive landscape character of the District Protecting biodiversity to ensure no net loss Encourage high quality design Conserve and enhance the District's heritage assets
Which areas are affected?	All areas
Cross-boundary issues?	Metropolitan Green Belt extends across neighbouring authorities Ashdown Forest – impact of development on European designated site Environmental and biodiversity issues do not follow administrative boundaries
Objective 3: Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural	
What are the main issues and challenges?	Provision of new employment land and premises Protection or improvement of existing employment land Strengthening the rural/visitor economy including accommodation Encouraging innovation and technology, including broadband
Which areas are affected?	All areas, both urban and rural Large employment sites Smaller employment sites especially in rural area
Cross-boundary issues?	Pressures and competition from adjoining areas and London

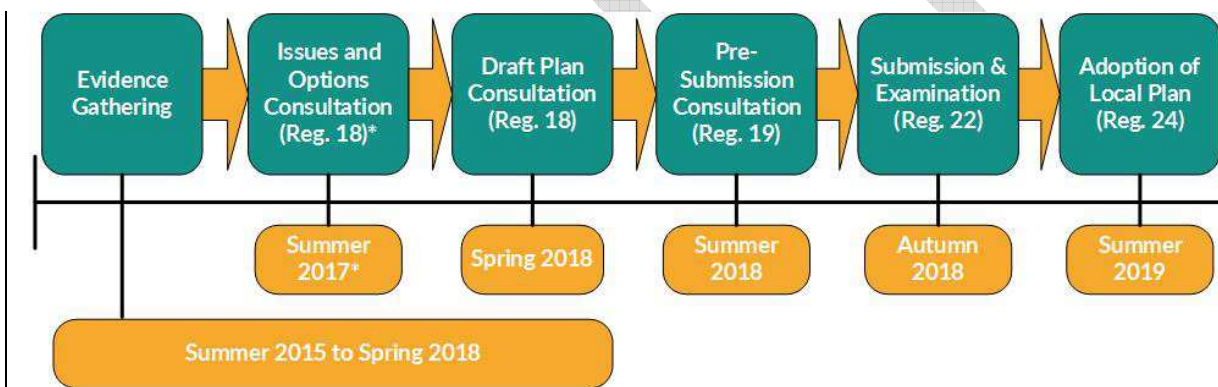
Objective 4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure	
What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Ensuring vibrant town centres Regeneration of Swanley and New Ash Green Retention of small scale local services and facilities (pubs, shops, halls etc) Pressures on major routes, particularly the M25 Pressures on railways, capacity issues, no west/east routes Encouraging opportunities to deliver sustainable modes of transport Ensuring sufficient infrastructure to meet both existing and future growth needs particularly for Health and Education Working with infrastructure providers to deliver capacity improvements including for communication/digital infrastructure</p>
Which areas are affected?	<p>Local town and local service centres (Sevenoaks/Swanley/Edenbridge/New Ash Green/Otford/Westerham). Facilities and services available for rural communities M25, M26, M20, A21, A20, A25 routes Rural connectivity with surrounding centres Secondary education provision in towns</p>
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Impact of Bluewater and potential expansion Other out-of-District centres Future Rail Services (mainline & metro) Lower Thames Crossing Possible Gatwick Airport and Biggin Hill Airport expansion County wide Health and Education provision</p>
Objective 5. Promote healthy living opportunities	
What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Community Wellbeing and reducing social exclusion Ageing Population Leisure provision for growing population Safeguarding of existing open space and provision of new space to meet District-wide deficits Improving air quality</p>
Which areas are affected?	<p>Areas with high levels of deprivation Rural areas can be affected with health inequalities due to a lack of health provision.</p>
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Health is a cross boundary issue Lack of collaborative working between the two NHS authorities operating within the District.</p>
Objective 6. Promote a greener future	
What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Climate change mitigation and adaptation Ensure new development avoids or mitigates against fluvial and surface water flood risk</p>
Which areas are affected?	<p>All areas</p>
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Connections across boundary for recreational opportunities including walking and cycling Habitat connections Landscape designations including AONBs</p>

Contents / How to respond – to be added

Why Produce a New Local Plan?

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and the associated Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) was adopted in 2015. However, because the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in 2012, and amongst other alterations, changed the way housing need was calculated, there is a requirement to update our Plan. Many of the policies contained in these existing documents remain relevant and it is the intention to carry these over into the new Local Plan, particularly in relation to Development Management policies and site allocations which have not yet been implemented. Over the past ten years, 2,509 homes have been completed (or 250 homes per year) against a target of 165 homes per year and last year 115 affordable homes were completed (against a target of 66 pa). In addition, our planning department is the busiest in Kent, with 2,101 planning applications received in 2016.

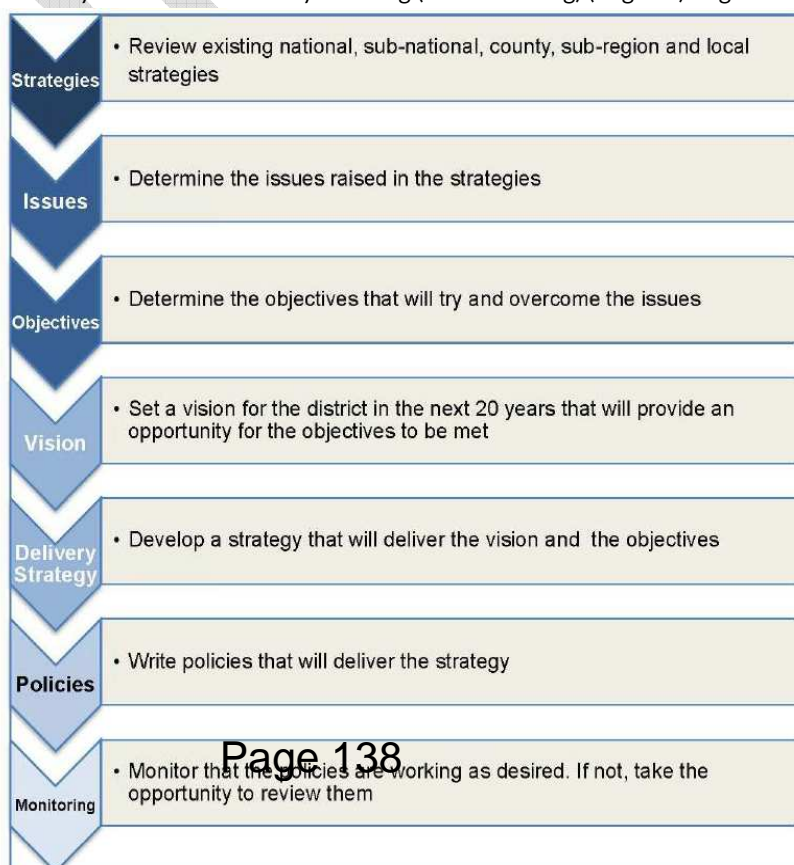
Process and Timetable



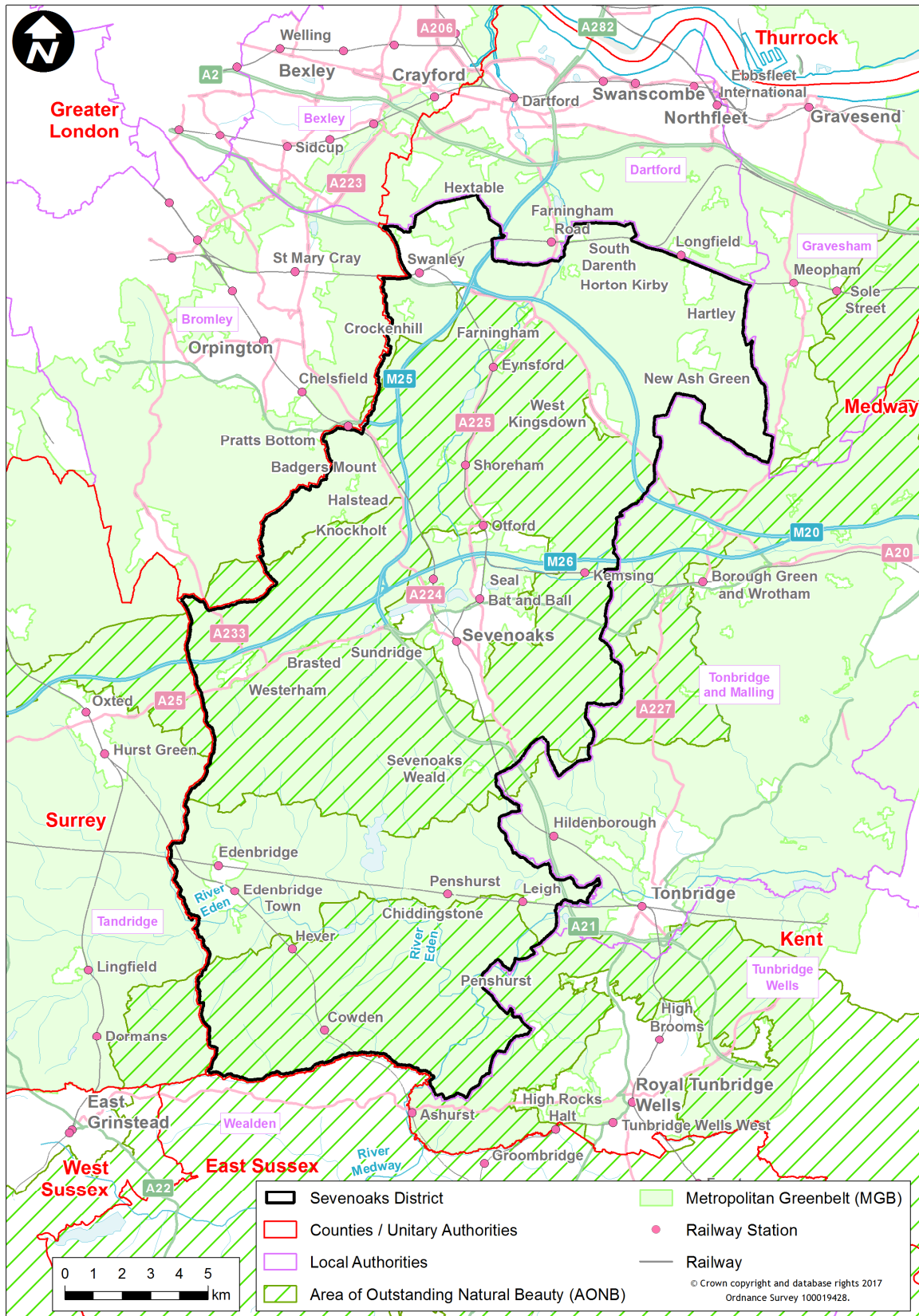
- [This consultation*](#)

Reg.18,19,22 & 24 are defined by the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Key Modules of a Local Plan





Sevenoaks District's Position within the Metropolitan Green Belt



Your District...

Population **118,400**

<p>93% Green Belt</p>	 <p>1 in 5 people over 65</p>	<p>Average Household Income in the District £48,000</p>
<p>60% Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</p> <p>11% covered in ancient woodland</p> 		<p>2 wards in 20% most deprived in England</p> <p>Annual average unemployment rate: Sevenoaks: 0.7% Kent: 1.6% Great Britain: 1.8% (Calculated as proportion of those aged 16-64)</p>

What the District needs up to 2035...



A housing need of **12,400 units** (620 units per year)



A need for up to **11.6ha** of employment land



A need for up to **32,000m²** of retail space

Agenda Item 9

What is the District Like?

Sevenoaks District is located in West Kent, with the edge of Greater London to the north-west, Surrey to the west and East Sussex to the south. The District covers almost 143 square miles and 93% is designated Green Belt. The towns are Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham, where ~~about half a significant proportion~~ of the 118,409 residents (2015 mid-year population estimates, ONS) in the District live. There are over 30 villages and smaller settlements of which the largest is New Ash Green.

The District has a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. 60% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many areas of woodland much of which is designated as Ancient Woodland, two Country Parks and a large network of public rights of way. Parts of the District afford impressive views over Kent and the South East particularly from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. The District also is rich in biodiversity with many Wildlife Reserves, designated areas as well the River Darent and Eden.

There are many historic settlements in the District as reflected in the high number of conservation areas and listed buildings. The District also boasts many nationally recognised heritage assets including the historic estates of Knole, Chartwell, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place and Lullingstone Castle. Other places of interest include the National Trust village at Chiddingstone, Eynsford Castle ruin, Lullingstone Roman Villa, Otford Palace and Toys Hill (the birthplace of the National Trust). There are many tourist opportunities within the District and it is particularly popular with day visitors. The settlements contain well used village greens, sports pitches, play facilities for children and young people and parks and gardens.

The population of the District is expected to grow by more than 20,000 people over the plan period 2015-35 (ONS). This is in line with other authorities in Kent and the South East and reflects people living longer, an increasing birth rate and internal migration patterns (largely people moving out of London into Sevenoaks). In respect of international migration and particularly any impact 'Brexit' may have, the number of people expected to enter the District over the plan period is roughly the same as the number of people expected to leave, therefore having zero or very little impact. 20% of the District's population are currently aged 65 or over and this figure is expected to grow to 25% over the plan period. This growing population and changing age structure presents a key challenge for the District. There are areas of affluence in the district as well as pockets of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD uses information about income, employment, health, education, crime and living environment to rank every small area in England from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived). According to the IMD the District is the second least deprived local authority in Kent, although there are areas which are within the 20% most deprived in the country.

The District has generally high house prices. The average house prices in the District are around £175,000 higher than in Kent making it very difficult for first time buyers and young families to remain in the District. The Local Plan evidence identifies a need for 12,400 new

homes over the plan period to meet the needs of the growing population. This includes a high proportion of affordable homes and specialist accommodation for older people.

The District is a popular place to live, partly because of its proximity to London and the continent. Major transport links are provided by the M25, M26, M20, A21, A20 and A25. Stations throughout the District provide rail access to London in under an hour. The District is also well located for Gatwick and Heathrow airports as well as the Channel Ports, Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations.

We want to ensure the District is a safe place for all to live, work and travel, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and providing people with access to good quality healthcare. There are two minor injury hospitals; Sevenoaks Hospital and Edenbridge & District War Memorial Hospital. There is no major medical facility within the District for residents. Residents have to travel out of the District to Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Queen Mary's Hospital (Sidcup), Darent Valley Hospital (Dartford), [Maidstone Hospital](#) and London hospitals.

It is important to ensure everyone has access to community services and facilities to reduce social isolation, social exclusion and to improve wellbeing. The District has a good coverage of leisure provision primarily through sports centres and community halls however there is some need to improve the overall quality.

Education provision within the District is varied with a mixture of state and private, primary and secondary provision. While there are 42 primary schools, there are only 3 [state](#) secondary schools within the District with many children being sent outside the District [or privately](#) for their secondary education. An annex for the Weald of Kent Grammar School is expected to be opened in Sevenoaks Town in September 2017.

The District has the lowest level of unemployment in Kent. The residents of the District are generally well qualified with only 8% of the population having no qualifications. There are a number of employment areas within the District. The majority of residents work in the West Kent area with more than 40% working within Greater London. The District also has a strong rural economy, but issues of connectivity and broadband are common.

The District has vibrant town centres with many independent shops and a good retail offering. There is strong competition from nearby areas including Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells. Some areas are in need of regeneration including Swanley Town Centre and New Ash Green Village Centre. Areas outside towns are served by local facilities within villages. These services are of great value to local communities and contribute to the District's rural economy.

Sevenoaks Vision of Sevenoaks District in 2015-2035

Sevenoaks District will strive to meet housing and employment needs without compromising the built and natural environment that is cherished by people who live, work and relax in the area. We will ~~have worked~~ with partners to ensure that growth ~~has been is~~ accompanied by a wide range of supporting infrastructure, particularly for education, health, transport and open space. Sevenoaks District will continue to thrive as a desirable place where people choose to build their lives.

People and Housing

The District will continue to be made up of distinct communities with strong local character. People will be safe and healthy and proud of the area in which they live and work. There will be a choice of accommodation to meet the needs of the residents of the District, including affordable housing and homes for older people.

The District will have helped the delivery of new homes in a sustainable way, by making effective use of urban land within existing settlements and other brownfield land, thereby continuing to protect the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries will only have been altered if 'exceptional circumstances' have been found to apply.

Jobs and the Economy

The potential of the District's accessible location along major transport routes will have been maximised to ensure a dynamic local economy, both urban and rural. The range of employment opportunities available in the District will have been maintained and strengthened, and town centres will be the focus for retail and leisure opportunities. Broadband connectivity will be widely established, particularly to support rural communities and the visitor economy will be thriving. The District will have benefitted from the delivery of new employment opportunities, especially in offices. Retail and leisure activity in the town centres will be thriving. Challenges associated with the M25 and infrastructure provision (particularly medical and education facilities) are recognised and we will work with partners to facilitate improvements in these areas.

Nature and the Environment

All of the District's landscapes, habitats, historic and heritage assets, including the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will continue to be conserved and enhanced in a way which protects local identity and distinctiveness. New development will be of high quality sustainable design responding to local character.

Objectives for the Local Plan

The six objectives, [on pages X-X](#), set out a way of achieving the Vision. They help to focus priorities for future work but also provide structure and easily understood headings against which progress can be monitored each year.

The objectives for the Local Plan come from the key issues which have been derived from evidence gathering and other plans and strategies. These include our Corporate Plan, Community Plan, the current adopted Core Strategy, the Sustainability Objectives that will accompany the new Local Plan together with newly emerging strategies and priorities for housing, economic development and leisure.

The objectives are also mindful of changing Government priorities around areas such as health, economic development, technology and infrastructure.

The following chart explains how the rest of this section is structured, covering topics related to the six key objectives:

Objective	Addressed within the following sections:
1. Promote housing choice for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing need • Housing supply • Affordable Housing, incl. older people • Housing mix, size, type, and density • Gypsies and travellers
2. Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District's distinctive high quality natural and built environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Belt • Natural environment and Landscape • Biodiversity and Ecology • Design, Heritage and Conservation
3. Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs by use class • Employment land supply • Measures to support skills improvement • Rural and visitor economy
4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure priorities, particularly transport, health, education & broadband • Retail provision • Town centre leisure
5. Promote healthy living opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and wellbeing • Air quality • Leisure • Open Space and Recreation
6. Promote a greener future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change mitigation and adaptation • Water usage and Flood risk • Technological advancements

Agenda Item 9

Strategic Approach

To be effective the Local Plan will need a strategy developed from options that explore how best to meet identified development needs. The key issues for Sevenoaks District have been identified above. **The headline needs are: 12,400 houses, 11.6ha employment land, 32,000m² retail floorspace.** A change in the level of provision in any of these will impact on the level of other needs. In broad terms less housing is likely to mean less need for employment or retail.

In Sevenoaks District options are heavily constrained by Green Belt and environmental constraints. 'Protect the Green Belt' is a corporate priority and it reflects both an expression of local concern and is a position that continues to be upheld by Government through the NPPF. Green Belt boundaries can only be amended in exceptional circumstances. Meeting housing or wider development needs does not in its own right constitute exceptional circumstances; the overriding requirement is to ensure that development is sustainable. A 2016 study assessing the District's Green Belt finds that all areas continue to perform against at least one of the five purposes of Green Belt making its continued designation appropriate unless exceptional circumstances are clearly identified.

It is the meeting of housing needs that provides the greatest challenge in terms of finding suitable land. The unconstrained annual requirement of 620 houses per annum is nearly four times as high as the current target of 165 houses per annum in the Core Strategy (which was established at a regional level and sought to limit development in more constrained areas).

