

~~27 February 2018~~ POSTPONED TO 12 MARCH 2018
at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 19.02.18



Housing & Health Advisory Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Horwood; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Parkin
Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Dr. Canet, Dyball, Eyre, Gaywood, Lowe, Parson, Pearsall, Scott
and Miss. Stack

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 Committee held on 10 October 2017, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Actions from Previous Meetings (if any)		
4. Update from Portfolio Holder	(Pages 7 - 10)	
5. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. Be Inspired Be Active Project Report and Sustainability	(Pages 11 - 22)	Yulia La-Kruz Tel: 01732 227149
7. West Kent Housing Association Presentation on Social Housing Provisions Presentation by Deborah White - West Kent Housing Association	(Pages 23 - 24)	Lesley Bowles Tel: 01732 227335, Hayley Brooks Tel: 01732 227272

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|--|
| 8. | Draft Housing Allocations Policy for Consultation | (Pages 25 - 98) | Lesley Bowles,
Tel: 01732 227335,
Hayley Brooks
Tel: 01732 227272 |
| 9. | Housing Strategy Progress Report (Number 1) | (Pages 99 - 126) | Gavin Missons
Tel: 01732 227332 |
| 10. | To note minutes of the Health Liaison Board
To note the minutes of the meeting of the Health Liaison Board held on 7 February 2018. | To Follow | |
| 11. | Work Plan | (Pages 127 - 128) | |

INFORMATION ITEM CIRCULATED ON SEPARATE AGENDA

12. BRE Stock Modelling

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.

HOUSING & HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Horwood (Chairman)

Cllr. Parkin (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Dr. Canet, Dyball, Eyre, Lowe, Parson, Pearsall, Scott and Miss. Stack

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Gaywood.

15. Election of Vice Chairman for 2017/18

Resolved: That Cllr. Parkin be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18.

16. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 20 June 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. Declarations of Interest

For reasons of transparency, Cllr. Parkin declared an interest in agenda item 9 (Minute 23) in that her husband was applying for a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) which was a mandatory grant and not affected by the proposed policy.

18. Actions from Previous Meetings

The Chairman advised that he would circulate an email he had received from Building Control concerning the cladding used at Tubbs Hill, Sevenoaks and Horizon House, Swanley.

19. Update from Portfolio Holder

Members' noted the Portfolio Holder's update.

20. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

21. Kent & Medway (Sustainability and Transformation Plan)

The Chairman welcomed Ian Ayres, the Accountable Officer for West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group. Kent and Medway STP. He advised that it had been called the Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) but was now to be known as Sustainability and Transformation Partnership. He stated that this was a key shift. The NHS as it was operating was not sustainable without transformation, and partnerships would be key to delivery.

He advised that the three main problems to tackle were: inequalities within the population; health care quality, which was good but had had plateaued; and financial resources. Beneath this was a whole other set of issues such as not enough resources spent keeping people well which could only be done through partnerships and investment. There also needed to be more work on community care and support.

Centralisation of services was proven to be more efficient and there needed to be more.

In West Kent within the next 12 months there would be more work on integrating community development and the shared responsibility to keep people healthy; more on health estate management - what services were needed what services were in the area and whether resources/buildings be pooled/shared; the question of how to help individuals - signposting etc.; efficiencies in the running of the 7 hospital sites. By Spring next year there would be consultation on where to centralise the stroke service.

In response to a question concerning potential redevelopment of the Sevenoaks Hospital site he replied that what services should be provided from their sites, potentially additional or shared services, would be something to be looked at but they were not quite there yet. At the moment it was a case of looking at existing services and estates. Any redevelopment would require access to capital, and to meet any criteria they would have to prove all other options had been fully investigated first.

In response to question on Primary Care, he explained that in aggregate there was capacity at GP surgeries, however the space was not necessarily in the places needed. Buildings often hindered capacity too. Work was ongoing looking at population growth, demand and what needed to be done to any existing buildings to support.

In response to a Member's question, with regard to any proposed retirement village and whether a satellite surgery would be helpful, it was hard to answer, it could be an inefficient use of a building for example but would depend on circumstances. Early engagement in any discussions would help.

A Member pointed out that for older rural communities, centralisation caused a number of issues and the user rather than just the financial expediency, needed to

be put first. She also added that it was difficult to measure outcomes of public health preventive actions.

Members suggested the potential use of libraries, which Mr. Ayres thought was an interesting idea that had not come forward before.

A Member asked whether there was anything additional that the District Council could do to be of help and Mr Ayres responded that as District Council colleagues were ahead of CCG and other health colleagues in working in partnership.

In response to questions he also advised that more part time GPs was a national trend and there was a workforce shortage. Uncertainties with BREXIT meant that at the moment they were struggling to keep the same level of recruitment from Europe.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Ayres on behalf of the Committee and hoped to see him again at future meetings.

22. Budget 2018/19: Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report which set out updates to the 2018/19 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presented proposals that had been identified and needed to be considered, together with further suggestions made by the Advisory Committees, before finalising the budget for 2018/19.

Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it was proposed that the Council continued to set a revenue budget which assumed no funding from Government through the Revenue Support Grant or New Homes Bonus. This would result in the Council continuing to be financially self-sufficient as set out in its Corporate Plan.

To achieve this aim and to ensure a balanced budget position over the next 10-year period, whilst also increasing the Council's ability to be sustainable beyond that time, a savings requirement of £100,000 per annum was included. Other pressures may come out later in the budget process, such as when the Government publishes its Autumn Budget on 22 November or when the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December. There may therefore be a requirement for further savings. Officers would continue to monitor these pressures and report the latest position to Cabinet in December.

No new growth and savings items had been proposed in the report for services applicable to this Advisory Committee. Members were given the opportunity to discuss and put forward any growth and savings suggestions. Members discussed potentially reducing the cost of the Leisure contract.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Agenda Item 1

Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 10 October 2017

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

Resolved: That Cabinet be advised that

- a) no growth and savings proposals had been identified in Appendix D to the report; and
- b) the suggestion of a reduction in the cost of the leisure contract be put forward to Cabinet.

23. Housing Assistance Policy

The Housing Standards Team Leader presented the report which sought approval from Council of the Housing Assistance Policy. The Policy set out the way in which the funding provided by the Better Care Fund for mandatory disabled facilities grant and discretionary assistance for improved collaboration with Health and Social care services was administered; along with the Councils own discretionary assistance.

He advised that further to writing the report it had become apparent that the repair or buying of furniture would also be useful to add to the Hospital Discharge Grant and this would include within Registered Social Landlord properties.

In response to questions he advised that going forward the majority of grant applications would go through an accelerated process and this meant applicants were not being means tested.

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 to recommend to Council, to approve, subject to amendments to the Hospital Discharge Grant (HDG) to include 'the repair or buying of furniture' which would include within Registered Social Landlord properties, the proposed Housing Assistance Policy in order to ensure increased funding provided via the Better Care Fund is delivered to those who have not previously been able to obtain financial assistance; and to update the criteria for the Councils own discretionary financial assistance.

24. B.R.E Stock Modelling

The Housing Standards Team Leader presented the report. The Building Research Establishment (B.R.E) had undertaken a stock model assessment to identify the condition of the private housing stock within the District. Unfortunately it had not been possible to analyse the data yet so more comprehensive a report would be brought back to the next meeting.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

25. West Kent Homelessness Strategy

The Housing & Health Manager presented the report. A new West Kent Homelessness Strategy had been developed by the three West Kent Councils and the report sought adoption, by Council, of the Strategy.

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 to recommend to Council, adoption of the West Kent Homelessness Strategy.

26. Work Plan

The work plan was noted and the following amendments made:

28 November 2017

- B.R.E Stock modelling report
- Update on implementation of the Sevenoaks District Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme to be removed and updated as part of the Portfolio Holder's update
- Sports development update

27 February 2018

- Update on temporary accommodation and emergency planning provision
- Performance indicators on Housing Strategy
- West Kent Housing Association (WKHA) presentation on social housing provisions and the Emerald scheme
- SDC Health activity update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.37 PM

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

Housing & Health Advisory Committee

27 February 2018

Portfolio Holders Report

Housing

The Housing strategy was officially launched on 3 November and is already making a difference to residents. This committee will be responsible for measuring outcomes starting with the first report on the strategy's progress this evening.