We will seek to maximise supply for meeting identified housing needs without encroaching into the Green Belt. This initial starting point has the potential to provide for about 5,000 new homes over 20 years and is advanced as the essential building blocks for new Local Plan strategy. A dual approach is then recommended for exploring how remaining housing need might be met. Firstly, [development choices for housing are set out on page X.](#) Our preferred option is to only consider further potential for the sustainable development of 'brownfield' sites in the Green Belt (see glossary for definition being used) and the potential inclusion of larger scale examples of exceptional circumstances which offer convincing cases of substantial community benefit [\(such as infrastructure improvements\)](#) alongside well-developed place-making opportunity. Secondly discussions already taking place under the Duty to Co-operate will be continued and escalated. Clearly there will be a balance between how much can be achieved from options within [the highly constrained](#) Sevenoaks District and what might be achieved elsewhere [in neighbouring authorities](#) through the Duty to Cooperate.

Meeting development needs, particularly housing needs, within a constrained environment will be one defining factor in the ultimate strategy finally agreed for the District. Just as important is the need to place a high value on the varied and distinctive places and communities that make up Sevenoaks District. With this in mind, the District has been divided into six 'place-making areas' each containing Parishes with similar characteristics and geography. These have been used in gaining local representative views as part of emerging work through consultation and workshop events. Grouping Parishes in this way will help allow for local differences in character to be reflected in policy as the Local Plan progresses.

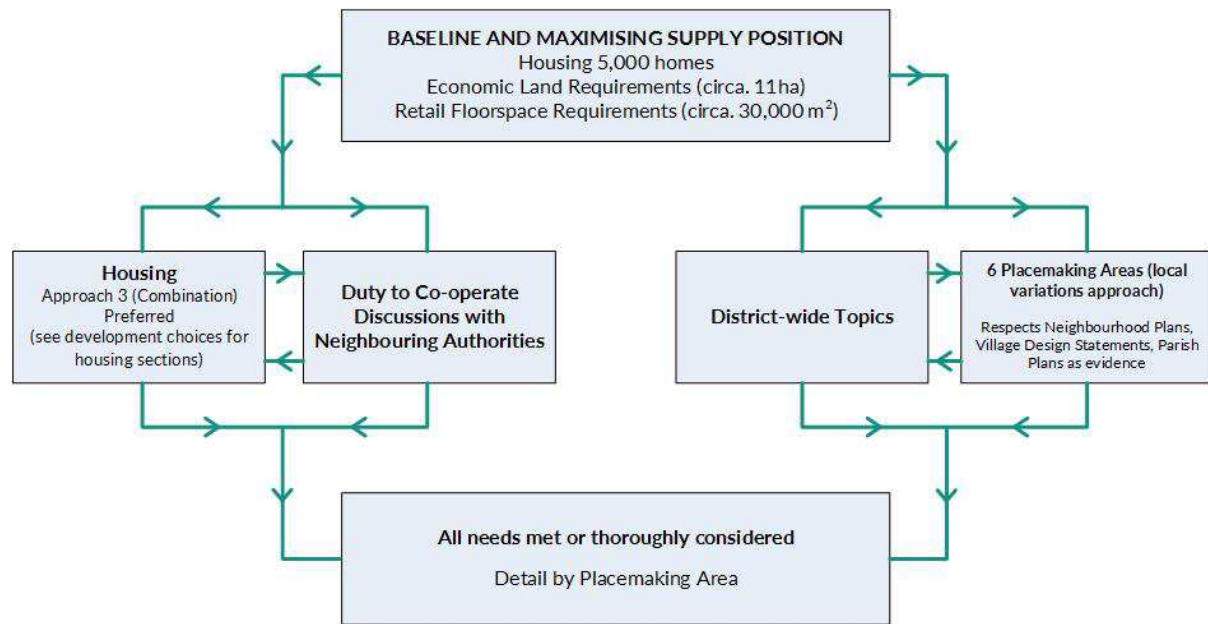
Local Plan Strategic Approach

Quantitative aspects:

Needs, land supply and allocations

Qualitative aspects:

Distinctive places and development quality



Note: Housing supply includes Baseline and Maximising Supply (5000 units) plus approach 3 - Brownfield Land in the Green Belt (1500 units) and Exceptional Circumstances cases (TBC)

Agenda Item 9

Objective 1. Promote housing choice for all

The Need for New Housing

The provision of new housing, both market and affordable, is a key priority and pressure for the District. Demand for new housing is rising as statistics show that the population is projected to increase by 17% over the plan period 2015-35, equating to a 20% rise in households as household sizes become smaller. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that 12,400 new homes are required over the plan period (620 per year) in order to meet the housing needs of the District during the plan period.

We are required by Government to investigate all reasonable alternatives to identify land for new homes to meet the identified need. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2017 identifies a number of sites that are suitable and available for development in the Local Plan period and which could contribute towards meeting the District's housing need.

Historically we have relied on developing the existing built up areas of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, with smaller scale development in some of the smaller settlements. However given the increased demand for housing, it is not possible to accommodate all needs on these sites.

Recent consultation with community representatives via place-making workshops showed strong support for the protection of the Green Belt and a preference to develop brownfield land. Whilst it is unlikely that the identified housing need will be met within existing settlements and on brownfield sites alone, we will continue to explore all brownfield options.

The Local Plan must be positive in planning for new homes to increase supply and some difficult choices will need to be made in seeking the right balance between providing new homes, protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting the urban and rural economies. It is vital that new development makes the most efficient use of land in sustainable locations whilst ensuring that new development is designed to the highest quality.

Development Choices for Housing

We have identified five different approaches to try and accommodate the identified housing need. It should be noted that not all of these approaches deliver the required level of housing, but they are incremental as different elements are layered up. The current baseline situation and maximising the supply in existing settlements are unlikely to be a realistic approach for future delivery in themselves, but they provide the building blocks upon which the delivery strategy can be based. The settlement hierarchy, which assesses settlements based on their population, facilities and services has informed these options.

In summary:

Baseline	considers the baseline commitments e.g. homes built 2015-17 and permissions issued
Maximising Supply	considers maximising the supply in existing built areas <u>e.g. through increased density and airspace development</u> and from rural exceptions sites
Approach 1	considers the contribution from 'Brownfield' land in the Green Belt
Approach 2	considers the contribution of Green Belt land adjacent to higher-tier settlements, <u>but only</u> where 'Exceptional Circumstances' <u>can be proven</u>
Approach 3	considers a Combination of Brownfield land in the Green Belt and land where 'Exceptional Circumstances' exist
Approach 4	considers a large urban extension or new settlement
Approach 5	considers Green Belt close to transport hubs

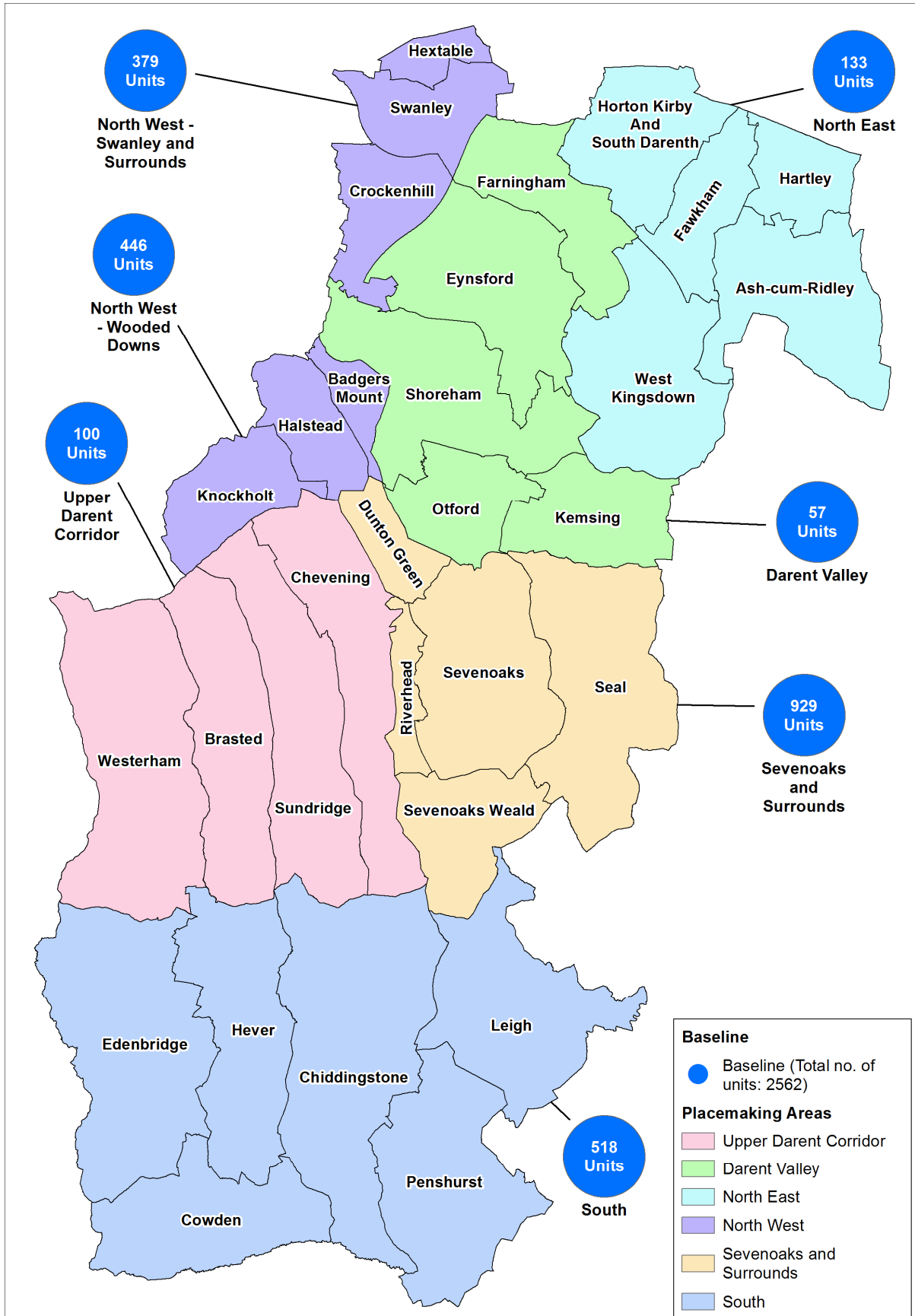
Our preferred option is Approach 3 (i.e. maximising growth in existing settlements and then considering a combination of brownfield land in the Green Belt and land where 'exceptional circumstances' cases can be substantiated) and believes this to be the most suitable option to deliver housing to meet the needs of the district.

Agenda Item 9

Based on evidence gathered to date the number of units currently estimated as being available to each of the approaches is summarised below:

Approach Number	Description	Approximate Units
'Baseline'	All 'committed' development since 2015: a) Built schemes (2015-17) b) Schemes with permission at 31-3-2017	726 <u>1836</u> = 2,562
'Maximising supply'	Maximising Supply in existing built up areas: - Suitable urban sites submitted through call for sites - Sites allocated in the ADMP - Increasing densities on existing ADMP allocations - Sevenoaks Station airspace development - Regeneration of Swanley town The following elements are <i>not mapped</i> : - Windfall estimate (46pa x15) - Rural exceptions sites Total for Baseline and Maximising Supply (using 5,000 ensures some built in flexibility)	338 415 117 100 650* = 1,620 690 200 5072 (5,000)
1	'Brownfield' Delivering growth on suitable 'brownfield' land in the Green Belt (using 1,500 ensures some built in flexibility)	= 1,563 (1,500)
2	'Exceptional Circumstances' Delivering growth initiatives on Green Belt land where exceptional circumstances may exist: - Sevenoaks Town (Northern Masterplan) - Westerham (Relief Road) - Edenbridge (Health and Education Hub) - Swanley/Hextable	<u>Unconfirmed</u> <u>Unconfirmed</u> <u>Unconfirmed</u> <u>Unconfirmed</u>
3	'Combination' Baseline + Max Supply + 1 'brownfield' approach + 2 'exceptional circumstances' approach	5,000 1,500 <u>Unconfirmed</u> = 6,500 + TBC
4	'New Settlement' A large urban extension or new settlement	TBC
5	'Transport Hubs' Green Belt close to 'Transport Hubs'	TBC

(* The figure for regeneration of Swanley town is a provisional figure dependant on further studies in connection with the Swanley Master-vision)



Agenda Item 9

Maximising Supply

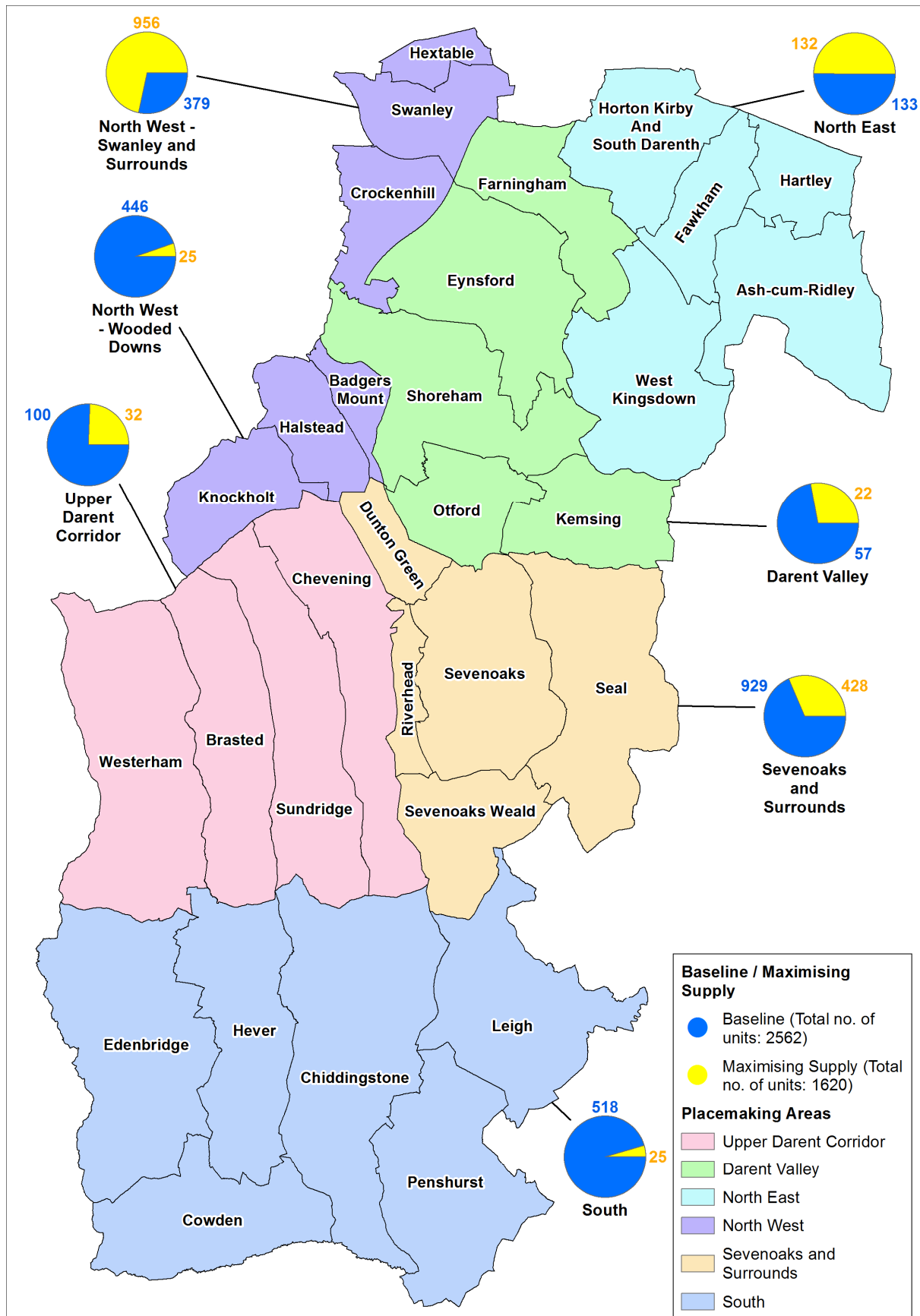
Description of Approach: Baseline plus maximising the supply within existing settlements within the District, including through increased density and urban regeneration. This approach also considers the contribution from rural housing exceptions sites, which form part of existing policy. The components of this approach are:

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline	2,562 (see above)
Suitable sites within identified settlement (submitted through the call for sites) which form Category One of the SHELAA http://cde.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s31158/09%20Appendix%20a%20-%20Category%201%20sites%20combined.pdf	338
Site allocations in ADMP (which have not yet been implemented)	415
Increased densities on existing ADMP allocations (not yet implemented)	117
Sevenoaks Station airspace development, building above existing station land	100
Regeneration of Swanley town (provisional figure dependant on further studies in connection with the Swanley Master-vision)	650
Sub-total	1620
Rural exceptions sites - <i>not mapped</i>	200
Windfall estimate (46 units per annum over 15 years) - <i>not mapped</i>	690
Total for Baseline and Maximising Supply:	5,072

Total for Maximising Supply: approx. 5,000 homes

The aim of this approach is to focus development in and maximise the potential of existing built areas, which will help to protect wider Green Belt land within the District. This includes suitable land submitted via the call for sites that falls within existing settlements, increased densities on existing sites allocated for housing, building above the area around Sevenoaks train station and focusing on the potential of land within the settlement of Swanley, particularly around the town centre.

In addition, this approach considers small-scale development on the edge of lower-tier settlements and villages to support the rural economy. This would be predominantly to provide affordable housing and homes suitable for older people, for those with a local connection who are currently unable to find suitable housing (e.g. rural housing exceptions sites). There is also a recognition that small-scale development will help support rural businesses and services, such as village shops, pubs and schools. This approach would provide a small number of homes in areas where supply might otherwise be limited. There are 25 eligible parishes and rural exceptions sites usually consist of about 10 units; therefore it is estimated that this approach could yield approximately 200 units.



* Windfall Estimate (690 units) and Potential rural exceptions sites (200 units) not mapped

Agenda Item 9

Approach 1 – ‘Brownfield’

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus delivering growth on suitable ‘brownfield’ Green Belt land. This approach considers the contribution of brownfield land in the District, in accordance with existing national policy.