Progress is being made on establishing whether an affordable housing company is viable for this council to set up and operate. If it is, the company will be able to spend the vast majority of the council's affordable housing contributions on building new affordable homes in the district in line with the housing strategy.

The Department of Communities and Local Government granted Sevenoaks District Council an extra £100,000 for DFGs. As our staff are working at capacity to complete our existing funding for DFGs, we will be working in partnership with the voluntary sector to make the home adaptations. This is excellent news given Sevenoaks has the highest number of hip fractures in the county. The more homes we can adapt the more falls we can prevent enabling older and vulnerable people to live independent and fulfilled lives for as long as possible.

We have developed a new grants scheme for the Better Care/DFG funding, to support voluntary sector organisations who are delivering priorities under Better Care Funding (keeping people out of hospital, reducing falls etc.) so we can complete more home adaptations even faster.

To take part in National Empty Homes Week (16th to 22nd October) SDC held an empty homes drop in surgery in the Conference Room from 1.30 until 4pm with our Empty Homes Officer, Lisa Webb and Andrew Lavender from the 'No Use Empty' scheme giving advice and guidance to people. The event was publicised to all long term property owners and on social media.

A third house in Sevenoaks Town has been approved under the SPVRS scheme. The owners are Christians and wanted to help with the humanitarian crisis. They were not prepared to offer the home to residents on our register.

The council is currently updating our allocations policy. We have currently consulted with many of our stakeholders including the voluntary sector and housing associations as well as members. Members will also have the opportunity to comment on the draft allocations policy.

The housing team are working on implementing the new Homelessness Reduction Act duties and processes (from 3 April 2018 we have 13 extra duties with more intensive housing support for everyone who approaches the Council who is at risk of homelessness), work includes staff training, new upgraded IT system and revising the operational processes.

Agenda Item 4

Health & Leisure

The Council now employs five *One You* advisors that are paid for by public health to work with GPs to identify people most likely to fall to arrange home adaptations, to identify people who are lonely and find solutions, people who are living in inadequate accommodation that is affecting their health - plus a whole range of other health issues where the cause is not medical even if the symptoms appear to be. Two work for SDC, two work for Dartford Borough Council and one works as a pilot in Edenbridge as a partnership between Age UK with DFG funding called One You – Your Home Project.

The *One You* officers are managed by SDC's Healthy Living Project Officer: Anton Tavernier-Gustav and they will link up with Super-HERO officers for more complex cases that involve debt and mental ill health issues.

Although this service is being rolled out across Kent it is based on the SDC's Health Integration deal proposals that recommended HERO officers working from GP surgeries to fix the causes of patients' problems. The Sevenoaks service is more enhanced than the rest of Kent as it is linked to Super-HERO and the DFG service. The service is reducing demand on GPs (each appointment costs £40) and hospital admissions as well as speeding up discharge times. This is a great example of housing and health working together to improve the lives of our residents.

We now have three new HERO outreach surgeries in Swanley: at The Link and PLUS, and a *One You* Advisor working with HERO at Swanley CAB to link Housing and Health even more closely together. The Council has signed new HERO contracts with Dartford Borough Council and West Kent Housing Association for another year. HERO are planning two armed forces presentations on services at local events.

The council has set up five new Satellite clubs with schools using KCC funding. We also have a new archery course starting in Edenbridge on 19 January which is now fully booked. We are working with the Orchard Academy to support them with a self-harm and positive image project.

I attended the DCN Conference on 8th and 9th February and spoke in the main plenary session about building healthy towns and villages, such as what we are doing in Sevenoaks.

I met with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government: The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP when he visited Sevenoaks on 5 February to talk about the council's achievements in housing and health.

The Council continues to encourage more towns and villages to become dementia-friendly helping to enable independent living for as long as possible. Our dementia-friendly work helps to complement the work of Super-HERO and our One You advisors meeting our ageing well health objective.

We are supporting Eynsford and West Kingsdown to become dementia friendly and are looking to start a new dementia film night at the Stag. We already have people signed up for the Dementia run in May which will be happening in Knole Park again. This is all delivered in partnership with the Dementia Forums.

The Council is building on its sports development programmes across the district, especially for people who live further away from our three leisure centres. As well as our usual Health Walks and *Up and Running*, we now also have *Every Step Counts* in Otford and West Kingsdown for people who can only walk for up to 20 minutes at a time, From *Couch to 5k* across the district for people who are more fit.

It is a tribute to this committee and the Health Liaison Board that the promotion of wellbeing is playing such an integral part in the council's new corporate plan. The World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities and Towns network promotes local government using all its functions to promote wellbeing and this is exactly what Sevenoaks is doing.

This page is intentionally left blank

BE INSPIRED, BE ACTIVE PROJECT REPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Committee - Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 28 November 2017

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status For Information

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: The Council was awarded funding from Sport England to deliver sports tasters and courses in four wards. The project outcomes, sustainability and subsequent work are set out.

This report supports the Key Aim of reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing for all.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Yulia La-Kruz, Ext. 7149

Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee: That the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation: The outcomes of the project are set out with details about the sustainability of the activities supported.

Introduction and Background

- 1 As Members may recall, the Council was awarded £ 60,000 from Sport England's Community Support Activation Fund for the Be Inspired, Be Active project. The funding bid was part of the Council's legacy following the Paralympic Road Cycling held at Brand's Hatch in 2012.
- 2 The project's aim was to deliver sports tasters and courses in wards in the north east corner of the District that are remote from the Council's existing leisure facilities.
- 3 The wards targeted by the project were
Ash & New Ash Green;
Farningham, Horton Kirby & South Darenth;
Fawkham & West Kingsdown;
Hartley & Hodsoll Street.

We chose those wards because they were remote from existing leisure provision in the District, based in Swanley and Sevenoaks.

Agenda Item 6

- 4 The project ran for two years from January 2014 to January 2016.

Project Outcomes & Successes

- 5 A total of 2221 people took part in the project, of which over 90% were from the target wards (Farningham, Horton Kirby & South Darenth, Ash & New Ash Green, Fawkham & West Kingsdown, Hartley & Hodsoll Street).
- 6 648 sports sessions on 81 six to ten week courses were delivered in nine different sports, including archery, football, netball, fitness, yoga, dance and movement.
- 7 The project worked with GP surgeries in Farningham, New Ash Green and West Kingsdown to identify residents with complex long-term health conditions. The project delivered chair yoga courses for these residents.
- 8 The project delivered archery courses for children with disabilities from Milestone School in New Ash Green.
- 9 The project delivered an ice skating rink in New Ash Green as part of a Christmas family event. Over 450 people took part in ice skating on the day.
- 10 Although the project ran for two years, some of the activities delivered have carried on with funding from elsewhere.

Sports Sustainability

- 11 The courses are intended to reach people who would not usually participate in regular sport activities. This project builds upon the London 2012 legacy work which aims to get more people involved in community and accessible sports. The links to the legacy has been recognised by Sport England and has contributed to other successful funding bids.
- 12 We always try to ensure that the new activities continue after the funding ends by working with existing community clubs nearby.
- 13 Boogie Buggy Fit sessions for mothers with small children in prams continued for over six months in West Kingsdown, with participants paying a small fee to retain use of the venue for meetings.
- 14 Chair yoga courses are continuing to date in Farningham and West Kingsdown. An additional class has been set up in Swanley Village as a result of the success of sessions in Farningham and West Kingsdown.
- 15 In August 2015 officers applied for additional Sportivate funding from Kent Sport and the Council was awarded £2,100 to deliver Inclusive Archery and £1,200 for Mountain biking to encourage young people to try these sports and subsequently link them with local sport clubs. Three 6 week courses of Inclusive Archery was delivered at Wilderness leisure centre and Knole academy, and two 6-week Mountain biking courses took place at Himalayan Gardens, Riverhill.

- 16 In December 2016 an additional Sportivate funding of £1,432 was awarded to run pilot introductory trampolining courses in Edenbridge. Sessions ran between March 2017 - April 2017.
- 17 Following on from Sportivate funding and links made with local archery clubs, we expanded our archery courses for young people and adults to Edenbridge leisure centre and delivered two 6 week courses between October 2016 and March 2017. As a result, five participants have gone on to join North down Archery club following the courses.
- 18 In September 2016, an additional £2,600 was awarded from Kent Sport's satellite clubs programme to develop satellite clubs in table tennis and boxing in Swanley. The satellite clubs project has been completed on targets set by funders; two new clubs have been set up at Orchard Academy: table tennis with Sutton at Hone table tennis club and boxing with Olympia Boxing club.
- 19 Key Implications

Financial

The project was funded with Sport England Community Sport Activation funding.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications relating to this report.

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.

Conclusions

The Council was awarded £60,000 over two years to deliver sports tasters and courses in wards in the north east of the District. Over 2,000 people took part in 648 sports sessions on 81 course. Additional funding has been awarded from other external funders during the course of the work, as set out in this report.

Some of sport activities have continued to run past the length of the project and many participants have gone on to join clubs and participate in sport regularly. Insight work and successful partnership work allowed officers receive external funding to run an additional sport projects.

Appendices

Appendix A - Project summary

Background Papers

Project summary document above

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Boogie Buggy Fit (adults)	Outdoor class mainly designed for mums with young babies, keen to get into shape. Parents/carers with very young children often feel isolated and lonely and wish to exercise with their children. The class is designed to provide a peer support system for new mums as well.	10 week X5 courses and 8 week X1 course	66 participants/ 212 attendances	Sessions were structured where an outdoor hourly cardio class was followed by an informal meeting at the Gamecock meadow café. Exercise classes were delivered by a qualified antenatal and postnatal fitness instructor with extensive knowledge in post-natal health, which helped participants get back to exercising regularly and confidently following birth of a child and/or a long break. Feedback indicates that participants valued the social aspects of the class as well as the fitness component. As a correctly structured course was not deemed to be sustainable once external funding ceased, a new model for the class was developed. Local volunteer participants ensured that the group continued to meet on a weekly basis for a power walk and meeting. Case studies based on participants were provided for 'In Shape' magazine. A 6 month follow-on review showed that group carried on the meetings and the participants were attending the West Kingsdown group as well as other local peer support groups in Longfield and Gravesend.	"General health improved and we made a new friends" "Thoroughly enjoyable class and my son is so happy to meet other babies" "Sheree has been a wonderful teacher and a friend, and very helpful looking after babies when needed!" "Instructor is very positive and helpful"
Archery (adults)	Target Archery is an outdoor beginners class intended for adults to learn a new sport, under the guidance of a qualified archery instructor. The classes ran on weekday evenings to encourage participation by commuters/workers	6 week X3 courses	90 participants/ 349 attendances	The project offered archery to residents at community events as taster sessions and proved very successful. Popularity of the sessions grew rapidly within the community. Archery has tremendous benefits in health and fitness. We have worked in partnership with Horton Kirby scouts group in order to develop a 6-week beginner course for all abilities/levels covering the fundamental aspects of safely shooting and the maintainance of archery equipment. We have facilitated training for additional leaders in " Arrows Young Leader Award" in order to build a capacity for the group to deliver more Archery sessions to the wider community. As a result of our involvement, the number of actual archery sessions has increased. They were sustainably running on weekends for the two seasons following completion of the Be Inspired Be Active project. We applied for Sportivate funding from Kent Sport to deliver Inclusive Archery to encourage young people (14-25) across the district to participate in archery.	"A relaxing and friendly atmosphere and great fun to start a new sport" "Great tutor, really patient and injects humour. Very interactive and involves everyone"
Table tennis (adults)	Table tennis introductory course for 16 years old and over was set up on weekdays evenings with one aim of linking them with local clubs .	6 week X4 courses	27 participants / 126 attendances	Courses were set up at Horton Kirby Scouts hall as there was not a suitable alternative venue for the sessions with the required signficant storage space for the table tennis equipment. The venue was quite remote and sessions had to run later in the evening to fit with existing schedule of the hall. This impacted on recruitment process. We had a core group of participants who attended the courses, building up skills and confidence in table tennis. Some participants had very much improved their skills to the level they were ready to join the club. Our work is ongoing with Falcons Table Tennis Club, Kemnal Table Tennis Club to link participants with those clubs.	"Very well put together course, very practical and informative" "Friendly and social too."

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Back to netball (adults) Page 16	After consultation with West Kingsdown Parish Council it have been decided to set up evening "Back to netball" classes to provide women of all ages with a gentle re-introduction to the sport.	10week x5 courses	142 participants/ 539 attendances	<p>The course was set up in partnership with the South East region Back to netball scheme. Our biggest challenge for the project was to find a suitable venue within our wards to run it all year round. During the summer sessions it ran on the grounds of West Kingsdown Primary school and during the winter season we hired Longfield academy as a venue, which put additional costs on the project. Sessions were run by passionate and experienced Level 3 coach with sessions covering the basics of the game including passing, footwork and shooting. All sessions finished with a friendly game to put skills into practice. The West Kingsdown Back to Netball team was taught over two seasons and were able to play a friendly match with affiliated West Kent College "Back to Netball" team.</p> <p>To ensure sustainability the participants were charged £3.00 per session on a pay as you go basis to cover cost of the coach. Venue costs were covered through external BIBA funding. Due to unavailability of suitable coaches and expensive venue cost we were not able to sustain the project past 3 months but many of the participants have subsequently joined other B2N groups in Gravesend and Tonbridge and Malling as a result.</p>	<p>"I enjoy meeting new people and being part of the team. A good form of keep fit."</p> <p>"Love it all. A good group of girls."</p> <p>"Love playing against people of varying abilities"</p> <p>"it's a good way back into a sport that I haven't done for a long time. I wouldn't have tried it if it was not local or I'd had to commit to a competitive team."</p>

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
<p>Chair yoga (adults)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>This class was set after consultation with local residents at one of our community events. This is an adapted gentle form yoga class that is practiced in a chair or using a chair for support. It is specifically developed to assist those with mobility issues and older people to participate in yoga class.</p>	<p>10 week x6 courses and 6 week x19 courses</p>	<p>306 participants/ 1397 attendances</p>	<p>This project was set up following feedback from residents about the lack of local classes for elder people, many of whom have health conditions and can not participate in traditional sports. After running a series of successful taster sessions, six-week introductory, free courses were set up from January 2015, in four different locations (Farningham, West Kingsdown, Hartley and New Ash Green). Classes were kept small (maximum 10), were 60 mins in duration and were delivered by a qualified practitioner. The programme comprised of gentle stretching movements, relaxation, breathing techniques, strengthening and balance work. From March 2015, participants began to pay for instructor expenses and BIBA project covered venue costs and necessary equipment. As a result we expanded the range of classes and delivered 19 courses. One outcome of the project was that a number of participants after 12 - 18 weeks attending chair yoga classes felt that their physical condition had improved and then joined newly formed beginners Hatha Yoga class.</p> <p>A 12 month review highlighted that classes were still running in three locations: Farningham, West Kingsdown and Hartley. The number of new participants reported for March 2016 - December 2016 was 183, and 1000 attendances for those classes. An added success of the project was the creation of a new class; 'Gentle years chair yoga' which was set-up in Swanley in June 2017.</p>	<p>I have had two "new knees" and at the time couldn't attend a Keep Fit class and the chair yoga was an excellent start back into exercise for me.</p> <p>"I have COPD and 8 lower back damaged disks - breathing has helped this so much"</p> <p>"Our tutor was very helpful and showed individual help to each of one of us"</p> <p>"I have paralysed arm, which affects balance these classes have improved my physical condition. I have much more flexibility of movement too, particularly neck movements"</p> <p>"I have been attending the classes for 2years and find them a great help in moving and relaxing , I am 83years old and suffer with Parkinson's so am unable to do all the other things"</p>
<p>Dance (adults)</p>	<p>Adult dance classes were set up in reponse of parents whose children took part in dance sessions in West Kingsdown and Horton Kirby. Informal weekday evening classes were set up for adults in Ballroom and Latin dances and a course in street dance.</p>	<p>10 weeks X 3 courses</p>	<p>23 participants/ 398 attendances</p>	<p>Following the success of children's street dance classes, a number of parents said that they would like to attend similar classes. A beginners course was set up in West Kingsdown village hall and delivered by the same qualified instructor on weekday evenings to encourage participation by commuters/workers. The class was well attended mainly by local residents. A case study of one of participants featured in Inshape magazine. In an attempt to sustain the class, participants were charged a small fee to cover instructor costs, the venue cost was covered through the project funds. Classes were sustained for next 6 months, however were unable to continue due to the instructor having to leave the project.</p>	<p>Very friendly and I feel relaxed learning new dances and making new friends"</p> <p>" we really enjoyed learning the dances and mixing with other villagers. Please keep going."</p> <p>"Good fun + meeting local people"</p> <p>"Lauren is an excellent tutor especially for us as total beginners"</p>