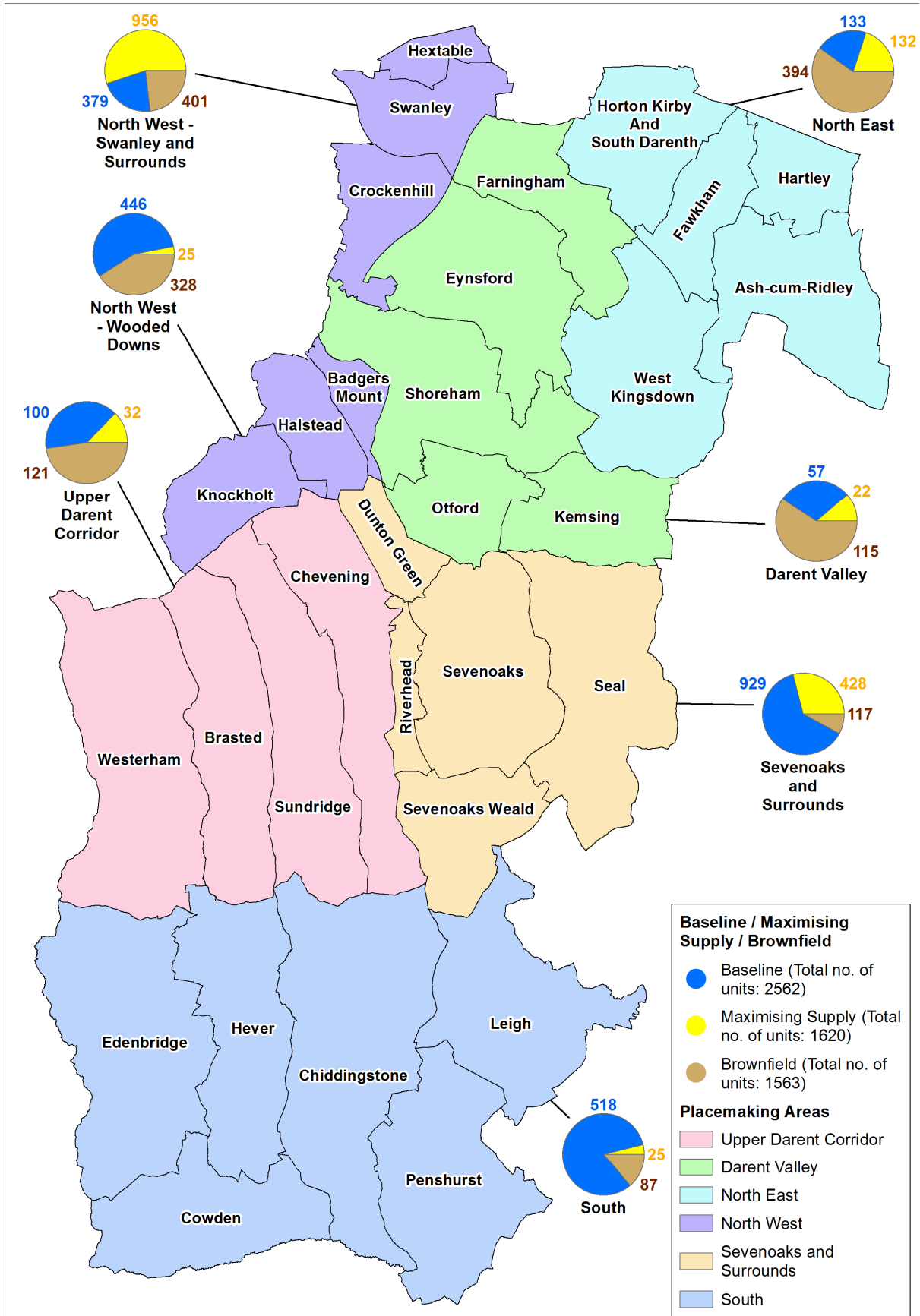
Brownfield Land by Place-making area	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5,000 (see above)
South (incl. Edenbridge)	87
Upper Darent Corridor (incl. Westerham)	121
Sevenoaks and surrounds	117
Darent Valley	115
North West	
- Swanley and Surrounds	<u>401</u>
- Wooded Downs	328
North East	394
Total:	5000+ <u>1563</u> = <u>6563</u>

Total for ‘Brownfield’: approx. 6,500 homes

In addition to the call for sites process, where landowners across the District were asked to submit land that might be suitable for development, we have contacted every Town and Parish Council to understand if there are other brownfield sites in their areas which may be suitable. This combined process has yielded sites which could accommodate approximately 1500 units on suitable brownfield land in the Green Belt (see SHELAA report Category 2 and 3 sites <http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=8418#mgDocuments>). In addition, to assist in the further identification and consideration of brownfield land, we will be establishing a brownfield land register later in 2017.

Brownfield or ‘Previously Developed Land’ (PDL) is defined in national policy (NPPF) as land ‘which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure’. The NPPF then lists a number of exclusions such as land that has been used for agriculture and forestry, minerals and waste workings. However, for the purposes of the identification of potential land in this consultation, ‘brownfield’ has been defined in the widest sense i.e. land that has been previously developed (is no longer a green field), without considering the exclusions outlined in the NPPF. Once the Local Plan is further developed, consideration will be given as to whether the exclusions set out in the NPPF are relevant for the development of the strategy.

A recent judgement (Dartford BC v Secretary of State) has considered whether private residential gardens are previously developed land. It is clear (from the NPPF and the judgement) that garden ‘land in built up areas’ is not previously developed land, but outside built up areas, garden-land may be considered previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land. The term ‘built up area’ is not specifically defined, but this could relate to settlement boundaries. We will carefully monitor this potential area of supply.



Agenda Item 9

Approach 2 – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus contribution of Green Belt land adjacent to higher-tier settlements, where ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ cases may exist.

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5000 (see above)
North of Sevenoaks Town (Quarry)	<u>Unconfirmed</u> TBC
North of Westerham (Relief-Road)	<u>Unconfirmed</u> TBC
Edenbridge (Health and Education Hub)	<u>Unconfirmed</u> TBC
Swanley and Hextable	<u>Unconfirmed</u> TBC

Officers are monitoring a number of different initiatives in relation to the top tier settlements within the District which may eventually have the potential to provide exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release. Although the NPPF does not define exceptional circumstances, this Local Plan will seek to interpret national policy in order to provide clearer guidance. For example exceptional circumstances may occur where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt. The current initiatives are:

Sevenoaks (town) Northern Masterplan – led by Sevenoaks Town Council, this masterplan has been subject to recent public consultation in May/June 2017. It focuses on community infrastructure and facilities at Bat and Ball in addition to housing and employment and could provide approximately 800 new homes on and around the quarry site to the north of Sevenoaks within the Local Plan period. The masterplan will feed into the Neighbourhood Development Plan and could be appropriately reflected in the emerging Local Plan. [ADD LINK](#)

Westerham – ‘Which Way Westerham’ proposals are being progressed by the Squerryes estate, which include a relief road to the north-west of the settlement, approximately 600 new homes and environmental improvements. The Squerryes team have recently undertaken local community engagement in May 2017 and submitted supporting information to us which will be made available during the consultation. [ADD LINK](#)

Edenbridge –there is a Neighbourhood Plan process ongoing although it is not currently considering an exceptional circumstance case. Provision of new health and post-11 education hub is likely to be important if any case were to be made.

Swanley and Hextable – Following the February 2017 Cabinet decision to no longer investigate potential for a garden village to the east of Swanley, the focus is now on maximising the supply within the existing settlement boundary, including a consideration of increased density on accessible town-centre sites and potential for regeneration of residential estates. Work on the Hextable Neighbourhood Plan is now continuing and the Local Plan will consider any exceptional circumstance cases arising through this work.

Approach 3 - 'Combination'

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus combination of both 'brownfield' land and cases where 'exceptional circumstances' may exist

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5000 (see above)
'Brownfield' land in the Green Belt	1500 (see above)
'Exceptional circumstances' cases	TBC
Total:	5000+1500= 6500

Total for 'combination': 6,500 homes

The combination approach represents our preferred approach to meeting housing need as part of the wider Local Plan strategy.

This approach is formed of a combination of all of the above approaches.

Approach 4 - 'New Settlement'

Description of Approach: (Combination) plus a large urban extension or new settlement.

Focussing growth on one (or more) area may enable supporting infrastructure to be provided. During 2016 we consulted on the option of a Swanley Garden Village for 3,000 new homes as part of the Swanley Master Vision. After giving fair consideration to consultation responses received, the District Council has resolved not to promote a garden village as part of the regeneration options for Swanley and will instead focus on options that do not entail Green Belt release. More recently, substantial areas of land that could accommodate new settlements or larger scale development have been submitted to us under the call for sites process. These sites do not form part of our preferred strategy, as they are in the Green Belt but they will be assessed in the same way as other sites received under the call for sites process. They will form part of an updated SHELAA in 2018.

Approach 5 - 'Transport Hubs'

Description of Approach: (Combination) plus Green Belt land close to 'Transport Hubs'.

Further clarification is sought from Government on this emerging requirement in relation to the Housing White Paper (2017) consultation, which suggests that 'when carrying out Green Belt review, local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs'. It is suggested that this is a reference to public transport hubs, such as train stations and bus interchanges, but this approach will be looked at in more detail once the Government provides additional clarification as to what they consider constitutes 'transport hubs' and also as further local evidence is gathered.

The Need for Affordable Homes

Definitions:

Social rented housing	<p>Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register).</p> <p>Rents are set through the national rent regime but are generally around 50-60% of market rents.</p>
Affordable rented housing	<p>Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register).</p> <p>Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents, but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.</p>
Intermediate housing	<p>Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants must be registered under Help to Buy and can have a household income of up to £80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District.</p> <p>Intermediate housing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared equity housing – purchasers typically buy a 75-80% share of the property with no rent payable to the housing association on the remainder. • Shared ownership housing – purchasers buy a 25-75% share of the property and pay a subsidised rent to the housing association on the remainder. • Intermediate rented housing – generally let on Assured Shorthold tenancies, the rent plus service charge is no more than 80% of the market rent.

Affordability is a key issue in Sevenoaks District given the high house prices relative to incomes. In 2016 the median house price in the District was £392,500, the highest in Kent, and house prices were 13 times annual earnings, compared with 6.5 times across England. This means that many people are unable to afford their own home in the District on the open market and therefore require assistance. High housing costs have led to an increase in the number of households privately renting and the out-migration of younger and economically-active groups in search of cheaper housing elsewhere, including essential workers.

For as long as house prices continue to increase, more of the District's housing stock becomes unaffordable to an increasing number of people. Building new affordable homes will help ensure that those requiring assistance receive it, and the increase in the supply of

affordable housing will help to slow down the rise in housing costs, allowing those who aspire to own their own home the ability to get onto the housing ladder.

The evidence set out in the SHMA identifies a net annual need of 422 households that require financial support to meet their housing needs, and recommends that 35% affordable housing should be delivered on market-led housing schemes. Current Core Strategy policy requires 40% affordable housing to be delivered on schemes of 15 or more units, so this would constitute an adjustment to current policy. Of the 35% affordable housing, it is recommended that 76% should be social/affordable rented and 24% intermediate, in order to meet the affordable housing needs of the District. The Local Housing Needs Study 2017 also identifies that many people aspire to own their own homes, and given this local evidence the Local Plan could take a flexible approach in setting requirements for the split of affordable housing provision. The recommendations in relation to affordable housing, by place-making area, are set out below:

Recommendations from Local Housing Needs Study:

	Affordable Housing % by area	AH 1-2 bed	AH 3+ bed	AH Older persons
Sevenoaks and surrounds	28%	78%	8%	14%
North East	26%	77%	6%	17%
North West	16%	81%	10%	9%
South	13%	82%	3%	15%
Upper Darent Corridor	10%	47%	43%	10%
Darent Valley	7%	93%	0%	7%

The Local Plan will need to adopt a flexible approach, allowing for off-site contributions where on-site provision is proven not viable, or where more can be achieved elsewhere.

There is a high proportion of small sites in the District, particularly within the rural areas. A recent change to Government policy now prevents us from seeking affordable housing on developments of 10 units or less which means that it is more difficult to provide affordable housing in rural areas. However where local evidence for delivery on smaller sites is sufficiently strong there may be scope through the Local Plan to develop a case for a locally specific policy that enables contributions from smaller development sites. The Local Housing Needs Study 2017 looks specifically at affordable housing needs by place-making area and will help to identify where rural exception schemes may be required.

Recent consultation with community representatives showed serious concern about the affordability of homes in the District. There was general consensus that more affordable homes need to be provided, but also that there needs to be a greater choice of product in order to meet the wide-ranging needs of the community.

We are keen to expand our affordable housing offer to include innovative solutions to help solve the housing crisis in the District. The Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy 2017 explores the various types and tenures of affordable housing that could be delivered in the District, including but not limited to:

- Modular housing
- Micro-homes
- Starter homes
- Making better use of amenity land

Agenda Item 9

- Leasehold model for older people – a model that allows qualifying buyers to purchase homes at around 80% open market value with the remaining share retained by another organisation/public body, which would allow the homes to remain affordable in perpetuity
- Delivering small schemes in rural gardens (as per the Dartford judgement ([P. X](#))).

The Local Plan can include specific requirements for these types of affordable homes providing there is evidence to support demand.

Affordable Housing in Rural Areas

Opportunities to provide affordable housing and homes suitable for older people in rural areas of the District are much more limited than in the urban areas because of the Green Belt. However, rural exception housing provides affordable homes to meet local housing needs in rural areas as an exception to other Local Plan policies. Given the extensive network of rural settlements in the District, rural exception housing is a really important part of the affordable housing stock. The recently completed Local Housing Needs Study 2017 is showing an increased level of demand for affordable housing in rural areas.

In order to be eligible for rural exception housing households must have a local connection to the parish through living in that area, having family or working there. Once built, rural exception housing remains part of the affordable stock in perpetuity (125 years). However, with the planned extension of the Government's 'right to buy' to housing owned by housing associations, there are concerns that this may not be the case in the future. We will continue to work with its housing providers in order to identify a way forward.

We have a programme of rural housing needs surveys across the District, in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK). Where surveys show evidence of need we will work with the Parish Council, local community and housing providers to identify and assist in delivering suitable sites.

Recent consultation with community representatives emphasised concern about the often difficult and contentious process of finding suitable sites which can delay the deliverability of much needed local needs affordable housing. Landowners can sometimes be unwilling to release land due to hope value for market housing or due to concerns within the local community.

Providing the Right Mix of Homes

It is important that the Local Plan considers a mix of homes of different sizes and types to meet the needs of the current and future population to help create inclusive mixed communities. In particular the Local Plan is required to consider homes for families, older people, people with a range of disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.

Housing size

Three, four and five bedroom homes make up nearly 70% of the District's housing stock so it is important that the Local Plan makes provision for smaller units, particularly given the growing older population who may wish to downsize in the future. Additional smaller units should also increase the proportion of lower cost housing available to buy so that first time buyers have greater choice in the market.

Based on the existing housing stock and taking into account how the population is expected to grow and change over the plan period, the below table sets out the identified need for different sizes of homes for both market and affordable housing. There is a strong focus towards the provision of new starter family housing and housing for those wishing to downsize, particularly 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

Housing type

Older people and people with disabilities

20% of the District's population is aged over 65 and this number is expected to grow substantially, to 25%, over the plan period. Particularly strong growth is expected in those aged over 75 driven by improving life expectancy.

A growing older population and increasing longevity is expected to result in a substantial growth in people with dementia and mobility problems, and some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs whilst others may require more specialist accommodation or support, including lifetime and wheelchair-accessible homes. There is a clear need for a higher proportion of homes which are capable of accommodating people's changing needs.

We are keen to provide choices for older people who may be thinking of moving, or who may need to move, as their current home no longer supports their needs. Options to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Extra care and specialist dementia care housing
- Downsizing / rightsizing
- Lifetime homes
- Wheelchair-accessible homes
- Granny pods
- Co-location of the elderly and young

In finding suitable sites for housing for older people, they must be in a sustainable location close to services and facilities, and to transport links.

People wishing to build their own homes

The Government is keen to encourage people to build their own homes as a mainstream housing option and whilst it is currently a small sector of the housing market, it does have potential to grow. In order to identify the demand for custom and self build we have set up a 'Self Build Register'. To date 31 individuals have registered.

Government guidance on how custom and self build should be provided is not yet clear, but it is expected that plots could be provided on both small and large sites. There is also an opportunity for a number of custom and self build plots to be provided as affordable housing.

Agenda Item 9

Housing Density

Housing density describes the number of homes developed within a particular site area and it is calculated by the number of dwellings per hectare (DPH). Increasing the density of development in sustainable locations can help to ensure that land is used in the most efficient way, and ultimately that less land overall is used for development. In Sevenoaks District, where the Green Belt covers 93% of the area, **maximising densities in the main towns and villages will help to ensure that the Green Belt continues to be protected.**

Recent consultation with community representatives showed strong support for the protection of the Green Belt and a preference to develop within existing settlement boundaries and on brownfield land at increased densities. High density developments are sometimes associated with large tower blocks. However, through careful and high quality design, to be required through the Local Plan, this is not the case. Higher densities will not be appropriate in all locations, and judgements will need to be made in order to achieve the right balance between providing homes and respecting and enhancing the character of the area.

Historically the Local Plan has required development to achieve a density of between 30 DPH at the edge of settlements and 75 DPH in town centres. Given the increased need for housing it is considered that densities could be increased to ensure that land is used in the most efficient way. Therefore a number of assumptions have been made in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in order to calculate the amount of land that is available and suitable for new housing in the District. It has been assumed that densities could increase as follows:

- Within and near to town centres and transport hubs – higher densities.
- Within settlements but outside of town centres – high densities.
- Edge of settlements and elsewhere – increased densities.

It is considered that these increases could be realistically achieved without negatively impacting on the character of an area. This approach is supported by the Government's direction of travel towards higher densities in the recently published Housing White Paper.

Homes for Gypsies and Travellers

We must plan for the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the District in the same way as for the settled community. There are currently three public sites within the District at Barnfield Park, Ash; Hever Road, Edenbridge and Polhill, Dunton Green. In addition there are also 41 pitches on private sites with permanent permission and a further 6 pitches with temporary permission (as at 28/4/2017). The recently completed Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies a need for an additional 51 permanent pitches over the plan period 2015-35. There is no need identified for Travelling Show People or transit sites. This evidence document was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in April 2017 as the basis for our Gypsy and Traveller policy. The Local Plan needs to identify suitable places for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the future need. It is likely that the need can be accommodated by making suitable existing sites with temporary permission permanent and by accommodating additional pitches on suitable existing sites. In place-making workshops participants expressed the need to ensure that all aspects of the local community are integrated including Gypsy and Travellers. In order to make a robust and thorough assessment of all available land to meet the need for new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches, we are interested in any land that could be used for this purpose. Submissions can be made through the "Call for Sites" process and will be considered alongside those submitted previously.

Objective 2. Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District's distinctive high quality natural and built environments

Green Belt

Sevenoaks lies on the edge of Greater London and 93% of the District is classified as Metropolitan Green Belt. It is a cherished resource that has a wide-range of benefits for health and recreation, the natural environment and agriculture. It serves a number of purposes, including stopping settlements merging and protecting the countryside and providing the setting to historic towns. The only areas that are not within the Green Belt are the towns and larger villages within the District. We have undertaken a comprehensive District-wide review of the performance of the Green Belt against the five purposes of Green Belt (as set out at para. 80 of the NPPF). The evidence base report outlines that all the Green Belt in the District is performing against at least one of the five purposes to a greater or lesser extent, and the vast majority of the Green Belt (77 out of 101 parcels) is performing strongly. It identifies 31 sub-areas where it is considered that the Green Belt is performing weakly and could be suitable for further investigation, if required. However, we have taken the view that these areas are still meeting Green Belt purposes and the emphasis should therefore still remain on their protection unless exceptional circumstances become apparent. Green Belt policy is largely defined at the national level (within Chapter 9 of the NPPF). The existing policy, within the ADMP, outlines a number of development management policies largely related to extensions/conversions and replacements of buildings in the countryside. We have also adopted an SPD on the Green Belt. These policies will be reviewed to ensure that they are working as intended and potentially supplemented with additional local detail, for example in relation to infill and brownfield land. The NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should only be amended in 'exceptional circumstances' and the recent Housing White Paper attempts to clarify what this means in practice; Councils should have examined fully all other reasonable options, including brownfield land, estate regeneration, underused and public sector land, optimising density and exploring whether other authorities can assist. Land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs should be considered first and this should be offset by compensatory improvements to the environmental quality/ accessibility of remaining Green Belt.

All the place-making workshop groups discussed the need to protect the Green Belt. A number of the groups discussed the potential to expand smaller hamlets in the Green Belt and that Green Belt could be considered 'a gift as well as an obstacle'.

Natural Environment and Landscape

Sevenoaks District is an attractive place to live and work. The diverse landscape and strong historic features have contributed to the special and distinctive character of the District. 61% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 11% of the District is covered in irreplaceable Ancient Woodland (compared with the UK average of 2%).

Agenda Item 9

The Landscape Character Assessment 2016 provides a detailed review of the entire District including the AONBs. A key issue for the new Local Plan will be ensuring that development conserves and enhances landscape character through high quality design and layout.