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Football (adult)	Sessions were organised in partnership with Kingdown Racers football club offering an additional community football session for those over 16 years old to attend during their training night.	10 weeks x2 courses	16 participants / 81 attendances	Kingsdown racers FC were looking to expand their club and offered additional community football sessions for those to over 16 years old. Sessions were led by coaches and volunteers from the club providing training in a friendly atmosphere with the possibility of joining the club. Summer sessions took place at West Kingsdown Gamecock Meadow and at Orchard's Academy in the winter as no suitable venues were available locally. This seasonal change has had a significant and negative impact on numbers attending regularly and the community sessions did not continue. As a result of the project some of participants have joined Kingsdown Racers FC. The club have taken more coaches to increase the capacity and for the first time running a first and reserve side at adult level from August 2017.	"it's a fun and a good balance of participation and tuition".
Ballroom and Latin Dance (children)	Classes were set up in partnership with Horton Kirby primary school as after school community club for KS2 children.	12 week X4 courses	54 participants/ 309 attendances	Ballroom and Latin dance sessions were run as a 12 week after-school club for Y3 - Y6 students. Classes were delivered by a qualified dance instructor. Following each course, participants were offered a chance to enter into a competition against other schools, performing dances that they had learnt during the course. This competition involves 9 different schools competing against each other using the dance routines they have learnt over the 12 weeks. The courses have continued for the duration of the project, however due to unavailability of instructors Horton Kirby school were unable to sustain the club.	"Professional Tuition. A learned a lot." "I love taking part in competitions."

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Football coaching (children)	Classes were set up to assist local football club Kingsdown Racers to develop their young development squad.	10 weeks x6 courses	67 participants/ 287 attendances	As part of the project we set up classes for: 4 -7 years old, 8 - 12 and 13 - 16 years. During the summer months sessions ran on Sunday mornings so they didn't clash with training and matches played by Kingsdown Racers club at Gamecock meadow. Sessions were delivered by qualified level 1 and level 3 coaches, which offered greater support and more experience. During the winter season, a 3G pitch was hired at Wrotham School to continue with classes as there was no suitable venue locally. As the session was run on weekday nights to fit with the existing schedule, this had an impact on attendances, which had effect on the sustainability of the project. When Be Inspired Be Active funding ceased, Kingsdown Racers continued to develop youth division in partnership with West Kingsdown primary school and delivered summer courses to the wider community. As a result, from May 2016, Kingsdown Racers FC have U8's and U10's including development centre at Gamecock Meadow in West Kingsdown.	"It is a good fun and I make a lots of friends."

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Street dance (children)	Following a request from Horton Kirby and West Kingsdown Parish Councils street dance classes for 8 - 16 years old were set up to offer young people to opportunities to express themselves at the same time as to get fit.	10 week X 11 courses	81 participants/ 808 attendances	Street Dance Beginners class was set up to provide an introduction to core street dance skills and fun high-energy choreography for young people. Classes at both locations were delivered by a qualified instructor and participants could attend both classes if they missed one session. The classes included fitness exercise element as well as learning choreographed routines as a group. Groups performed on community events such as the West Kingsdown Summer Fair and Horton Kirby St George day celebrations. In order to sustain the project, participants were charged £2.50 per session on a pay-as-you go basis to cover cost of the instructor, venue costs were covered through external BIBA funding. Classes at West Kingsdown village hall were more popular and regularly attended and have continued for a further 9 months when BIBA project funding had ceased.	<p>"I enjoyed most the exercise part and new routines"</p> <p>"Please keep it going"</p> <p>"it is good fun and also an exercise"</p> <p>" I have enjoyed the games and a catwalk, give a lot of confidence"</p> <p>"Looking forward to see end of the year show" (parent of participant)</p>
Archery (children)	Following request from residents at community event we organised a six week beginner course to introduce participants to target archery.	6 week x 2 courses	28 participants/104 attendances	Course were offered in Horton Kirby for 8 - 16 years old. The aim of the course was to provide participants with learning basic skills and being able to safely shoot arrows down range some 20-30 yds. Participants were given an introduction to this historic sport, taught the importance of safety, and encourage to develop a basic archery skills.	<p>"Great fun and very educational"</p> <p>"A really friendly group I learnt all the basics and more, the leaders are knowledgeable and very soon I was hitting GOLD."</p> <p>"Great fun and some great friendships made:)"</p>

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Sports tasters and short courses	Various taster sessions were offered at local community events, in collaboration with other partners identify the most popular sports to offer longer courses. Sessions were set up for the whole community, but particularly targeted those not taking part in sport, including inactive young people, women	Taster sessions and 2-3 sessions courses	1546 participants	For the duration of the project we have supported 17 community events across our target wards we offered taster sessions in: archery, dance, boccia, multi-skill coaching to pad boxing, rowing machine, Latin dance, ice skating, chair yoga, cycling, exercise bike, football coaching, Boogie Buggy Fit. We have supported Parish Councils with summer fetes, parishes with summer schools for children. We worked with partners from voluntary organisatons: KIARA, NADARA and scouts groups to deliver taster sessions and short courses based on them.	"Very educational"

Name of activity	Purpose	Number of courses /sessions delivered	Number of participants / attendances	Highlights from projects	Quotes from participants
Sportivate (Inclusive Archery, mountain biking, trampolining)	Extensive work with archery project allowed Sevenoaks District Council to apply for Sportivate funding from Kent Sport to deliver sports project to raise the percentage of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week. Funding was awarded to encourage young people across Sevenoaks District to try the new sports.	8 week X3 courses in archery and 6 week X2 course in mountail biking 6 week X 3 courses in trampolining	48 participants/ 261 attendances plus mountail biking numbers	<p>We particularly targeted young people who would not participate in more traditional types of sport, such as football and rugby. The key points about the projects were to make sessions informal, inviting young people to courses which were tailored to their needs. All our courses were accessible to all abilities with emphasis to equip the participants with basic techniques and knowledge to inspire them to progress in the sport further.</p> <p>On inclusive Archery courses we have worked with 3 local Archery clubs (Fox archers, Sevenoaks Archery club and North Down Archery club) to ensure that young people have best possible outcome and able join any club if they wish to do so after the project complete. Hour long sessions were delivered by a qualified archery coach along with 2 - 3 of the club's volunteers, who provided a wealth of experience, dedication to sport as well as supporting young people individually to encourage them to take part in archery more regularly. We had 26 young people, with some having a disability or long term conditions, completed the 6 week project which was slightly lower than KCC target for 30 participants, however our project had much sustainable outcomes at the end as 10 of participants subsequently have come to the club to continue with archery. Even more so they have encouraged their families to take up an Archery as result of the project. A case study of one of participant were featured in InShape magazine.</p> <p>Sportivate trampolining course was set up in partnership with with West Kent Communities SDC have applied for Sportivate funding to run an introductory trampolining courses for young people in Edenbridge . The project was a success and the group is very keen to continue doing trampolining regularly and WK Communities to explore options for alternative external funding to continue the project;</p> <p>Sportivate Mountain Biking was delivered in two courses at Riverhill Himalayan Gardens. A total of 22 participants took part in 12 sessions. It was originally planned to run sessions in September 2016, but these did not recruit, so they were rescheduled into the winter. The other sessions were delivered over the February half-term. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and some of the participants have gone on to join other cycling clubs.</p>	Sportivate Inclusive Archery course gave me the opportunity to try this new sport. All instructors were really friendly and supportive."
Satellite club (table tennis and boxing)	Satellite clubs are run by sports clubs who bring their expertise and enthusiasm to a place where young people already meet. We were successful with Kent Sport funding to set up 2 satellite clubs in Swanley.	20 week/ x2 courses	48 participants/390 attendancies	We have worked in partnership with Sutton at Hone TT club and Olympia Boxing to bring their expertise and enthusiasm for this sport to Orchard Academy to inspire young people to take up a sport. Satalite clubs ran as hourly sessions on a weekly basis and were available to the whole local community in order to engage and recruit even more young people aged 11 - 19 into their sport. Clubs were delivered by qualified coaches from the community clubs with assistance of the school's PE leaders which provided additional support to young people and created a familiar environment on the sessions. As a result of the project school's PE leader had received Coaching qualification Level 1 in both sports to continue support the clubs. Both clubs have been exciding the targets set by funder with some participants regularly attending open training sessions at the community clubs. In July 2017 SDC have been invited to support the KCC satellite clubs programme by provided clubs Activator function within Sevenoaks District assisting partners in the district to submit a new applications and to reapply for the successful projects.	"Satellite clubs funding allowed us provide our pupils with professional table tennis coaching from local club and the equipment wil benefit the school for many years."

WEST KENT HOUSING ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 27 February 2018

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report provides Members with an overview of the West Kent Housing Association's presentation on their work to deliver social housing in Sevenoaks District

This report supports the Key Aim of providing the right support at the right time, reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing for all

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Lowe

Contact Officer(s) Hayley Brooks Ext. 7272

Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee: That the information in the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 West Kent Housing Association is the largest social housing provider in Sevenoaks District. The social housing properties provided by West Kent Housing includes the social housing stock transfer from this Council in 1989.
- 2 West Kent Housing is one of the leading community providers of affordable housing in Kent. They aim to provide great places to live and space for people to grow, providing homes as a foundation for getting on in life and nurture communities.
- 3 West Kent Housing is part of the national Placeshapers initiative, an alliance of 100 housing associations who work together to strengthen communities of the future.

Housing Director Presentation

- 4 Deborah White, Housing Director at West Kent Housing Association will present information to Members on the work and commitment of their organisation in Sevenoaks District.
- 5 The presentation will cover the following topics:

Agenda Item 7

- Providing new homes and investing in the District - summary of recent homes delivered and updates on future house building projects
- Improving the lives of older people - details of their older people's Strategy and work to improve Emerald homes for older people
- Tenancy Agreements - updates on the agreements being delivered from April 2018
- Digital Plan - how West Kent are using digital resources and technology to improve lives
- Community activities - an overview of community work and activities across the Sevenoaks District

6 Members will be updated at the meeting with a presentation on this work.

Key Implications

Financial

7 There are no financial implications for the Council associated to this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

8 There are no legal implications for the Council associated to this report.

Equality Assessment

9 No decision is required as part of this paper and therefore no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

10 For Members to note the work of West Kent Housing Association as presented by their Housing Director.

Appendices None

Background Papers: None

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

DRAFT HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY FOR CONSULTATION

Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 27 February 2018

Report of Chief Officer, Communities & Business

Status For Consideration

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: It is necessary to update the Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy to incorporate changes in legislation and the assessment of need to ensure social housing is allocated to those in priority need. Members are asked to comment on the proposed consultation draft of the Housing Allocations Policy, set out at Appendix B before it is circulated for public consultation.

This report supports the Key Aims of providing the right support at the right time and reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing for all.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Hayley Brooks, Ext. 7272

Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:

Members are asked to comment on the draft Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy before it is circulated for public consultation.

Reason for recommendation: The Council has a legal requirement to produce a Housing Allocations Policy in line with current housing and homelessness legislation. Updates are required to the existing Policy due to legislation and changes in affordability criteria.

Introduction and Background

- 1 All local authorities with responsibility for housing are required by law to publish a Housing Allocations Policy, which sets out how social housing properties will be allocated to those in priority need. The Council must ensure that the District's Housing Allocations Policy complies with all legislative requirements, case law, national and local housing policies.
- 2 This Council's legal duty to produce a Policy that outlines how social housing is allocated in this District complies with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).

Agenda Item 8

- 3 The Localism Act 2011 introduced significant amendments to Part 6 of the Housing Act to enable housing authorities to better manage their housing waiting list by giving them the power to determine their policy for allocating of social housing locally.
- 4 The current Housing Allocations Policy was approved by Cabinet on 3 August 2006, with minor wording amendments in 2014 and 2016 approved by Portfolio Holder Decision.
- 5 This Council's Social Housing Register and waiting list is operated by West Kent Housing under a series of Service Level Agreements. This arrangement has been in place since the social housing stock transfer in 1989. This Council still has the legal responsibility to ensure the Housing Allocations Policy is kept up to date and adhered to when social housing is allocated through the Housing Register.

Updating the Housing Allocations Policy

- 6 The purpose of the Housing Allocations Policy is to set out a clear, fair and transparent procedure for allocations of social housing properties across the District to those with priority need.
- 7 With new legislation coming into effect on 3 April 2018 (Homelessness Reduction Act) and changes to economic and affordability assessments including welfare reform, benefit cap and increased property rental price, it is necessary to update the current Housing Allocations Policy to incorporate these changes.
- 8 Recommended changes to the existing Policy are detailed at Appendix A. These changes are required to update the Policy so it continues to be fully compliant with national legislation and is based on local affordability and housing needs. An overview of these changes includes:
 - Eligibility and Qualification - updates to existing criteria including local connection, income limits, exclusions and exemptions
 - Allocating properties - adding restrictions on the number of reasonable offers refused and frequency of bids made by the applicant
 - Priority needs - Updates to the banding scheme criteria and definitions for those with a housing and priority need. It now incorporates appropriate wording for those owed a prevention or relief duty as part of the new Homelessness Reduction Act.

Next Steps

- 9 Stakeholder workshops have been held for Members, key voluntary sector organisations and housing associations to gather initial views on housing allocations going forward. These views have helped Officers to draft the consultation draft as set out at Appendix B.

- 10 A six-week formal consultation will commence following Housing and Health Advisory Committee on 27 February 2018. This will be based on the consultation draft as set out at Appendix B and will include the summary of changes as set out at Appendix A.
- 11 The consultation will be sent to registered housing providers, neighbouring local authorities and key voluntary sector and support providers, as well as all Members and Town and Parish Councils. It will also be placed on the Council's website and promoted to those on the Housing Register waiting list to enable public consultation.
- 12 During consultation, further work will continue with West Kent Housing to ensure the operational processes within the Policy accurately represents currently procedures operated by West Kent, who manage the Housing Register on behalf of this Council.
- 13 All of the comments and views will be incorporated to create a final draft of the updated Allocations Policy, which will then be brought back to this committee for Members to consider.