Green infrastructure and natural environment features should be incorporated into new development schemes at the early stages of design in order to make the most of any existing opportunities and providing new provision where possible. This can include suitable landscaping and planting as well as more innovative solutions such as living walls and roofs, bird bricks and permeable paving. Trees, woodlands and hedgerows within both the urban and rural areas form an important part of the District's character and the setting of buildings and settlements. They are an integral part of the local character of an area and play an important role in cleaning the air we breathe.

Green infrastructure also has an important role to play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Plants and trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen. They also act as a carbon sink, storing it in the soil and vegetation. They also have a key role to play in adapting to a changing climate, helping to prevent localised flooding by reducing surface water run off and providing floodwater reservoirs. Deciduous trees can help manage high temperatures by providing shading in the summer but still allowing heat and sunlight through in the winter.

[The landscape and natural environment is an important asset which is deserving of care and management. We are involved with projects that provide improvements to the natural environment, increase public enjoyment and provide health benefits at the landscape scale these include the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme and the developing Greensands Commons project.](#)

Participants at place-making workshops stressed how greatly the green nature of District is valued amongst its residents. They expressed the importance of incorporating appropriate and natural landscaping into new developments as part of maintaining the local character and quality of the natural environment. Many stated that important views and woodland should be protected and were also keen to preserve "green corridors" between villages.

Rivers and Areas of Open Water

The District has two major rivers and a number of bodies of open water. The River Darent flows from Westerham towards Otford and then north through the picturesque Darent Valley before entering Dartford. The river can suffer from low flows but is also prone to flooding. The River Eden travels through the south of the District passing through Edenbridge, Hever, Chiddingstone and joins the River Medway near Penshurst and has also had flood events. The District also has a number of areas of open water, notably at Bough Beech Reservoir [and lakes in quarries.](#)

The rivers and areas of open water within the District are an important aspect of its character. They provide important habitats and provide recreational, educational and community opportunities. We work with the River Darent and Eden Catchment improvement groups to deliver projects which bring improvements to the Rivers and wider catchment in accordance with the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans.

Public Rights of Way and Walking Routes

The District has a large network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). There are also four waymarked long distance walking routes crossing the District: The North Downs, the Darent Valley Path, the Greensands Way and the Eden Valley Path. Kent County Council manages the network of public rights of way and the Explore Kent website collates the many circular walks within the District. It will be important to maintain and improve the pedestrian links in all parts of the District to allow safe movement of the residents to services and facilities and for recreational use. New developments will provide an opportunity to add additional links with and to the existing PROW network. The maintenance, signposting and safety of existing routes can also be improved to encourage residents to walk rather than use the car following Sport England active design principles.

Participants in the place-making workshops stated that they wished to see improvements to pedestrian links to include enhanced footpath signage, better links to railway stations and more accessible paths. There was also the desire to see new walking and cycling routes established such as a route along the River Darent between Westerham and Brasted as an extension to the Darent Valley Path.

Biodiversity and Ecology

Sevenoaks District is rich in biodiversity and wildlife due to its range of different habitats and protected areas. There are 17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) of national importance for their biological or geological interest, 61 Local Wildlife Sites important for the conservation of wildlife and the District's extensive ancient woodland is a particularly rich source of biodiversity. There are also a number of Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves and Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves. [These locally designated areas are important for wildlife and should be afforded protection in the Local Plan.](#)

There are no International or European designated sites present wholly or partly within the District. However, there are four such sites within 10km of the boundary of the District, the most significant of which is Ashdown Forest which lies approximately 6km south of the District boundary. The District's nearest settlement to Ashdown Forest is Edenbridge, which is approximately 12km from the site and a recent survey has found that less than 1% of visitors to the Forest are from within Sevenoaks District. The Local Plan will be accompanied by a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) to ascertain whether there is an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. We will continue to work proactively with Natural England, neighbouring authorities and any other relevant bodies to understand the impact of the Local Plan on the Ashdown Forest and, if necessary, develop policies for mitigation.

Biodiversity is not confined to designated and protected areas but is found throughout rural and urban areas. It is important to conserve existing biodiversity and seek increases through creation of habitats, either large scale such as wildflower meadows and flood prevention schemes, or through small scale solutions, such as new planting or bat and bird boxes. It is also crucial to provide means by which wildlife can move and thrive. Interconnected habitats

Agenda Item 9

allow wildlife to move freely in accordance with natural patterns and changing climates. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy includes the designation of “Biodiversity Opportunity Areas” across Kent approved by the Kent Nature Partnership. There are 4 such areas within Sevenoaks District. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) indicate where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation.

Access to the natural environment and areas of high biodiversity value can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and can help reduce social and health inequalities. We are supportive of projects such as community led habitat management, health walks and wildlife/nature experiences.

A key issue will be to ensure new development does not lead to a net loss in biodiversity but instead enhances biodiversity value through improvements of existing habitats and creation of new ones, as appropriate to the scheme. It is likely that additional evidence will need to be produced in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Kent Nature Partnership, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust in order to further explore the biodiversity and natural capital value of the District, [for inclusion within the Local Plan](#).

The participants at the place-making workshops considered it important to protect existing biodiversity areas and habitats including woodlands, hedgerows, wildlife reserves and designated areas.

Design

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the benefits of good design and considers that it is a key aspect of sustainable development. Development should contribute to making better and more attractive places for people. We already have a number of adopted policies which encourage proposals to have a high quality design and that development responds to the scale, height and materials of the surrounding environment, as well as the topography and character of a site and also to protect amenity.

There is however a need to re-consider our policies and make it clear what aspects the developer should address when designing a scheme and to encourage design to be considered at an early stages. We intend to include a new policy in the Local Plan requiring applicants to set out how the following have been considered in every scheme:

- Character (inc. materials, site specific characteristics, density, layout etc.)
- Connections – (inc. public transport, pedestrian links and facilities)
- Working with site and context – (inc. views, existing features, surrounding areas)
- Landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage
- Well defined streets and spaces (inc. car parking, secure by design, active design)
- Public and private spaces
- External storage, utilities and green technologies (e.g. broadband, cycle [and refuse](#) storage, renewables)
- Relevant design or character supplementary planning documents

A Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to assist applicants in meeting the requirements of the policy based on the Building for Life 12 design assessments [and taking](#)

[account of all aspects of design including the built and natural environment, local character, layout, materials, transport, flooding and heritage.](#)

There also needs to be greater flexibility in some policies, particularly around density and height of development. This is because the NPPF allows for higher densities and taller buildings subject to good design. Higher density development within urban areas is considered to be preferable to developing in Green Belt locations.

In addition, to national and local planning policies there are also a number of design documents in place to assist in assessing the design of development:

- Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment (SPD) (April 2012)
- Landscape Character Assessment (January 2017)
- Residential Extensions SPD (May 2009)
- Kent Design Guide (Dec 2005)
- [Village Design Statements and Parish Plans](#) (various dates)
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019 and associated guidance
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019 and associated guidance
- Building for Life 12 (Jan 2015)

Some of these documents are quite general in the guidance they give and district coverage is patchy. There is therefore an opportunity both for more specific documents and for more documents where design guidance is currently absent. We work closely with Design South East and are considering the introduction of a Design Panel, whereby an independent panel of experts review proposed designs, to encourage higher quality design in the larger and more sensitive developments.

The role of design in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures is increasingly important whether providing for renewable energies, incorporating passive solar design or through green infrastructure.

60% of the District is covered by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the north and in the south by the High Weald AONB. These are nationally designated landscapes and the AONB management plans clearly lay out design guidelines and principles to ensure that any new development conserves, enhances and reflects the [distinctive](#) quality and character of these landscapes.

Heritage and Conservation

Sevenoaks District has an abundance of heritage assets including 2,112 Listed Buildings, 42 designated Conservation Areas, 17 designated Historic Parks and Gardens and 23 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The District also has a number of properties which have been recognised as non designated heritage assets, [including](#) through the Local List Supplementary Planning Document and also identified by officers through individual planning applications.

In addition to the built environment, the District also contains significant areas of ancient woodland, important trees and identified fieldscapes and patterns which are all considered as elements which contribute to the design and heritage of the District. Therefore clear policies need to be laid out for the protection and enhancement of all these assets.

Agenda Item 9

Further heritage evidence is currently in preparation, in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. This will provide a review of the current evidence base for the historic environment of the district and identify key heritage themes to be addressed. The review will also identify any areas of additional research that will be required.

Place-making groups considered it important to protect heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas, historic estates and locally listed buildings. There was a keenness to encourage development that is compatible with its context and reflects the character of the area. Protection of the AONBs, key views, gaps between settlements, village greens, parkland, woodland and other natural features were all considered important.

DRAFT

Objective 3. Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural

Economic Land and the Rural Economy

Sevenoaks District has a vibrant and varied economy with a high level of employment, an economically active population and a skilled workforce. The majority of the District’s residents work and live in the West Kent area (Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling Local Authorities) and many work from home. In addition more than 40% of the Districts resident workforce work within the Greater London Local Authorities areas.

The District has 30 large employment sites (over 0.2ha) which provide 89.1ha land for office accommodation, warehousing and industrial uses. A further 4.1ha is allocated for employment use at Broom Hill in Swanley. These employment sites are currently allocated and protected for employment use and are all performing well. There are also many smaller employment sites, both urban and rural, which have minimum protection.

We are developing a new Economic Development Strategy which will focus on five key priorities – enterprise, the visitor economy, growth and investment, infrastructure and skills. Certain elements of this strategy will have spatial implications which will be reflected in the new Local Plan. For example, support for the rural economy has already been highlighted in the Economic Needs Study evidence base document as well as by the representatives from the local communities; both stated that rural based employment development should continue to be encouraged through the support of suitable projects (including through the West Kent Leader programme), protection of existing uses and improvements to supporting infrastructure such as broadband. The District has a varied broadband provision, some areas have excellent connections and speeds and others are more challenging. We will continue to work with partners and providers to ensure an increase in both the provision and speed of broadband.

The rural economy is a vital aspect of the wider economy, as many jobs are provided in rural areas often on smaller sites. There is an opportunity to support the rural economy through increased flexibility. We will be looking to support the re-use and redevelopment of existing buildings and farm complexes which provide an economic benefit, subject to other planning considerations.

Table X Needs across relevant use classes identified by the Economic Needs Study 2016.

	Total Need	Offices B1a/b need	Industrial B1c/B2	Warehousing and Storage B8
Employment Land needed up to 2035	11.6ha*	7.2ha	1.1ha	3.3ha
* does not include land already allocated. 11.6ha is approximately equivalent to the allocated land at the Vestry Estate in Sevenoaks, see allocation EMP1(a) in the ADMP.				

Agenda Item 9

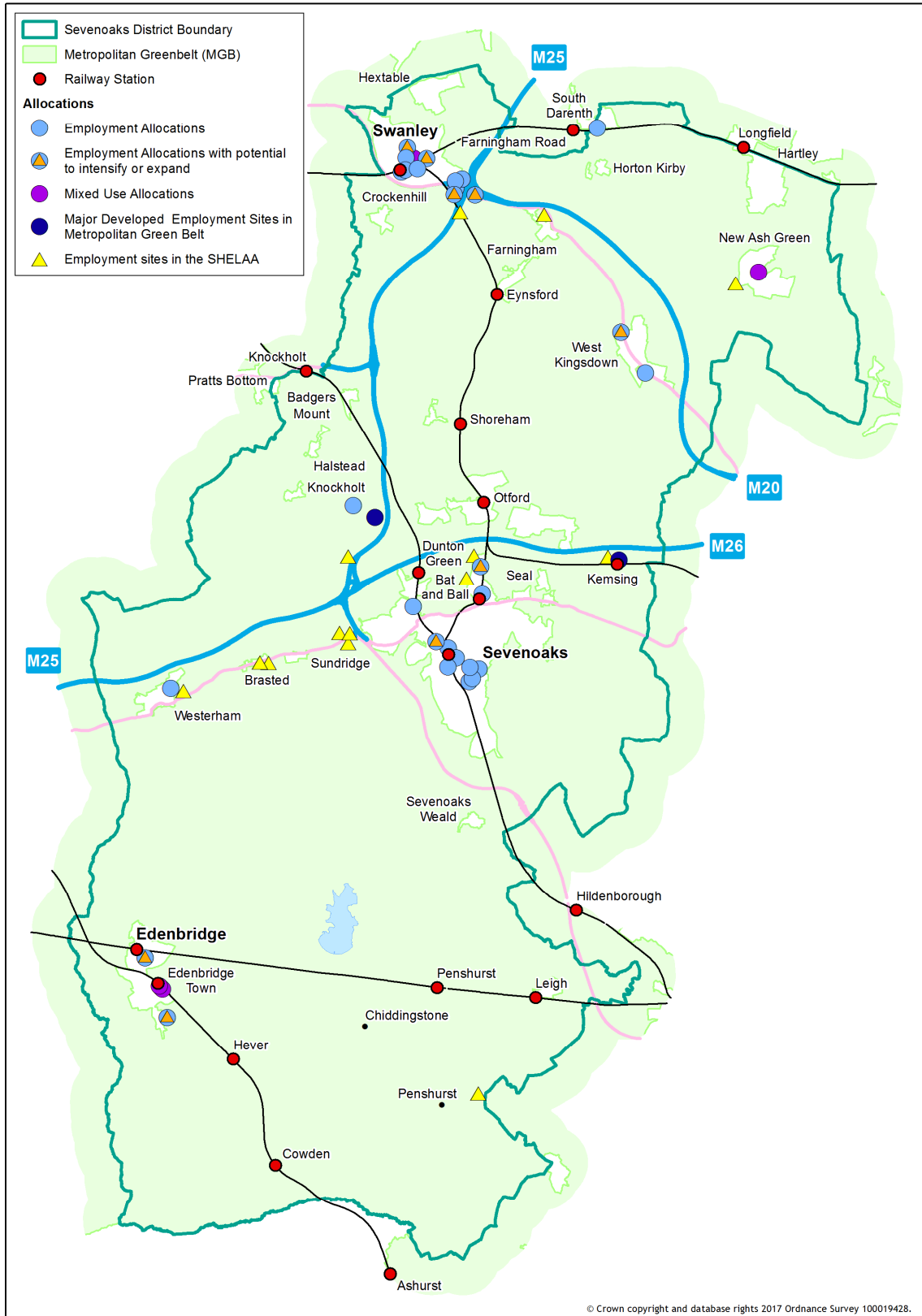


Figure X: Allocated land for employment use and land submitted for employment use

The District's economy is expected to grow over the next 20 years and new land and floorspace for employment uses will need to be identified to ensure that Sevenoaks District remains economically competitive and continues to meet the needs of the residents and workforce. Table X sets out needs across relevant use classes identified by the Economic Needs Study 2016. This need is in addition to any land currently used for employment or allocated for employment within the ADMP.

In 2013 the government first introduced a change to the permitted development rights for office accommodation to allow change of use and conversion to residential without the need for planning permission. Although this has yielded 185 new homes it has led to a substantial loss in office floorspace within the District. As at 31st March 2016, the District has lost approximately 17,000 m² of office floorspace within 12 buildings in this way. A further 4900 m² could be lost from schemes yet to be implemented. This loss in office accommodation is reflected in the high proportion of office need identified by the Economic Needs Study (see table X). We can protect office provision from future conversion in this way by removing the permitted development rights through an Article 4 direction.

Existing employment allocations are protected from redevelopment through Core Strategy policy SP8. The policy states that sites will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes up to 2026. The Allocations and Development Management Plan gives further details as to what is expected to be demonstrated. It has been suggested that we include a "redevelopment hierarchy" for allocated employment sites outlining the order in which the redevelopment of existing employment sites should be considered subject to marketing and suitable evidence with B use classes to be considered first [followed by other employment generating uses](#). It will be up to applicants to demonstrate how the site is unsuitable for all non-residential uses which may provide jobs and employment opportunities before a wholly residential scheme will be considered.

Some existing employment sites are older and may no longer be fit for purpose in the longer term as business practices change. We will need to consider the replacement and redevelopment of existing sites where the quantity of employment provision is retained and or additional provision can be accommodated. This will include the replacement of older poorer quality units with modern premises.

The ADMP requires any redevelopment of non-allocated employment land for residential development to be subject to a minimum of 6 months marketing for business use not restricted to the existing use. Notwithstanding points made in the above paragraph, we are considering increasing this minimum period to 12 months to better reflect the importance of the smaller non-allocated sites in providing jobs for the local community. The District's economy relies on smaller businesses with approximately 91% of them having less than 10 employees. The increased time will also make the marketing more robust as it will take account of seasonal fluctuations in the employment market. [Similarly, it is suggested that the bar is raised in relation to the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential, to ensure that the agricultural permission is not being used as a loophole to create residential dwellings.](#)

Agenda Item 9

The Local Plan also has aspirations to regenerate some areas of the District which would benefit from improved housing, employment and services and facilities, details of these are included in the relevant place-making area section. The redevelopment and regeneration of Swanley Town Centre and the Sevenoaks Northern area could create real economic benefits for the local area as well as the wider District.

It is also important to maximise the economic opportunities arising from the major developments across Kent. These include Ebbsfleet garden city to the north of the District, a potential **Paramount** theme park on the Swanscombe peninsula, the expansion of services at Bluewater and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. The Economic Needs Study undertook a review of these emerging projects and determined that they were at too early a stage to accurately predict the impact they will have on the District's economy. However, as the Local Plan progresses, account should be taken of these major projects and should identify opportunities in order to achieve an economic benefit.

The economic land need can be met through the identification of new sites for employment use in suitable locations, intensification of existing land to provide additional floorspace or through the extension of existing sites. It is likely that a combination of all these approaches will be used.

Participants at the place-making workshops all expressed the importance of a strong and vibrant economy. It was noted that the District has a number of small scale employment sites in rural areas such as old farmyards, converted buildings and former horticultural nurseries. It was also felt that the Local Plan should support rural businesses and jobs and support the improvement of broadband infrastructure.

The Visitor Economy

The District is already a popular tourism destination due to the attractive environment, historic towns and villages, and nationally recognised historic estates. There are a number of key heritage assets in the District such as Knole House, Chartwell, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place, other national trust properties and parks and gardens which [attract tourists](#) ~~make tourists attracted~~ to this area.

Tourism has the potential to have a significant impact on the economy and character of the District. The main issues are therefore the need to protect the existing tourism uses and accommodation, to encourage, ~~(where appropriate)~~ an increase in the amount and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities, as well as balancing this need against the priority to protect the rural district and its heritage and landscape.

National Planning Policy Framework supports building a strong and competitive economy, including the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in urban and rural areas. It also encourages sustainable tourism which benefits businesses and protects the countryside.

A Visitor Accommodation Study was carried out in September 2015. This reviews the type of supply of visitor accommodation in the District, trends in the markets and considers a number of opportunities for growth in such accommodation. In particular the study highlights that:

- The District is well placed to capitalise on the projected domestic short break and overseas tourist market.
- The projected population growth will drive a growth in weddings businesses and visits to friends and family.
- There is a growing demand for budget hotel accommodation.

Some key opportunities identified in the District include:

- The upgrading, development and expansion of existing hotels, spas, resorts and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- New hotel opportunities in Sevenoaks Town, Swanley, Fort Halstead and on golf courses.
- Encouragement of high quality pub accommodation and restaurants with rooms
- Country house wedding venues
- High quality holiday cottages and small holiday lodge complexes
- New touring caravans and camping sites and fishing lodges around fishing lakes
- Children's activity holiday centres.

Participants at place-making workshops supported encouragement of tourism as local rural areas want to promote their distinctive heritage and history and protect their cultural centres and pubs. There was recognition that improvements were needed in the following areas:

- Footpaths, river walks and create better signage.
- More bed spaces via new hotels and bed and breakfasts
- The need to protect and make heritage assets more attractive
- Better provision and management of parking surrounding tourist attractions.