Key Implications

Financial

- 14 The Housing Register is operated by West Kent Housing as part of a new Service Level Agreement at the cost to this Council of £88,000 per annum. This Council is part of the Kent Homechoice Partnership and contributes £10,861 per annum to the partnership for the online Choice Based Lettings System (online bidding and application system for social housing properties) provided by Locata for all Kent local authorities and housing providers.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 15 As a local housing authority, this Council has a legal duty to provide and publish a Housing Allocations Policy in order to comply with Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002),
- 16 The new draft Housing Allocations Policy also takes into account Government code of guidance and legislation within the Equalities Act 2010, Localism Act 2011 and the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 17 It is important that the proposed changes are implemented to ensure this Council continues to be compliant with the relevant legislation (as set out in paragraphs 15 and 16 above). By updating the policy, it will ensure that the best use of social housing stock in this District for those in the greatest of need including priority given to vulnerable and disadvantaged households.
- 18 Risk Assessment Statement - The following risks have been assessed with the knowledge and detail available to the Council at the time of writing this report. The risk assessment will be reviewed and reassessed prior to the final Housing Allocations Policy being produced following consultation.

Agenda Item 8

- 19 Risks are scored from 1 (a low impact / likelihood) to 5 (a high impact / likelihood)

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Comments and controls
That the new Policy may comply with Government Housing Allocations guidance and legislation resulting in a possible legal challenge by applicants	1	4	4 Low	The Consultation Draft of the revised Policy takes account of the Government code of guidance and relevant legislations.
That the new Policy is perceived to lack transparency and fairness by applicants.	1	4	4 Low	Public and partner consultation carried out thoroughly prior to the Policy being adopted. Legislative guidance included from the Equalities Act. Those on the Housing Register will also be encouraged to take part.
That the new Policy may change the way in which applications are processed.	2	4	8 High	Clearer operational processes and definitions will make the procedures more efficient. Close working with the managing agent taking place throughout the consultation period and beyond to training and establish the new processes. Clearer definitions and procedures outlined in the revised Allocations Policy to deter fraud.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Comments and controls
That the new Policy may change the way in which priority need is assessed, which may impact on those with lower needs.	2	3	6 High	New Policy provides clearer definitions for banding and priority categories in line with legislation. New removal and qualification rules ensure that only people with priority housing needs are accepted onto the Register, resulting in the waiting list being shorter and vacant properties more available to priority applicants. It also means that only those actively seeking housing remain on the Register.

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 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.

An updated Housing Allocations Policy will result in clearer definitions and transparency for those in the greatest of need including reasonable preference groups and protected characteristics. This will provide greater opportunities for people with an identified housing need to join the Social Housing Register in this District and prioritise those where the need is the greatest. The Equalities Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix C.

Resource (non financial)

Applications for the Sevenoaks District Housing Register will be managed by West Kent Housing's Allocations Team who work closely with this Council's housing Advice service within the Communities and Business Team. Any changes to the policy should be managed within existing resources and the situation will be monitored going forward.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

The updated Policy emphasises and provides clearer definition relating to those who are in the greatest need and require social housing. This Policy highlights 'reasonable preference' groups as identified in Section 166A(3) Part 6 of the

Agenda Item 8

Housing Act 1996 (as amended). This includes people who may be in priority need of housing due to safeguarding related issues such as: people occupying unsanitary, overcrowded or unsatisfactory living conditions; those with welfare and medical issues relating to a disability; people suffering hardship; and urgent re-housing due to violence. The amended Branding criteria ensures that priority is given to these groups.

The Housing Advice Team works closely with West Kent Housing and other registered housing providers to ensure that anyone who enquires about social housing or homelessness is referred through this Council's Safeguarding Policy when a safeguarding issue is raised with them. All staff receive safeguarding training regularly to keep their knowledge up to date and work closely with the Safeguarding leads at this Council and KCC.

Conclusions

The Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy has been updated to incorporate legislation and affordability changes and Members are asked to comment on this Draft Policy for consultation.

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy

Appendix B - Draft Housing Allocations Policy

Appendix C - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Communities and Local Government - Allocation of accommodation: guidance to local housing authorities in England

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

Summary of recommended changes to the Sevenoaks District Allocations Policy - February 2018

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
Qualifying to join the Housing Register			
1	<p><u>Local Connection</u> (Ref: 2.8)</p> <p>A person applying must have a Local Connection and these rules are (with some exceptions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ They must have been living in this area for either six months during the last year or for three years out of the last five years, or ➤ Have permanent employment in the District or need to move here to take up an offer of permanent employment, or ➤ Have close family currently living in the District and they have done so for the last 5 years. 	<p><u>Local Connection</u> (Ref: 3.1)</p> <p>An applicant can only join the Housing Register if they have a local connection to the Sevenoaks District and are also assessed as having a housing need as defined by this Policy.</p> <p>There are a number of defined exceptions to the local connection qualification rules. Full details can be found below.</p> <p>To demonstrate a local connection, applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have lived permanently in Sevenoaks District continuously for the last 2 years, or 3 years in total out of the last 5 years; b) Be in paid full or part time employment in Sevenoaks District, for a minimum of 16 hours per week. See section 3.2 below for further details. c) Have close family (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) that has lived in Sevenoaks District for a minimum of the last 5 years and the circumstances are that they need to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tighten up the Local connection rules so that only applicants with a substantial connection to Sevenoaks District can qualify. • Gives greater priority to provide ‘local homes for local people’, as highlighted in the Localism Act 2011. • The Secretary of State’s code of guidance states that they recommend local authorities adopt two years continuous as a standard for local connection. • Reduces the risk of out-of-area placements by other local authorities when no local connection is present or a short-term placement is made within the District.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>give or receive essential care and/or support for the foreseeable future. Documentary evidence to show the level of support will be required by the applicant to demonstrate it is significant and ongoing and is not short term or low level (e.g. to carry out shopping once a week);</p> <p>d) Applicants to whom the Council has accepted a full homelessness duty under section 193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 and they do not have a local connection with any other area.</p> <p>e) A local connection is automatically applied for any serving or ex armed forces personnel or War Widows/Widowers, see section 4.1 below for full details.</p> <p>For the purposes of determining a local connection, the Council will not consider a holiday let, including bed and breakfast accommodation booked for holiday purposes, as a local connection.</p> <p>There may be times when it is not appropriate to apply the local connection provision set out within this Policy. In these circumstances, the Council and the Managing Agent can on behalf of the Council, exercise discretion not to apply the local connection provisions in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be assessed on its merits.</p>	

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
2	<p><u>Employment Criteria</u> (Ref: 2.8)</p> <p>Currently have permanent employment in the District or need to move here to take up an offer of permanent employment.</p>	<p><u>Employment Criteria</u> (Ref: 3.2)</p> <p>An applicant will be considered to have employment in the District and therefore may meet the local connection criteria if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In paid full or part time permanent employment for 16 hours or more per week and their actual working location is within Sevenoaks District; or b) Working in Sevenoaks District on a temporary or zero-hour employment contract that has been in place for at least 6 months and can demonstrate they have worked at least 16 hours per week since starting the employment contract; c) Self-employed, or if the employment requires them from time to time to work outside of Sevenoaks District, they will be required to demonstrate that their permanent base of operations is within the Sevenoaks District. d) The employment must be the actual place of work in Sevenoaks District and not employment based on a head office or regional office situated in the District but from which they do not work; <p>At least one adult member of the household must be employed at the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides clearer definitions for the terms: ‘permanent employment’ and ‘close family’ to provide clarify and reduces challenges based on misinterpretations.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment				
		<p>point of application and at the point of nomination for a property, in accordance with validation process of the relevant housing provider. The applicant must provide evidence that a permanent job offer has been accepted and meets the above criteria. It will be the applicant's responsibility to provide documentary evidence to satisfy this Council that the work or job offer is genuine. Appropriate evidence could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contract of employment • wage/salary slips or bank statements covering the last three months; • tax and benefits information - e.g. proof that the applicant is in receipt of working tax credit (if eligible). 					
3	<p><u>Financial Limit</u> (Ref: Appendix C)</p> <p>People who apply cannot qualify (with some limited exceptions as set out in the Policy) if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Have a gross household income which exceeds £33,383 	<p><u>Income Limit Summary</u> (Ref: 3.3)</p> <p>A household cannot qualify if they have a gross household income which exceeds that set out below. This is the total combined income across all members of the household and is based on the household size and bedroom need :-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="846 1214 1357 1417"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="846 1214 1146 1353">Household size</th> <th data-bbox="1151 1214 1357 1353">Maximum Income Limit (per annum)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="846 1356 1146 1417">1 bedroom need</td> <td data-bbox="1151 1356 1357 1417">£30,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Household size	Maximum Income Limit (per annum)	1 bedroom need	£30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis on current social, affordable and private rental costs for housing across in this District (by ward from the Sevenoaks District Housing Needs Assessment). • Gap between social housing and next housing option (affordable rent) of £9,865. • This gap leaves households on low income earning between £33,000 and £43,000 with no affordable housing options. • A tiered system ensures that a fairer distribution of properties, based on the household size and levels of disposable income. • Housing Register data shows more applicants being housed in 1 bedroom properties, although the need is 2 bedroom, demonstrating that the income limit
Household size	Maximum Income Limit (per annum)						
1 bedroom need	£30,000						