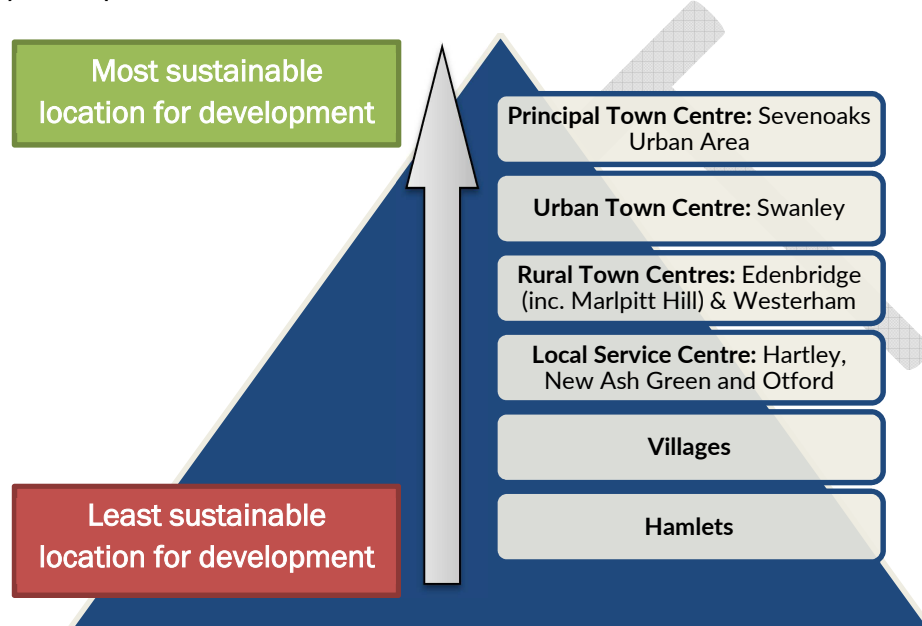
We want to support the District's urban, rural and visitor economy by making the most of every redevelopment or change of use opportunity. We are considering introducing a policy which will ensure employment generating non-residential uses are considered before residential schemes. This will ensure that the wider implications and opportunities are fully considered and the most appropriate use is permitted.

Agenda Item 9

Objective 4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure

Town Centres and Shopping

Sevenoaks District is a dynamic and diverse area with a range of settlements offering a mix of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of the community. The District Settlement Hierarchy considers the sustainability of the District's settlements by documenting their provision of, for instance, shops, transport links, schools, GP practices, community facilities and other services and facilities. The Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy 2017 provides the details on each settlement classification.



There is perhaps a perception that town centres are currently in decline due to the strong growth of internet/"click & collect" shopping over recent years. Whilst this is a trend nationally, the 2016 Retail Study for Sevenoaks District found that district's town and village centres were performing well despite this trend. The district also faces competition from a number of established out-of-district shopping areas including Bluewater, Orpington, Oxted, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone. By increasing competition, these centres can pose a challenge to Sevenoaks District's towns and local neighbourhood centres.

The Retail Study has considered where residents shop, both in and out of the District, as well as forecasting the potential requirements for new retail floorspace to meet the needs over the new plan period. The evidence gathered through the study shows that the District would require **21,700m²** of additional comparison goods (non-food) floorspace up to 2035, with a further **10,400m²** additional convenience (food) floorspace across the District over the same period. This totals an additional **32,100 m²** of retail space. To put this into perspective, the average retail unit in the UK is approximately 273m² (Estates Gazette 2012). By way of example, the additional floorspace over the Plan period is equivalent to:

- An additional **80 retail units** (based on the UK average); and
- An additional **6 Waitrose/Co-op stores** (based on the Waitrose/Co-op building in Edenbridge which is 1,820m²).

These figures seem surprisingly high but it must be remembered that they are linked to the growth forecasts for housing and employment and provided in the context of other nearby strong and expanding retail offers. We will keep the figures under review as the growth targets for the Local Plan become finalised.

The Retail Study is clear that the required amount of floorspace during the plan period is accurate up to 2030, from where the numbers are indicative. The evidence suggests that we should continue to review the requirements for retail floorspace, to account for a change in retail trends and other external factors during the course of the plan period. However, this should not prevent us from exploring all options to fully addressing the need.

		2020	2025	2030	2035
District-wide Requirements	Comparison Goods (Non-food)	3,900m ²	9,100m ²	15,300m ² (indicative)	21,700m ² (indicative)
	Convenience Goods (Food)	8,200m ²	9,100m ²	9,800m ² (indicative)	10,400m ² (indicative)

It is important to note that it may be possible to deliver retail floorspace across a number of storeys, rather than just ground level and the Local Plan will look to ensure that additional floorspace is facilitated in appropriate locations based predominantly on a town centre first approach. Key considerations will be the regeneration of the town centres at Swanley and New Ash Green and this is likely to influence the distribution of retail provision.

It is important to also understand that town centres are increasingly becoming a leisure destination, broadening their appeal from just retail. For Sevenoaks town this is likely to mean improving on an already well established base given the current wide-ranging food and drink offer as well as theatre and cinema. Swanley town centre's future leisure offer will undoubtedly form part of its regeneration ambitions whilst Edenbridge's centre may well benefit from an enhanced visitor economy.

The Retail Study sets out a series of recommendations that should be considered as part of the emerging Local Plan. There are District-wide recommendations, as well as considerations that should focus on the District's top-tier settlements.

Area	Study Recommendation
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting a local threshold for retail impact assessments, to assess the impact of retail developments outside of existing town and local centres (500 sq. m. net); Resist allocating retail floorspace within out-of-town developments; Support the development of the rural economy.
Sevenoaks Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for the town to support up to 7,200 sq.m net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2025 / 17,100 sq.m net by 2035; Sub-division of existing retail units within the primary shopping frontage should be resisted.
Swanley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and facilitate appropriate growth on sites in Swanley town centre to support and enhance its function as the

Agenda Item 9

	<p>Secondary Town centre in the District, and further develop and enhance the attractiveness of the retail and commercial leisure offer in the centre;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop robust frontage policies to ensure active shopping frontages, while developing other town centre uses in secondary areas (i.e. leisure).
Edenbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at providing more convenience floorspace into the town to accommodate growth in the town; • Continue to produce robust frontage policies to enhance the town centre.
Local Service Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In New Ash Green, in the short to medium term the Council should consider development of a centre-wide public realm strategy to improve the appearance of the centre and its attractiveness as a destination to meet local needs. • Applications which seek to enhance existing provision, or provide new retail floorspace appropriate in scale to the role and function of the centre should be supported in principle.

The full list of recommendations, including those for Local Service Centres (including New Ash Green, Otford and Westerham) can be found in Chapter 9 of the Retail Study 2017.

We believe it is important to have clear guidance and policy to maintain and improve vibrancy of existing District towns and villages. Measures that can help do this could include seeking to reduce the number of empty units in town centres, maintaining active shopping frontages and supporting a varied mix of town centre uses. The Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16 shows that within the top three main town centres (Sevenoaks town, Swanley and Edenbridge), the proportion of primary frontage (in A1 use) was consistent with monitoring targets for the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP):

- Sevenoaks Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **69%** (ADMP target 70%)
- Swanley Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **80%** (ADMP target 70%)
- Edenbridge Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **51%** (ADMP target 40%)

To ensure the vitality of the District's towns and local centres, the Retail Study recommends that the Council looks at the use of Article 4 Directions within the main town centres and local service centres. This is in response to greater flexibility being available for units to change from one use class to another, without the requirement for planning permission. An Article 4 Direction is a tool that we could use to restrict the permitted development rights; for instance removing the permitted development rights for converting A1 retail units into C3 residential units.

The importance of pubs, halls and meeting places to local communities, especially the rural communities is a locally specific issue for Sevenoaks District. The Settlement Hierarchy, in its methodology, places emphasis on whether there are pubs within the settlement, as they are seen as a key community asset. During the placemaking workshops, a number of parish representatives expressed a strong desire to protect community facilities that benefit residents, such as village/community halls, pubs, shops and community sport facilities as they

provide key focal points for a settlement. A number of examples of lost community facilities were given, including pubs which were lost to other uses, mainly residential uses.

We could look at ways of protecting pubs and other community assets by defining clear criteria to demonstrate sufficient assessment has been carried out to retain the asset before a change in use occurs (e.g. residential use). The current policy (ADMP Policy CF2) looks to protect community facilities in the urban areas of the three main settlements in the District. An option is to expand the policy to cover town and local centres (as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy) or even the whole District, including rural areas. Planning policy may also be able to offer support to the identification of assets of community value.

Transport Infrastructure

Sevenoaks District is in a unique position when looking at existing strategic transport connections. Three motorways (M20, M25 and M26) run through the District, offering vital connections to London, the Kent Coast, Gatwick and the Dartford Crossing. The District also benefits from a number of rail services to London as well as the Kent Coast. There is scope to access important transport hubs (e.g. Gatwick Airport and Ashford International) in order to travel internationally; this is mainly through rail services from Sevenoaks and Edenbridge (via Redhill and Tonbridge). Public transport is predominantly confined to the District’s urban centres with comparatively limited access for rural areas, [such as bus routes which are important to rural communities.](#)

There are a number of important strategic transport issues to consider across the District as well as the Kent region as a whole. Ensuring sufficient capacity on the transport network is an important aspect of bringing forward sustainable development. The Department for Transport, Highways England and Kent County Council continue to monitor the capacity of all transport provision and considering the strategic implications of transport improvements usually involves cross-boundary working. We will therefore continue to work collaboratively with partners on transport issues to facilitate local improvements. It is important that the Local Plan recognises its strategic context and the influence that significant nearby projects might have:

Lower Thames Crossing	Further future expansion at Gatwick Airport	Pressure on rail services across the District
<p>In April 2017, Highways England announced its preferred option for a new crossing over the River Thames. The preferred Option C will consist of a bored tunnel east of Gravesend in Kent and Tilbury in Essex. It is anticipated that the new crossing will relieve some pressure from the existing</p>	<p>As the closest airport to the District, Gatwick Airport is a vital asset to the South East economy. Despite the Government announcing its preferred option to expand Heathrow with a third runway in Autumn 2016, there is the possibility that the airport could still expand over the course of the new Plan period adding pressure</p>	<p>The Metro services that operate in South East London terminate at Sevenoaks. Swanley has been included within the Transport for London (TfL) travel zone and has been designated at Zone 8. There are plans for Oyster technology to be brought to Sevenoaks station. The Southeastern railway franchise is due to end in</p>

Agenda Item 9

crossing at Dartford. This will have implications for Junctions 2 and 3 of the M25 (Dartford and Swanley respectively) as well as the entire north area of the District due to better connectivity with the strategic and local road network.	on existing transport links, as well as an increase in arrival flights to the airport overflying the southern portion of the District.	2018. The Thameslink programme is due to be completed in 2018, as well as providing additional capacity on Maidstone to Cambridge services via Swanley. Connections to Gatwick (via Edenbridge and Tonbridge) will also need to be considered.
---	--	--

More locally Parish representatives from the place-making workshops have identified a number of considerations that we should think about when looking at transport delivery. This includes reducing traffic congestion, seeking to protect public transport services and enhancing future opportunities for sustainable transport solutions by connecting developments to services, facilities and other points of interest within communities. There are also area specific opportunities to address transport issues through master-planning exercises or Neighbourhood Plans by looking at specific areas. Examples of this include the Swanley & Hextable Master Vision and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

We recognise that improving transport is intrinsically linked to other aspects of the Local Plan, such as improving public health and encouraging healthy, active lifestyles which can offer an alternative experience to heavily reliance on private vehicles. The Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and KCC Active Travel Strategy look to improve existing walking and cycling infrastructure across the District as well as actively encouraging better integration of walking and cycling as part of the design process for future developments.

[Currently, a Cycling Strategy Working Group, set up by the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board, is looking at measures to implement the District's existing Cycling Strategy and its delivery. However, the emerging Local Plan offers an opportunity to review the Strategy and bring it into line with Kent County Council's ambitions for promoting greater opportunities for Active Travel, and we are seeking opinions on this approach towards sustainable transport delivery.](#)

Other Key Infrastructure

Utilities

There are a number of water and wastewater suppliers that operate in the District including Thames Water, South East Water, Mid Kent Water and SES Water. The increase in future development over the course of the new Local Plan period will increase the demands of water within the District, so it is important that utility companies account for the change in growth. This also includes electricity and gas providers where appropriate to account for the increase growth in the District. Consultation as the plan develops will help ensure this occurs.

Health and Medical

Sevenoaks District has 15 GP medical practices and 2 hospitals which deal with minor injuries (Sevenoaks Hospital, and Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital). Medical services are overseen by two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs); the West Kent CCG and the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG. While there is no dedicated hospital facility in the north of the District, residents are in close proximity to the Darent Valley Hospital and Queen Mary's Hospital Sidcup. Further hospital provision is provided out-of-District at Pembury Hospital (Tunbridge Wells) [and in Maidstone](#).

Population projections anticipate a rise in the elderly demographic, which in turn will create increased pressure on medical and health facilities. Increase in demand will be mitigated by ensuring that there is enough provision of services as well as designing homes which are fit for purpose. We are committed to delivering healthy communities through its Community Plan and District Health Deal, and will continue to work with partners.

Education

Currently, there are 42 primary schools and 3 secondary schools that operate within the District under Kent County Council as the Local Education Authority (LEA). There are also a number of independent (fee-paying) schools across the District that caters for primary and secondary education. In October 2015, the Government approved plans for a single-sex grammar "annex" which will be run by Weald of Kent Grammar Academy Trust [in Sevenoaks Town](#). At the time of writing, construction of the annex is almost complete and the Weald of Kent is expecting its first intake of secondary schoolchildren in September 2017. There are currently no colleges or "higher learning" facilities available in the District. Consultation with Kent County Council will continue as the plan progresses.

More generally the Local Plan will need to balance education provision within the District against the eventual scale of growth identified via the Local Plan. The KCC Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-2021 outlines the requirements for new school places. Equally, there needs to be consideration of how this development pressure could affect schools outside the District boundaries, in particular secondary education places. Due to an increase number of children travelling to and from school, this may also have a knock-on impact on public transport [and](#) highway capacity.

Delivery of Infrastructure in the District

Improvements in infrastructure are delivered by the relevant authority which includes (but is not limited to) Kent County Council, Highways England, Network Rail, the Environment Agency and NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups. We will continue to work with partners throughout the course of preparing the new Local Plan. We will [also](#) continue to levy contributions against developments where infrastructure and transport improvements are required. This will be achieved through the continued use of Section 106 legal agreements, as well as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

[A key aspect to infrastructure and transport delivery will be the production of evidence to support the Plan. We are committed to producing a ~~The plan will be accompanied by a~~ new District Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These documents will inform what is required to support the growth of the District and the amount of funding required for](#)

Agenda Item 9

delivery. Also, the evidence gathered in these documents, as well as the main Local Plan document, can be used to lobby relevant public bodies (e.g. the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent County Council, Department of Transport) for support and the funding of key infrastructure required to deliver development, However, infrastructure and transport improvements across the District cannot be delivered until the the preferred Local Plan approach is determined. Infrastructure providers and facilitators are consulted as part of the Local Plan process, and we will continue to identify high-level improvements across the District, before looking at site-specific and local level improvements which will have to be made to accommodate additional development, as per the preferred option.

We recognise that infrastructure and transport requirements will change over time over the course of the new Local Plan period. Through partnership working, Local Plan preparation work will help to inform any proposals and plans of partners such as KCC's Kent Growth and Infrastructure Framework and the Local Transport Plan 4. It is also recognised that a number of infrastructure providers work on different plans with different timescales that may not fit neatly with the plan period, as they operate within 5, 10 or 50 year timescales. We will continue our discussions with partners and identify where there are opportunities to input into these strategies and plans.

Objective 5. Promote healthy living opportunities

Health-Healthy and Inclusive Communities

National planning policy encourages local authorities to plan proactively for healthy, sustainable communities. This is likely to be achieved through plan-making as well as working with health and medical partners. The scope of what makes a sustainable community is wide ranging and might include encouraging sustainable transport links, better design and enhancing developments with meaningful provisions of public space for residents to enjoy.

Sevenoaks District is overall one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. Despite having low levels of deprivation on average across the District, there are some pockets of deprivation mainly in the north and rural areas. Data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015) shows that some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the District are located in the wards of Swanley White Oak and Swanley St. Mary's which amounts to approximately 10% of the total District population. Other wards with relative deprivation also include in Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village, Edenbridge North & East and Fawkham & West Kingsdown.

The District's main health consideration is the age profile of the District. Current population data shows that 21% (24,700) of the District's population is aged 65 and over. This trend shows that the District has an ageing population and will require the Local Plan to plan positively to meet any future requirements needed for older people. This includes providing appropriate accommodation (private housing and care home beds) as well as the necessary medical infrastructure to care for older people.

In addition, the Local Plan will have to consider the health impacts of traffic congestion and air quality. The District currently has 11 defined Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which are predominantly located along the District's strategic road network to include the M25, M20 and A25. There is a high dependency on private vehicles to make journeys to key locations within the District (e.g. stations, shops and community facilities). We will look at the priorities set out in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2016-19 and the Sevenoaks District Health Deal (2015) to develop appropriate local planning policies. Further corporate documents such as the Air Quality Action Plan will also be considered as part of the Local Plan.

Leisure

The District is generally well served by leisure provision with a good number of indoor sports facilities affording residents a range of potential activities.

The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study 2017 undertook an audit of existing indoor sports provision and identified current and future needs for the District. It found that much of the District's provision is within local authority owned formal sports centres, informal village halls or within educational establishments. Many of the educational establishments allow community use of facilities without formal community use agreements in place. This means that the services can be withdrawn at any time. There are also existing facilities which are not available for "pay and play" community use and where better use could be made of facilities.

The study found that there is an undersupply of fitness stations across the District and noted that there were no national fitness chains present. Much of the District's provision is in ageing premises and of not particularly high quality. The White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley is in need of improvement in the short term and the Edenbridge Centre in the medium to longer term. The quality across the District should be improved where possible to ensure the needs of residents are met.

Although there are many facilities for indoor leisure the study also noted that many facilities were only safely accessible by car, especially those in rural locations. The study recommended improvements in infrastructure to develop safe walking and cycling routes to existing facilities and where possible open up other informal, multipurpose spaces where people can be active.

Open Space and Recreation

Open spaces are spaces of value for sport, recreation and visual amenity. They include sports pitches, open areas within development, linear corridors and country parks and are not just restricted to publically accessible land. They can include areas of woodland and scrubland as well as formal parks and gardens. Open spaces are an important part of the landscape, local character and the setting of built development. They can provide health, well-being and social benefits acting as locations for community and social events. Open spaces can also provide the "green lungs" for settlements and can contribute to the reduction in atmospheric carbon dioxide and improved air quality particularly in areas including trees, woodland and hedges.

Agenda Item 9

The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study included a quantity and quality audit of the existing open spaces within the District. The study found that although the District has an adequate supply of most types of open space the quality of the spaces could be improved. We will work with partners to identify opportunities to redevelop areas which are currently not fit for purpose or where improvements can be made.

The District has a significant undersupply of Children and Young People's play space. There is an opportunity to include provision for Children and Young People within new housing developments. New provision can also be provided as part of the redevelopment of poor quality open spaces and we will work with partners to identify such opportunities and consider use of developer contributions for additional provision.

The Allocations and Development Management Plan protects specific open spaces within urban confines which are more than 0.2ha in size (unless they have been previously allocated). The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study audited all known areas of open space and views were sought from Town and Parish Councils on the spaces as part of the study. The Local Plan could remove the protection for some spaces or add spaces to the list of protected sites.

The National Planning Policy Framework gives Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans the ability to designate areas of open space of particular value to a local community as a "Local Green Space". These spaces must meet criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the NPPF and consideration should be given to other designations and protection already afforded to the land. The preferred approach is for such sites to be identified by local communities and designated in neighbourhood plans.

A playing pitch strategy is being undertaken to assess the current level of sports pitch provision across the District. An additional piece of evidence to evaluate the quality and quantity of the District's non-pitch sport and physical activity provision including golf courses will also be undertaken. The findings of both pieces of evidence will also be incorporated into the Local Plan.

The participants at the place-making workshops expressed a desire to retain and protect existing areas of open space of value to the local community, including recreation grounds, children's play areas and village greens. ~~There was also a desire to see new spaces developed such as orchards~~

Objective 6. Promote a greener future

Sustainability and Climate Change

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to “adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change”. Climate change is addressed throughout the Local Plan by delivering development in a sustainable way.

Energy efficiency measures are now required through building regulations and are no longer included in Local Plan policy. National Policy states that the Local Plan should investigate the scope for new renewable energy installations.

In 2012 Kent County Council undertook a study to evaluate the opportunities for renewable energy generation across Kent, for Sevenoaks the study found the District was most suited to the production of biofuels and forest management for biomass energy production. Some areas may be suitable for small or medium scale wind installations or solar farms but the study noted that landscape designations may cause restrictions and consideration was not given to the extent of the green belt within the District.

Combined Heat and Power and District Heating is most efficient in areas where there is a high heat demand such as highly populated areas and large scale infrastructure such as hospitals. However, areas with a high concentration of a number of facilities requiring high levels of heat are the most appropriate locations. The KCC study showed that the District has relatively low heat demand and that there are no real opportunities for a retrofitted district heating network. In the future, large scale development schemes should consider if a decentralised energy and heating scheme would be a viable and feasible solution.

Therefore, given the highly constrained nature of the District is unlikely that any renewable energy developments of significant size will be suitable within the District.

The majority of the District is suitable for microgeneration technologies including heat pumps, solar thermal and photovoltaics. Such technologies should be integrated into new developments where appropriate and actively encouraged on existing domestic dwellings.

Core Strategy Policy SP2 stated that we will support appropriate small scale community led renewable energy schemes this is an approach which can be taken into the new Local Plan.

Climate Change **mitigation** measures within the Local Plan could include:

- Supporting the inclusion of small scale renewable and low carbon technologies where appropriate
- Reducing the need to travel by sustainably locating new housing and supporting the level of services and facilities.
- Promoting sustainable design measures for new developments including passive solar design
- Investigating opportunities for decentralised energy and heating where appropriate
- Protecting existing green spaces, trees and vegetation to absorb carbon dioxide

In 2009 the Government released the UK Climate Projections which sets out the likely effects of climate change across the country up to the end of the century based on

Agenda Item 9

simulations from climate models. Within the South East the changing climate is expected to cause an increase in the average summer temperatures leading to potential overheating, associated health issues and an increased need for cooling. It is also expected to cause an overall decrease in rainfall which will reduce the availability of water in an already water stressed area of the country.

Beside these average changes in rainfall and temperature the South East is also likely to experience more frequent extreme weather events including short periods of heavy rainfall, which will put pressure on the built and natural environment and will lead to an increase in surface water flooding and rapid fluvial flooding, potential damage to buildings and infrastructure and have a negative impact on water quality. These changing weather conditions will also have an effect on the biodiversity within the District and are likely to lead to habitat disruption and species migration.

Climate Change **adaptation** measures within the Local Plan could include:

- Protecting and enhancing existing green spaces, trees and vegetation to provide new habitat and connections for wildlife.
- Inclusion of deciduous trees and other landscaping to provide cooling in the summer.
- Investigate water harvesting in new developments either through rainfall or wastewater.
- Incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments with suitable management arrangements.
- Provision of green infrastructure in new developments including the use of green and porous surfaces to reduce surface water run off and living roofs and walls.
- Design new developments to include buildings to withstand extreme weather effects and layouts to avoid areas likely to flood or overheat

Flood Risk and Drainage

There is already significant national and local guidance in place for flood risk, in the form of the NPPF and Practice Note. There is also local guidance provided by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) carried out in 2016 for the District has identified current sources of flooding and also takes into account the impact of climate change. The main source of flooding, in Sevenoaks is identified as fluvial flooding, the main sources being the River Darent and River Eden, with other smaller contributors.

The report also identifies that the District has experienced a number of historic surface water/drainage related flood events which can be attributed to a range of sources including surface water run off. There are five reservoirs in the District which can also be a source of flooding. Ground water flood events have occurred in the District mainly due to high water table levels. The SFRA also identifies the Flood Zones that land falls under across the District.

There are a few cross boundary and sub-regional issues regarding flooding and drainage. Firstly there is the potential to increase the height of the flood barrier at Leigh, which will have the potential to increase the amount of flood storage required within the southern part of the District. This will be considered further through Duty to Co-operate meetings. The

Environment Agency has also confirmed that they are currently in the process of updating their modelling for the Darent which is likely to update understanding of Flood Risk and Flood Zones for this area.

In looking at the flooding and drainage evidence, guidance and legislation, the main issues identified for Sevenoaks District, in addition to existing policy and guidance includes:

- The need to reduce surface water run-off from development.
- The need to create space for flooding, including integrating green infrastructure in mitigation for surface water and allocating Flood Zones 2 and 3 as open space.
- Looking at opportunities to work with natural processes to reduce flood risk. For example this will include considering the construction of up stream storage schemes to protect urban areas down stream. This will involve partnership working with neighbouring authorities, organisations and water management bodies.
- The need to reduce flood risk by naturalising the banks of development in particular for brownfield development, adjacent to water courses as much as possible.
- SuDs should be seen as an opportunity to promote and protect Green Infrastructure and also enhance ecological and amenity value as they mimic the natural process of green field surface water drainage and help reduce surface water run off.
- SuDs need to be considered at the early stages of development to reduce the risk of flooding particularly to third party land and to ensure they are intrinsic to site design.

A few of the place-making workshops identified the need to increase local 'Flood committees' to work through objectives to reduce flooding in local areas. Local issues include; Crockham Hill identified flood control as an issue, Leigh identified issues with drainage and also highlighted that there is the Eden Catchment Group (which is a local responsible body which looks at ways to support the objectives of the Water Framework Directive).

Agenda Item 9

Place-Making Areas:

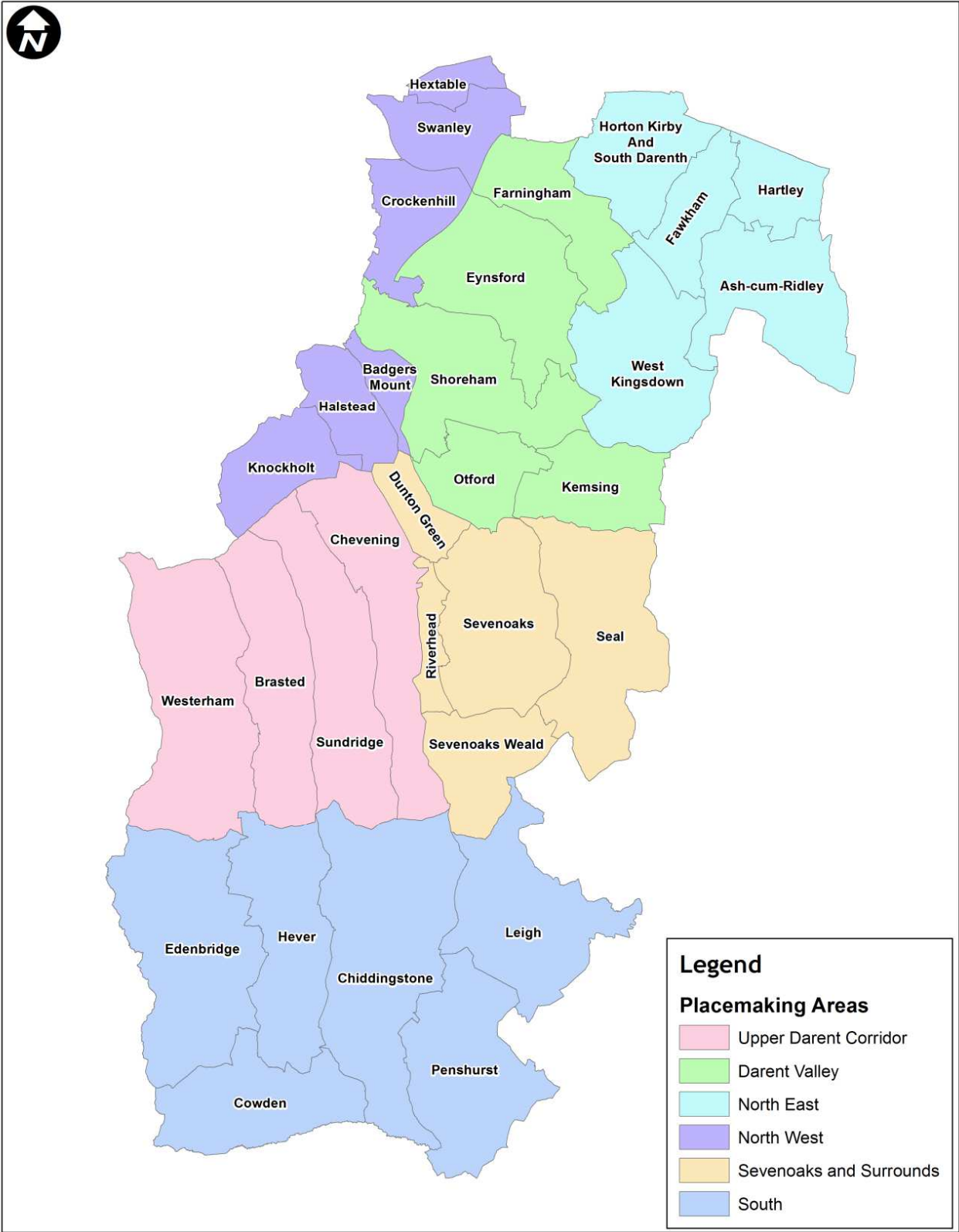
The District has been divided into six place-making areas, grouping together places with similar characteristics and natural environment, which function together in terms of shared services and transport routes. The six place-making areas are outlined below and comprise between 4-6 parishes.

Each place-making area is made up of parishes/towns with one or more of the following

- A shared sense of character and place, either due to shared characteristics, heritage or landscape designations
- The majority of residents within each place-making area are likely to use similar infrastructure, services and facilities, e.g. local train lines, shopping centres/high streets, medical centres, leisure facilities etc.
- The parishes and towns share local issues such as proximity to London, major road networks/junctions or shared demographics.

In developing this Plan, we have met with local community representatives from these place-making areas. Workshops were held in 2016 with local representatives, made up of Town and Parish Councillors and Ward Councillors for each place-making area. Participants were asked what they liked about their areas, what contributed to the local character and what should be conserved and protected. They were also asked about potential opportunities for the future and what changes could be made to improve the area. Finally, the participants were asked to share what they felt were the challenges, issues which are currently causing difficulty or which have the potential to cause difficulty in the next 20 years. These community views have fed into this consultation, together with the findings of the evidence studies, to try and develop a Plan that responds to local views and aspirations.

It is recognised that a one-size-fits-all approach within these place-making areas is not appropriate, as there are significant variations within the groupings, for example the villages of Hextable and Crockenhill have a very different character to that of Swanley town, within the north-west place-making area. Equally, issues within one place-making area may have significant impacts on neighbouring areas, for example proposals for Sevenoaks town are likely to be of interest to those in Otford, which falls within the Darent Valley grouping. Therefore, the purpose of the place-making areas is to assist with Local Plan consultation, bringing consultation to local areas and focusing in on local issues, but not to the exclusion of District-wide issues or issues within other place-making areas, if relevant. Policies will be developed for place-making areas if there are distinct local issues that need to be addressed, but these policies will not necessarily apply across the whole of the place-making area (e.g. regeneration policies for New Ash Green or Swanley would be place specific).



Agenda Item 9

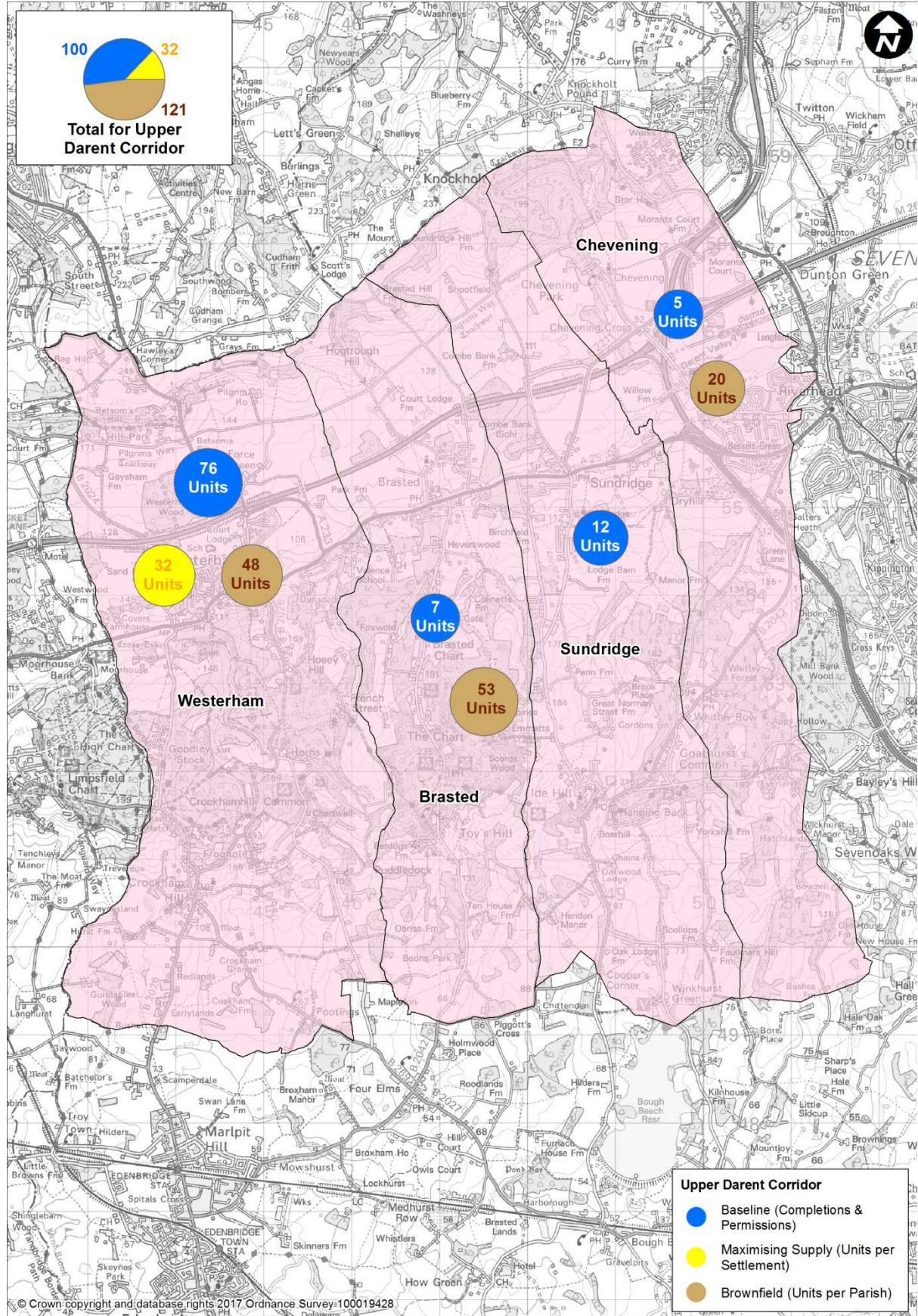
South	Upper Darent Corridor	Sevenoaks and surrounds	Darent Valley	North West (A and B)	North East
Edenbridge Cowden Hever Chiddingstone Leigh Penshurst	Westerham Brasted Sundridge Chevening	Sevenoaks Riverhead Dunton Green Sevenoaks Weald Seal	Farningham Eynsford Shoreham Otford Kemsing	A Swanley & surrounds: Swanley Hextable Crockenhill B Knockholt & Halstead Wooded Downs (inc. Badgers Mount)	Horton Kirby & South Darent Fawkham Hartley Ash-cum-Ridley West Kingsdown

DRAFT

The following sections consider locally specific issues, District wide issues are covered in the topic area sections.

DRAFT

Upper Darent Corridor (Westerham, Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge)



Proposed housing – approx. 250 units – provision split fairly evenly between brownfield land and existing commitments

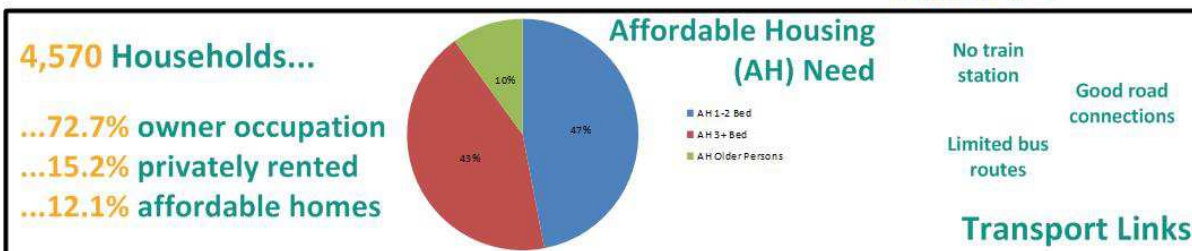
Upper Darent Corridor...