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment		
		<table border="1" data-bbox="846 225 1357 323"> <tr> <td data-bbox="846 225 1146 323">2 or more bedroom need</td> <td data-bbox="1151 225 1357 323">£40,000</td> </tr> </table> <p data-bbox="846 360 1357 632">This gross income of all household members will determine eligibility and will include:</p> <ul data-bbox="846 464 1357 632" style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross wages or income; • Benefits received, excluding those listed below; • Any regular cash deposits from others. <p data-bbox="846 668 1357 732">Financial payments not included within this calculation are:</p> <ul data-bbox="846 740 1357 1075" style="list-style-type: none"> • Guardians Allowance; • Disability Living Allowance (DLA); • Attendance Allowance (AA); • Personal Independence Payment (PIP); • Housing Benefit; • Armed Forces war pensioners' mobility supplement (AFIP); • Foster Carer Allowance from a local authority. 	2 or more bedroom need	£40,000	<p data-bbox="1435 225 2092 285">is currently too high for couple/single households with a 1 bedroom need.</p>
2 or more bedroom need	£40,000				
4	No wording in current Policy	<p data-bbox="846 1118 1301 1147"><u>Right to Move Applicants</u> (Ref: 3.5)</p> <p data-bbox="846 1184 1375 1442">The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/ 967) and corresponding statutory guidance, allow existing social housing tenants to be allocated social housing across local authority boundaries within England for work related reasons. This may include</p>	<ul data-bbox="1406 1118 2063 1353" style="list-style-type: none"> • New Government's code of guidance on 'The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015' (SI 2015/ 967) states that local housing authorities should give priority to applicants who can demonstrate a move would be to alleviate hardship. 		

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>a need to move to be closer for work or to take up a job offer.</p> <p>The onus is on the applicant to provide the information needed to evidence the ‘Right to Move’ to alleviate hardship. In determining hardship, this Council will take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home; b) The availability and affordability of transport, taking into consideration the level of the applicant’s earnings; c) The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home; d) Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move; e) The length and type of the work contract; f) Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve the applicant’s employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship. <p>Work which is short term and voluntary (unpaid) is not included. The work should be for at least 16 hours per week and for at least the minimum wage, or an apprenticeship, and expected to last for at least a year.</p>	

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
Exemption to the local connection rules			
5	<p><u>Who can join the Sevenoaks District Housing Register (SDHR)</u> (Ref: 2.0)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former members of the Armed Forces can establish a local connection with this District through living here during a posting or through previous residence in the District, for example: having lived here prior to a posting overseas. Serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move to this District because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service will be considered to have a local connection. Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces who need to live in this District as they have to leave Service Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner will be considered to have a local connection. 	<p><u>Armed Forces Personnel (4.1)</u></p> <p>One exception to the District’s local connection criteria is Armed Forces Personnel or War Widows/Widowers meeting the criteria below. The following people are able to apply to the Housing Register in this district regardless of whether or not they meet the District local connection criteria. This exception is set by housing legislation and has not been decided locally. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the 5 years preceding their application to the Housing Register; Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased to be, or will cease to be, entitled to reside in Service Family Accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly connected to their service; Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to live in this District because of a serious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government’s code of guidance: ‘Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England 2012’ regulates authorities to not disqualify Armed Forces personnel and their families if they do not have a local connection. The recommended bullet points outline the wording within the code of guidance for this exemption The Armed Forces Community Covenant signed by this Council, demonstrates our commitment to support Armed Forces personnel and their families as a priority.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		injury, illness, medical condition or disability which is wholly or partly connected to their service.	
6	<p><u>Unacceptable Behaviour</u> (Ref: 3.0)</p> <p>An applicant (or a member of their household) can be excluded who is considered unsuitable to be a tenant if they are guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of the Authority at the time of their application</p> <p>Unacceptable behaviour is defined as:</p> <p>(a) behaviour of the person concerned which would (if he were a secure tenant of the Authority) entitle the Authority to a Possession Order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 (c68) on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of that Act (other than Ground 8)</p> <p>or</p> <p>(b) behaviour of a member of his household that would (if he were a person residing with a secure tenant of the Authority) entitles the Authority to such a Possession Order.</p>	<p><u>Unacceptable Behaviour</u> (Ref: 5.9)</p> <p>This will apply where the applicant (including any member of the current or prospective household) has a history of serious unacceptable behaviour or former rent arrears, which in our view makes the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant.</p> <p>We will determine whether the behaviour and/or former or current rent arrears means that they cannot qualify for the Register. We will not be restricted to applying a test of whether the behaviour would entitle the landlord to a Possession Order (if the applicant was a tenant).</p> <p>Whether the behaviour and/or former or current rent arrears means that the applicant cannot qualify for the Register will be decided by a register officer working for the Managing Agent. A right to have a review will then be carried out by a senior officer for the Managing Agent in consultation with Sevenoaks District Council.</p> <p>Reasons for non-qualification, including but are not limited to anti-social behaviour, where:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in line with legislation (In accordance with s160ZA (8) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) which provides clearer definitions for ‘unacceptable behaviour’. • This amendment includes other types of unresolved serious behaviors’, not just a previous Possession Order, which may result in an applicant being an unsuitable social housing tenant.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
	<p>This means that applicants or a member of their household with a history of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Former or current rent arrears or not keeping to a housing debt repayment plan; ▫ Violence, threats of violence, arson or antisocial behaviour; ▫ Allowing the condition of a property to deteriorate; ▫ Obtaining a tenancy by deception; ▫ Illegal or immoral behaviour; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant, or any member of the household, has assaulted a member of staff and an injunction is being sought or has already been obtained. This may include violence, threats of violence or aggressive behaviour; • Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours including anti-social behaviour; • The Applicant, or any member of the household, have knowingly given false or misleading information or withheld information that has been reasonably requested; • The Applicant has rent arrears and a recoverable housing related debt (except where this has been verified by the Council as being through no fault of their own). This includes failing to uphold repayments as part of a housing debt repayment plan; • The Applicant has been non-compliant with a current or former tenancy agreement. This may include obtaining a tenancy by deception, allowing the condition of a property to deteriorate, using the property for illegal or immoral behaviour. <p>As rent arrears or recoverable housing-related debt may prevent the applicant from being considered for an allocation of a property, it is important that the applicant demonstrates they taken reasonable steps to address the debts.</p>	