(Brasted, Chevening, Sundridge & Westerham)

Population **11,280**



22% aged 65+ years



Other Area Characteristics:

Liabile to **flood** in areas

Located in the **Kent Downs AONB**

Tourism - Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks & gardens

Source of the **River Darent** in the Greensands Hills

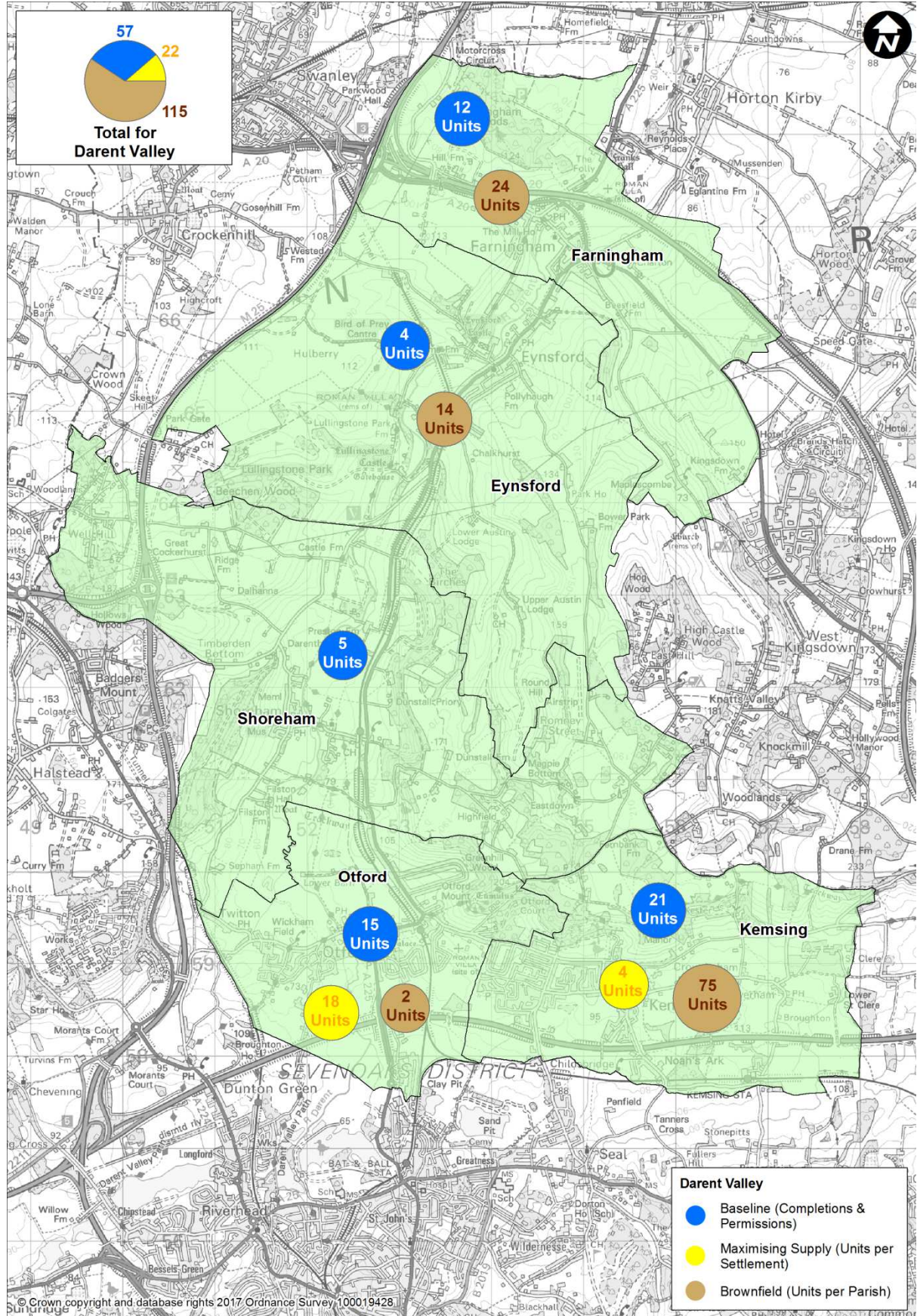
A25 connecting with the A21 and M25

No secondary school in the area

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- Increasing opportunities to develop the rural economy, including tourism
- Consideration of the potential direction of growth of Westerham and a possible new relief road – see Which Way Westerham proposals [\(add link\)](#)
- Mitigating air quality impacts associated with the M25/A25 corridor
- Endeavour to maintain or reduce traffic volumes along the A25
- Mitigating the impact of flooding from the River Darent on new development

Darent Valley



Proposed housing – approx. 200 units – provision focused (1/2) on brownfield land with the remaining units largely from existing commitments

Darent Valley

(Eynsford, Farningham, Kemsing, Otford & Shoreham)

Population **13,305**

21% aged 65+ years

5,250 Households...

- ...80% owner occupation
- ...9% privately rented
- ...11% affordable homes

Affordable Housing (AH) Need

- AH 1-2 Bed
- AH 3+ Bed
- AH Older Persons

Transport Links

- 4 train stations
- Good road connections
- Limited bus routes

Other Area Characteristics:

River Darent and the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme

No secondary school in the area

Lies in the Kent Downs AONB

Chaucer Business Park is the largest employment site

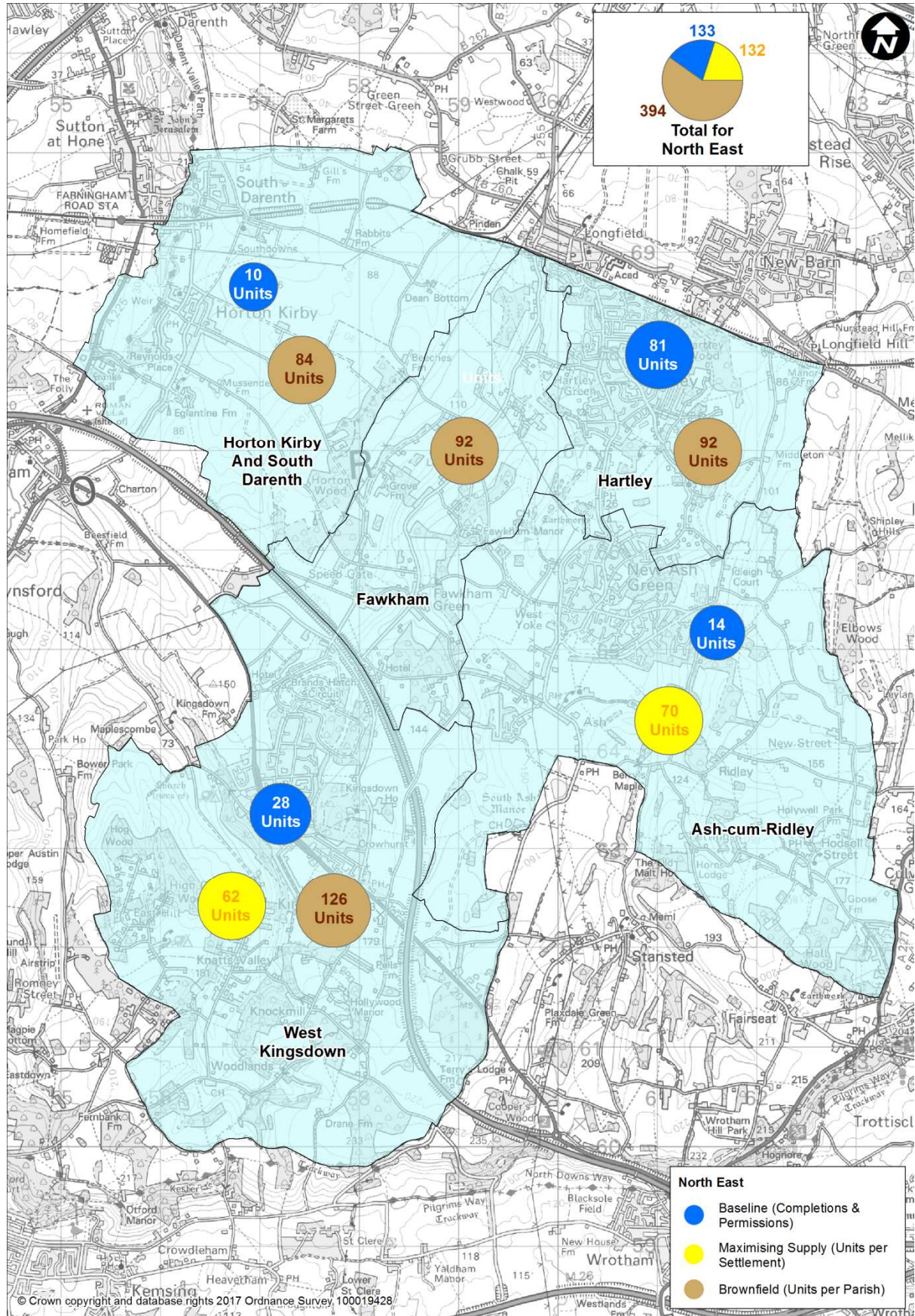
Liable to flood in areas

Tourism - nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- Strengthening the rural economy through improving local employment areas and visitor economy
- Impact of increased visitors on local infrastructure
- Mitigating the impact of flooding from the River Darent on new development

North East (New Ash Green and Hartley)

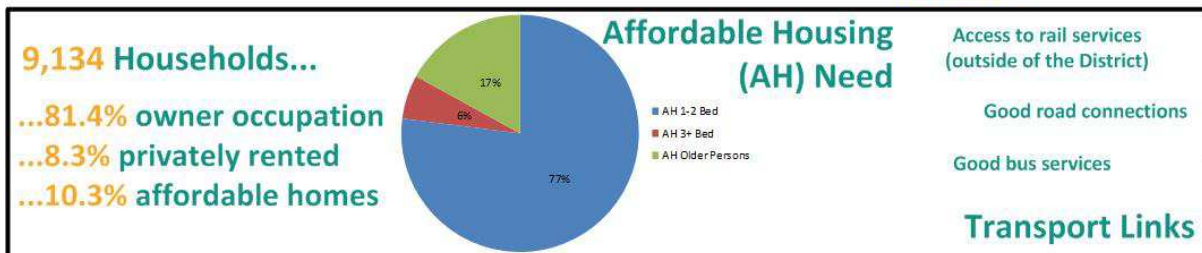


Proposed housing – approx. 650 units – proposed housing provision focused (2/3rds) on brownfield land with the remaining units forming existing commitments /sites within existing settlements

North East

(Ash-cum-Ridley, Fawkham, Hartley, Horton Kirby and South Darenth & West Kingsdown)

Population **20,925**
 20% aged 65+ years



Other Area Characteristics:

Brands Hatch Circuit – a centre of sport and leisure

Potential to regenerate **New Ash Green Village Centre**

Close to **Bluewater & Gravesend** for retail

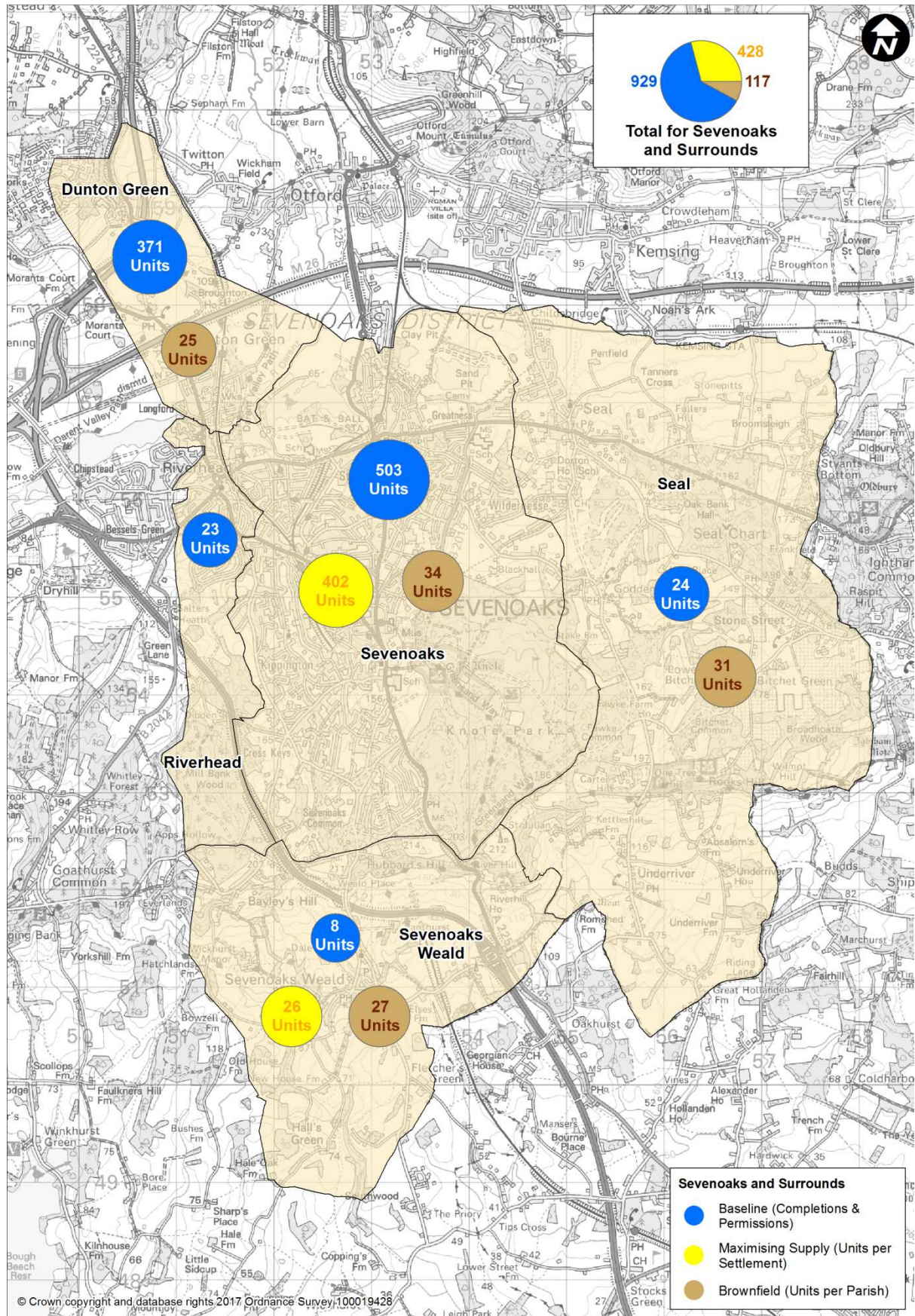
Upcoming Ash Neighbourhood Plan

Potential impacts from planned growth and infrastructure in **North Kent (Ebbsfleet, Lower Thames Crossing, Paramount)**

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- *New Ash Green –regenerating the village centre: it has a high vacancy rate and ageing buildings.*
- *Brands Hatch – important centre for sport and leisure activities based on the motor racing circuit but concerns regarding noise levels affecting adjoining residential properties*
- *Proposed Lower Thames Crossing may have an impact on the road network, and potential traffic/infrastructure implications of Thames Corridor developments*

Sevenoaks Urban Area and Surrounds

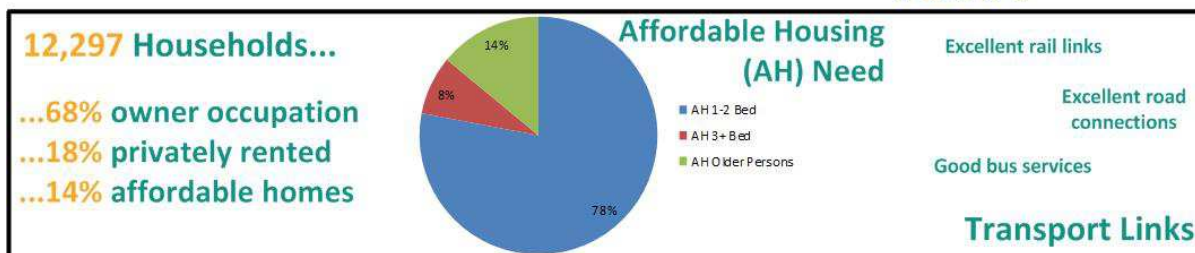


Proposed housing – approx. 1500 units - provision focused (2/3rds) on existing commitments, with the remaining provision focused on development in Sevenoaks town including around the train station.

Sevenoaks & Surrounds

(Dunton Green, Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks & Sevenoaks Weald)

Population **30,290**
 23% aged 65+ years



Other Area Characteristics:

Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens

Upcoming Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan

High number of Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

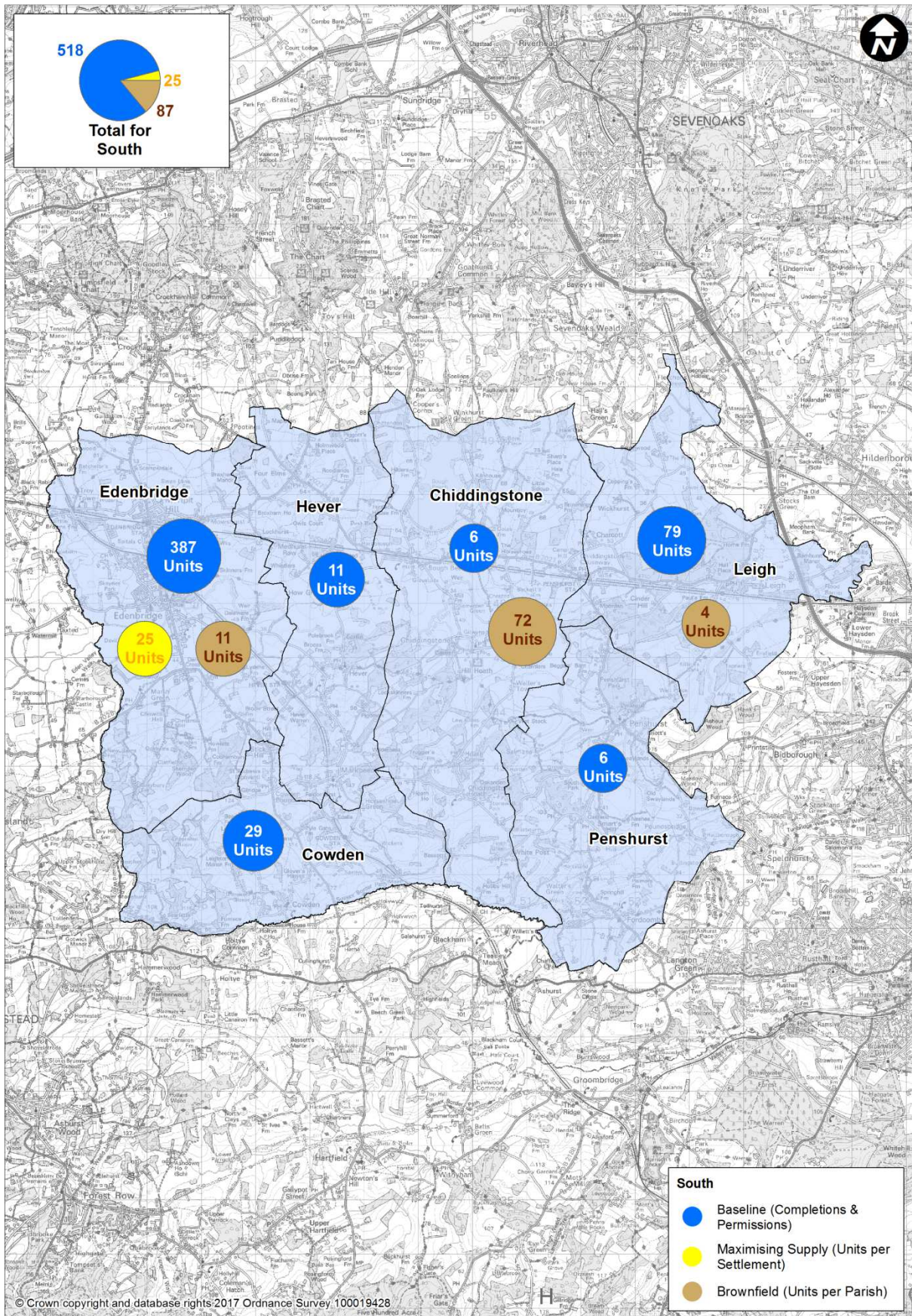
High loss of office provision

Partial Kent Downs AONB

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- Regeneration of the Sevenoaks Northern Area including the redevelopment of the quarry for a mixture of housing and other uses subject to Green Belt considerations.
- Consideration of a policy to restrict changes of use (of shops) within Sevenoaks Town Centre to ensure its economic competitiveness?
- Remove permitted development rights from offices to prevent conversion to residential without the need for planning permission? In particular, the areas currently exempt.