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>For further advice can be provided by the Housing Advice Service at Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227000 or email housing@sevenoaks.gov.uk. For independent advice and support, contact a local Citizens Advice service.</p> <p>Applicants who are excluded will be informed in writing and will be advised of their statutory right to request a review of this decision; see section 9.1 for further details of the review process.</p> <p>For the applicant to be able to re-apply for the Register at a later date, it is important that you can demonstrate that you have taken reasonable steps to address the issues within the original exclusion.</p>	
Accommodation - Offers and Bidding			
7	<p><u>Bidding (Ref. No. 18.2 Statement of Choice)</u></p> <p>Applicants are invited to bid for properties and we aim to ensure that all relevant information is available to enable applicants to make informed choices regarding bidding.</p>	<p><u>Providing Applicants with Choice (7.13)</u></p> <p>As far as possible, the Council wishes to give choice to anyone who is looking to obtain an offer of social housing. This is why the Council operates Choice Based Lettings scheme to give applicants the best possible choice over where they may wish to live. However, this must be set against the need to resolve a situation where there is an urgent need to provide settled or alternative housing. For example, where there are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a person can stay on the Register even if they never bid for a property in Sevenoaks District, through the Kent Homechoice Lettings process. • Perhaps change this to ‘at the time of drafting there were 965 applicants on the SDHR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 324 (34%) of these applicants had not placed a bid in the last 12 months; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 4 in Band A (Urgent priority) ➤ 70 in Band B (high priority) ➤ 37 in Band C (Medium) ➤ 112 in Band D (Low) ➤ 101 in Band E (No priority)

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>homeless households to whom there is a statutory duty to provide housing. Therefore, in certain circumstances, choice may be limited.</p> <p>In the following circumstances, the Council or Managing Agent may make a direct offer of suitable accommodation at any time in order to resolve a threat of homelessness, homelessness itself, or to reduce the financial burden on the Council of the cost of temporary accommodation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If an applicant is accepted by the Council as statutorily homeless and owed a duty to house¹; b. If an applicant is granted homeless status²; or c. If an applicant has been awarded Homeless Prevention banding under this policy. <p>Please note that if an applicant falls into the categories listed above and refuse a suitable offer of accommodation, they will lose the allocated A or B priority banding.</p> <p>An offer of suitable accommodation made will also bring to an end any statutory homeless duty owed¹¹. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which includes 193 of the 324 (60%) have never made a bid since joining the Register. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 3 in Band A (Urgent priority) ➢ 44 in Band B (high priority) ➢ 16 in Band C (Medium) ➢ 59 in Band D (Low) ➢ 71 in Band E (No priority) - <u>Please note:</u> these figures do not include 47 new applicants who have not yet placed a bid on their first property since joining the Register after 1 April 2017. • This amendment could help to reduce the length of the Register and remove applicants who no longer have a housing need. In turn, waiting times for applicants on the Register who have an urgent or immediate housing need may be reduced. • This section will include an exception for any applicant not bidding because they have registered and are waiting for the Rural Exception Site properties to be completed in Sevenoaks District (as per the current Policy) and over 55's without a local connection.

^{1 & 11} Housing Act 1996, sections 193(2) or 195(2)

² Under section 166A (3) (a) (people who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996)

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>applicant will be warned of this consequence at the point the property is formally offered. It is unlikely that the applicant would then receive a second offer within 12 months given lower banding. However, if they do receive such an offer and refuse that second offer, this applicant will be removed from the Register for a minimum period of 12 months.</p>	
8	<p><u>Offers of Accommodation (Ref. No. 13.0)</u></p> <p>Through the Kent Homechoice CBL scheme applicants can choose when to bid for a property. If they then choose not to accept an offer of accommodation made to them they will not lose any priority for housing.</p>	<p><u>Refusals of Offers (Ref: 7.7)</u></p> <p>Unless the applicant is being housed under the homelessness legislation (see section 8), the applicant may refuse a maximum of 2 suitable and reasonable offers of accommodation. If both offers are considered suitable and reasonable and are refused, the applicant will be removed from the register and will not be able to re-apply for 12 months.</p> <p>Before any applicant is removed, checks will be made to determine if both the offers were reasonable in relation to the applicant’s housing circumstances. The Applicant will have the right to request a review of the decision to be removed from the Register. See section 9.1 on the review process.</p> <p>It is within the discretion of the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council to waive this removal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current Policy allows an applicant to turn down as many offers as they like and remain on the Register with the same priority. This is despite the offers being suitable for them to take and would have solved their need for suitable housing. <p>This causes issues for the operation of the SDHR as applicants are making unlimited bids but the refusal rates are high resulting in longer re-let times for vacant homes. This in turn has a negative impact on rental income levels for housing providers.</p> <p>Full details on ‘Removal from the Register’ criteria’s can be found at Section 10.</p>

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
9	<p><u>How to SDHR works - Banding (Ref. No. 4.0)</u> The banding scheme is used to assess each application. Each factor is linked to a priority band which determines an applicant's priority for rehousing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Band A - Urgent need - Band B - High Priority need - Band C - Medium priority - Band D - Low priority - Band E - No housing need <p>Usually an application will be linked to several factors across different priority bands but the highest factor that applies to applicant's circumstances will determine which band they are placed in.</p>	<p><u>The Banding System (Ref: 7.2)</u> The banding system will normally be used to decide when to make an offer of accommodation and to whom. On occasions, properties may be allocated outside of this system in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council. Once an application has been verified and all documents received, the Managing Agent will allocate an A to D banding criteria based the applicant's housing needs based on their identified reasonable preference groups³</p> <p>There are 4 bands and properties will be allocated in the following order based upon housing need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Band A - Urgent need - Band B - High Priority need - Band C - Medium priority - Band D - Low priority <p>Priority for an offer of housing is normally determined by the band and then the length of time the applicant has been placed in that Band. Medical priority will be assessed by the Managing Agent with the option of referring the case to an independent medical advisor if considered appropriate.</p>	<p>The proposed changes to be bands are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To update the priority groups for 'qualifying preference' as identified in the Housing legislation and as recommended by the Secretary of State's code of guidance: 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England 2012'. b) Priorities to comply with the 'reasonable preference' categories within the Equality Act 2010. c) To provide clearer definitions on banding criteria descriptions for applicants and officers assessing applications. d) Priority added for people who are assessed as having a homelessness priority as part of the new Homelessness Reduction Act and the Localism Act 2010. e) Removal of Banding E (which is for people with no housing need). Local authorities are recommended to prioritise social housing for only those with a priority need. f) The majority of applicants in Band E are not actively bidding on the advertised properties, as they do not have a current housing need. If their circumstances change, and they have a housing need (and meet the qualification criteria) they can reapply and be reassessed to join the Housing Register.

³ as defined in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>See Appendix 2 for the full definitions for each priority group awarded a banding. Usually, an application is linked to several factors across different priority bands but the highest factor will normally determine the band.</p>	
Homelessness and Housing Advice			
10	No wording previously	<p><u>Homelessness and Housing Advice (Section 8)</u></p> <p>As part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, this Council has a statutory duty to provide ‘advisory services’ to anyone who is threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. As part of this service, the Council will work with individuals to complete a Personalised Housing Action Plan and help prevent them becoming homeless. This may include supporting them into alternative suitable accommodation, liaising with the current landlord and assessing their affordability to maximise income.</p> <p>Not all housing problems can be dealt with through the Housing Register, or at least not in the required timescale, for example if someone is homeless or at threat of becoming homeless, or if there are problems with a landlord, or disrepair of a property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording added to reflect the new Homelessness Reduction Act commencing from April 2018.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>If an individual is homeless or at risk of homelessness, the Council's Housing Advice Service can assess the housing needs under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).</p> <p>Someone requiring housing advice about housing problems, housing options or wish to make an application as homeless should contact the Housing Advice Service at Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG, tel: 01732 227000.</p>	
Removal from the Register			
11	<p>Removal from the Register (Ref: 6.0)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants will be asked to confirm annually that their information on the register is correct and that they want to remain on the register. If they do not respond within 28 days they will automatically be removed from the register. An applicant can request a review of the decision to remove them from the register as (detailed in paragraph 20) of this policy. 	<p>Refusal of Suitable Offers (Ref: 10.1)</p> <p>If any applicant refuses 2 suitable or reasonable offers in a 12 month period, they will be removed from the Housing Register and will