South Area



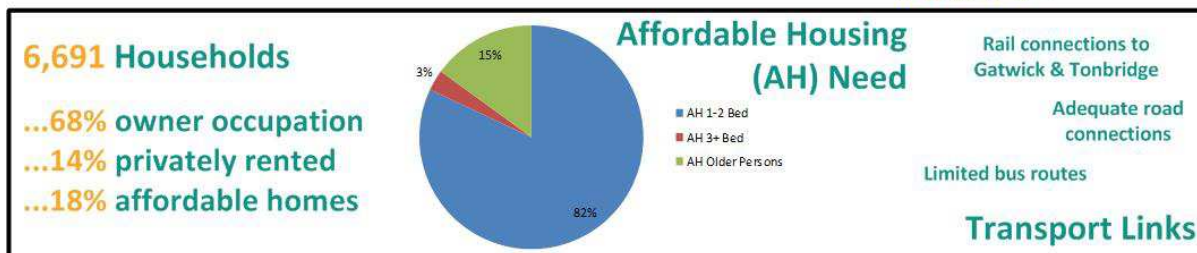
Proposed housing – approx. 600 units – proposed housing provision largely focused on existing commitments

South

(Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Hever, Leigh & Penshurst)

Population **16,410**

 20% aged 65+ years



Other Area Characteristics:

Remote area with some **High Weald AONB**

The River Eden and the Eden Valley

Upcoming Edenbridge Neighbourhood Plan

No secondary school in the area

Liable to flooding – effected by the River Eden & Leigh Flood Barrier

Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens

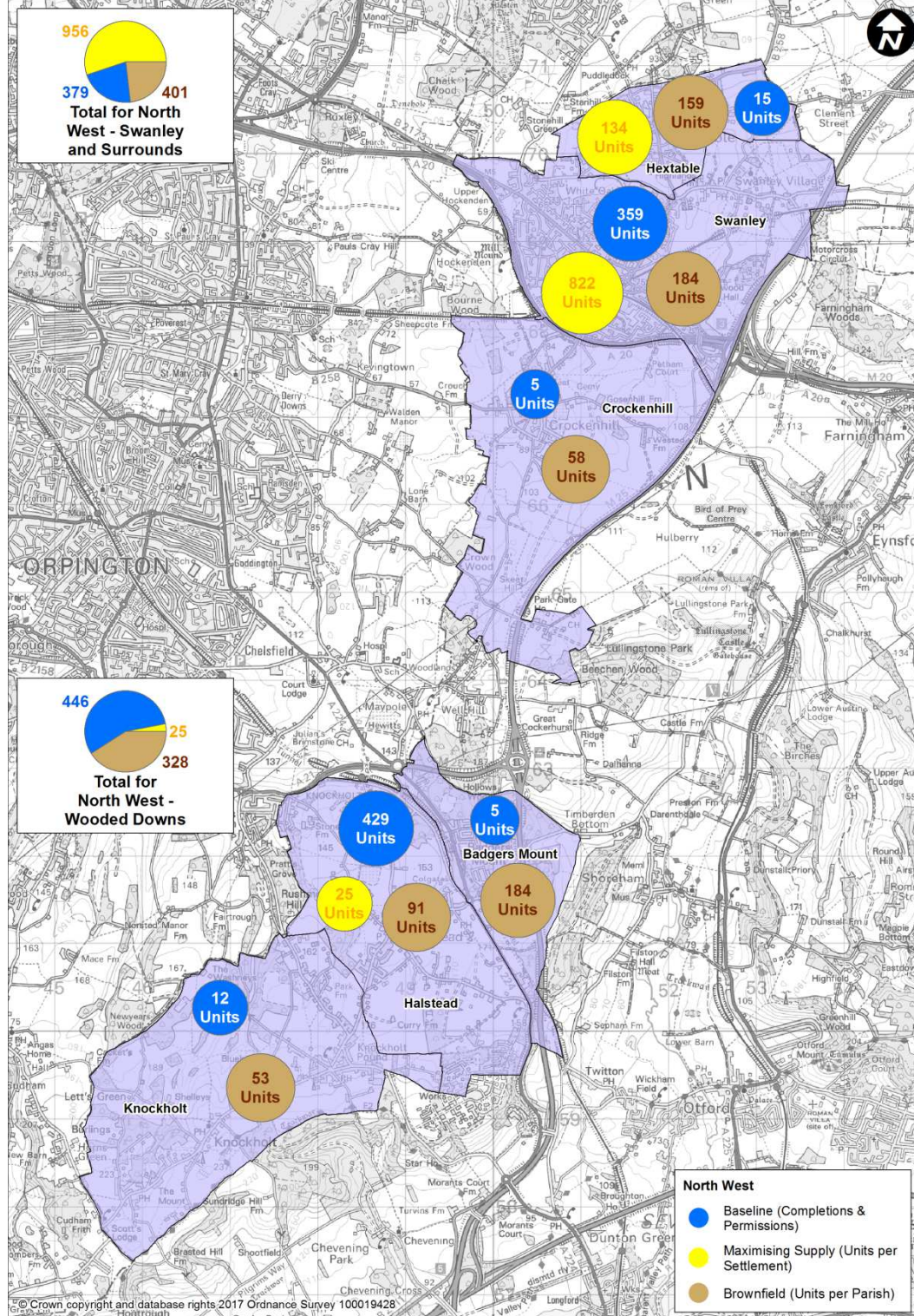
Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- Consider the need and potential provision of a new health and post-11 education hub in Edenbridge
- Protect shops, services, community facilities and employment in Edenbridge and the local villages
- Address flood risk and SuDs, including consideration of the Leigh Flood Barrier
- Consider the impact of development on Ashdown Forest (a European Site)

Agenda Item 9

North-West: the six parishes are split into two areas:

Swanley and surrounds	North-West wooded downs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swanley • Hextable • Crockenhill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badgers Mount • Halstead • Knockholt



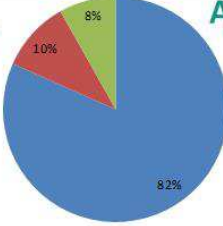
Swanley and surrounds – approx. 1700 units – focused (just over 1/2) on building within existing settlements, with remaining units forming brownfield land and existing commitments.

North-West wooded downs – approx. 800 units – provision split equally between existing commitments and brownfield land

North West - Swanley & Surrounds

(Crockenhill, Hextable & Swanley)

Population **22,680**
 20% aged 65+ years

<p>10,928 North West Households</p> <p>...69.9% owner occupation</p> <p>...8.9% privately rented</p> <p>...21.2% affordable homes</p>	 <p>Affordable Housing (AH) Need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AH 1-2 Bed AH 3+ Bed AH Older Persons 	Excellent rail links
		<p>Good road connections</p> <p>Good bus connections</p> <p>Transport Links</p>

Other Area Characteristics:

Key connections on the **M25 & A20**

A Master Vision for Swanley & Hextable

2 wards in the 20% most deprived wards in England

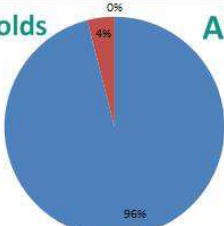
Swanley Station **Oyster** (London Travel Zone 8)

Historic for its horticulture & nurseries

North West - Wooded Downs

(Badgers Mount, Halstead & Knockholt)

Population **3,540**
 18% aged 65+ years

<p>10,928 North West Households</p> <p>...69.9% owner occupation</p> <p>...8.9% privately rented</p> <p>...21.2% affordable homes</p>	 <p>Affordable Housing (AH) Need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AH 1-2 Bed AH 3+ Bed AH Older Persons 	Knockholt Station (TfL Zone 6)
		<p>Good road connections</p> <p>Limited bus routes</p> <p>Transport Links</p>

Other Area Characteristics:

Redevelopment of **Fort Halstead**

North Downs Business Park (key employment site)

Good London connections

Ancient woodland

Some **Kent Downs AONB**

Agenda Item 9

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- *Regeneration of Swanley town centre which could, along with Sevenoaks, be a focus for new non-food retail outlets.*
- *Fort Halstead has an existing permission for employment-led, mixed-use redevelopment including 450 new homes. The site is largely brownfield land and may have the potential to accommodate a greater level of employment and/or housing, which would help protect other less-developed areas of Green Belt from potential release.*
- *Employment land – there are a number of existing employment sites which could be redeveloped and expanded to work more efficiently*
- *Mitigating air quality impacts associated with the M25 corridor*

DRAFT

Glossary

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply:

Glossary and Abbreviations	
Affordable rented housing	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register). Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents, but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	The NPPF defines AQMAs as “Areas designated by Local Authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines”. The Environment Act 1995 requires local councils to regularly assess the air quality in their area to see if any of the key pollutants in the National Air Quality Strategy are likely to exceed the targets currently set. In locations where this is likely to happen and where the public are exposed to pollution, the Council is required to designate an “Air Quality Management Area”.
Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)	The Allocations and Development Management Plan was adopted in 2015. It is a document that sets out the planning policies which manages development across the District, as well as setting out site allocations for housing, employment and mixed-use developments. This document sits alongside the Core Strategy and covers the plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace this document and the Core Strategy.
Ancient Woodland	An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONB represent the nation’s finest landscapes. AONB are designated by Natural England.
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)	Regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) habitats areas of greatest potential for restoration and creation. They are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are designated by the South East England Biodiversity Forum.
Brownfield (locally defined)	For the purposes of the identification of potential land in this consultation, ‘brownfield’ has been defined in the widest sense i.e. land

Agenda Item 9

	that has been previously developed (is no longer a green field), without considering the exclusions outlined in the NPPF. Once the Local Plan is further developed, consideration will be given as to whether the exclusions set out in the NPPF are relevant for the development of the strategy.
Brownfield land	See “Previously developed land”
Building for Life	Building for Life 12 (BfL 12) is the industry standard for the design of new housing developments and has been produced by the Design Council. Developments are assessed against 12 questions using a traffic light system. A well designed scheme should perform well against all 12 of the new questions – the top score being 12 Greens.
Climate Change	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20 th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climate_change
Climate change adaption	Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory, autonomous and planned adaption.
Climate change mitigation	Involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) or enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/
Combined Heat and Power	Combined heat and power (CHP) is the use of a heat engine or power station to generate electricity and useful heat at the same time.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in the area. A local authority is allowed to set its own rates (£. per m ²) on particular qualifying developments. Contributions raised on qualifying developments are then used for infrastructure delivery within the local authority area.
Comparison retail	Retail goods that are typically non-food (e.g. clothing, electrical goods), and bought less frequently.
Conservation Areas	Areas of special architectural or historical interest, where development should preserve and enhance their special character and qualities. These areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority under Section 69

	of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which gives them statutory recognition and protection.
Convenience retail	Everyday essential shopping goods, which typically relate to food.
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a long term, strategic document which forms part of the District's spatial strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011 and covers the current plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan.
Design Panel	A panel of independent experts and practitioners who review the design of schemes put forward to the panel. They provide advice and comments in regard to the design of the scheme and suggest improvements where necessary.
Design South East	Design South East is a regional trust which provides impartial design advice and assistance to support Local Authorities, developers and communities. It is an non profit and independent organisation.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	The documents that a local planning authority must prepare (to make up its Local Plan) and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. It should contain the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spatial strategy for the District; • Site specific allocations of land and development management policies; and • Policies map (with insets, where necessary)
District Heating	a heating system in which centrally generated heat is distributed via ducts and pipes to multiple buildings or locations.
Economic Development	Development for employment use, including those within the B Use Classes as well as other employment generating uses (but excluding housing development).
Economic Needs Study (ENS)	A study which is an important component of the evidence base for the development of the new Local Plan by providing an objective assessment of the need for employment land over the emerging plan period to 2033/35. This reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and builds upon previous evidence base studies including the 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
Exceptional circumstances (local)	The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but as part of the new Local Plan it is suggested that this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of

Agenda Item 9

	brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.
Fitness Station	Individual apparatus for fitness usually found in a fitness gym but can also include outdoor resistance apparatus.
Flood Zone	Flood zones refer to the probability of river and sea flooding over areas of land. There are varying levels of flood risk which are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance.
Fluvial flooding	Flooding resulting from water levels exceeding the bank level of a main river.
Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)	<u>Economic analysis is best undertaken at the spatial level at which the relevant economic market operates – or the ‘functional economic market area’</u>
Green Belt	A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped.
Green Corridor	<u>A green corridor is a route by which wildlife can move from one habitat to another such as river banks, railways embankments and roadside verges. They can also include human recreational connections such as public rights of way and cycle routes.</u>
Green Infrastructure	Green infrastructure goes beyond traditional site-based landscaping. It requires an assessment of both natural/semi-natural features and biodiversity within the site, and furthers its links with the natural environment of its surroundings and, where appropriate, the wider character of the area. The provision of Green Infrastructure can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating “living roofs”; • Connecting with existing PROW network; • Using plants and trees which extend existing native habitats around site boundaries; and • The provision of formal and informal recreational spaces (including the provision for children and young people where appropriate).
Green Lung	An area of open space within a settlement which contributes to a healthy environment.
Gypsies and Travellers	Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependents’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

<p>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)</p>	<p>Evidence base document to support the Local Plan outlining the District's objectively assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation.</p>
<p>Habitat Regulation Assessment</p>	<p>Is a recognised step by step process which helps determine likely significant effect of development on a habitat and where appropriate they can be used to assess the adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site. An assessment will examine alternative solutions and provide justification for imperative reasons of over riding public interest for the development (IROPI).</p>
<p>Heritage asset</p>	<p>Heritage Asset – A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage Asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local Listing)</p> <p>Designated Heritage Asset – A World heritage Site, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.</p>
<p>Historic Parks and Gardens</p>	<p>A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.</p>
<p><u>Housing Market Area (HMA)</u></p>	<p><u>Planning for housing takes place on a scale that is larger than most local authorities because market dynamics and population changes do not respect administrative boundaries. They cut across them, operating at different scales. The West Kent Housing Market Area (HMA) includes Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells</u></p>
<p>Housing White Paper</p>	<p>At the time of this document's publication (August 2017), the Housing White Paper was a consultation paper on the Government's proposed housing and planning reforms. This was consulted upon between March and May 2017. Whilst it is not Government policy at the moment, it is important that we recognise its significance and potential challenges that the White Paper poses whilst producing a new Local Plan.</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>Basic services necessary for development to take place (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewerage, education and health facilities).</p>
<p>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)</p>	<p>A document which shows the amount of infrastructure required to facilitate development</p>
<p>Intermediate</p>	<p>Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible</p>

Agenda Item 9

<p>housing</p>	<p>households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants must be registered under Help to Buy and can have a household income of up to £80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District. Intermediate housing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared equity housing – purchasers typically buy a 75-80% share of the property with no rent payable to the housing association on the remainder. • Shared ownership housing – purchasers buy a 25-75% share of the property and pay a subsidised rent to the housing association on the remainder. • Intermediate rented housing – generally let on Assured Shorthold tenancies, the rent plus service charge is no more than 80% of the market rent.
<p>Kent Nature Partnership</p>	<p>The Kent Nature Partnership was awarded Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status by the government in July 2012 to drive positive change in the local natural environment. The Partnership takes a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved in managing the natural environment as a system benefiting biodiversity, people and the local economy.</p>
<p>Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves</p>	<p>Nature reserves managed by Kent Wildlife Trust <u>(a nationally recognised registered charity)</u>.</p>
<p>Lead Local Flood Authority</p>	<p>Unitary authorities or County Councils that are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas and for maintaining a register of flood risk assets. They also have lead responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.</p>
<p>Listed Building</p>	<p>A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings of permanent structures (e.g. wells with its curtilage). Designations are made by Historic England.</p>
<p>Living roofs and walls</p>	<p>Roofs and walls that are partial or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane. It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation system.</p>
<p>Local List</p>	<p>A range of buildings and structures that together make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the District. The Local List <u>(which currently covers Sevenoaks Town only)</u> does not provide any additional planning controls but buildings on the list have the status of heritage assets and their conservation is an objective of the</p>

	NPPF. The inclusion of a building or structure on the list will be a material consideration that we will take into account when considering planning applications.
Local Nature Reserves	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.
Local Plan	The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Local Wildlife Site	Local wildlife sites, previously known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), are sites which are important to nature conservation interests in a local context. They are designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The document that sets out national planning policies from Government for England and how they are to be applied during the planning process. The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. It must also be used as a material consideration when determining planning applications. Further guidance on particular topics is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and is updated regularly to reflect the application of national planning policies (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance).
Neighbourhood Plans	A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
Non-designated heritage assets	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified by the Local Planning Authority as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It can include assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local listing) but does not include any asset formally designated under the relevant legislation i.e. Conservation area, Listed Building or scheduled ancient monument.
Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)	An unconstrained figure based on the latest Government population and household projections, but is not considered as the District's housing target. This evidence is used against other evidence bases gathered to determine the District's housing target.
Pitch for Gypsy	There is no set definition of what should be contained within a pitch but

Agenda Item 9

and Traveller	it is generally accepted that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating a large trailer and touring caravan, an amenity building, parking space and a small garden area.
Playing Pitch Strategy	A document outlining the needs and supply of playing pitches within a local authority area. The document is prepared in partnership with Sport National Governing Bodies and endorsed by Sport England.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
Public Right of Way	An adopted right of way available for public use defined on the Definitive Map.
Registered Parks and Gardens	A park or garden of special historic interest. They are graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.
Retail Study	An up-to-date evidence base on the existing and future roles and performance of the District's Town, and Service Centres and assess future demand for retail floorspace in the District over the period to 2035. The study has full regard to the expected levels of growth in Sevenoaks and neighbouring authorities, as well as recent and emerging changes in consumer behaviour.
River Basin Management Plan (RBMPs)	These Management Plans set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to protect and improve the quality of our water environment. These plans were updated in 2015 and set out how the minimum of 680 (14%) of waters will improve over the next 6 years from around £3 billion investment.
Roadside Nature Reserves	Areas adjacent to road which have been identified, protected and managed by the Kent and Medway Road Verge Project. These areas provide vital wildlife corridors for many species and include a number of scarce and threatened habitats.
Scheduled Ancient Monument	Section 61(12) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 defines an ancient monument as "any scheduled monument" and "any other monument which in the opinion of the Secretary of State is of the public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching to it".
Secured by Design	Secured by Design (SBD) is a police initiative to guide and encourage those engaged within the specification, design and building of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of their schemes.
Site of Special	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as

<p>Scientific Interest (SSSI)</p>	<p>amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reasons of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (e.g. plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structures).</p>
<p>Social rented housing</p>	<p>Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register). Rents are set through the national rent regime but are generally around 50-60% of market rents.</p>
<p>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)</p>	<p>This assessment provides an overview of the methodology, assumptions, uncertainties, tasks undertaken and the links to the wider sustainability appraisal process. It provides policy recommendations and guidance for the application of the Sequential Test, the preparation of flood risk assessments and the use of sustainable drainage systems, within the Council's administrative boundary.</p>
<p>Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)</p>	<p>A Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify sites and broad locations with potential for development; • assess their development potential; and • assess their suitability for development, and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability). <p>This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites or broad locations are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use. The assessment is an important evidence base to inform plan making. However it does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. This is because not all sites considered in the assessment will be suitable for development (e.g. because of policy constraints or if they are unviable). It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet need, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those needs.</p>
<p>Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</p>	<p>A Strategic Housing Market Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing. • Determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area, for example, as between the urban and rural areas. • Consider the future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirements of specific groups such as homeless households, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, first time buyers, disabled groups, older people, Gypsies and Travellers,

Agenda Item 9

	and occupational groups such as key workers, student and operational defence personnel.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	SPDs provide further guidance regarding how Local Plan policies should be implemented.
Surface water flooding	Flooding as a result of surface water runoff because of high intensity rainfall when water is ponding or flowing over the ground surface before it enters the underground drainage network or watercourse, or cannot enter it because the network is full to capacity, thus causing what is known as pluvial flooding.
Sustainability Appraisal	Assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the policies and proposals contained with the new Local Plan including how the plan meets the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
Sustainable development	<p>There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages; • Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature; • Replacing poor design with better design; • Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	An alternative approach from the traditional ways to manage runoff from buildings and hardstanding. They can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through stormwater systems.
TBC	To be confirmed
Transport hub	A place where passengers and cargo are exchanged between vehicles or between transport modes. Public transport hubs include train and bus stations and airports.
<u>Village Design Statements (VDS)</u>	<u>Documents prepared by local people to guide new development in their villages. They are used when assessing planning applications for development and other changes within these villages.</u>
West Kent Leader Programme	A source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for rural

	West Kent.
--	------------

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank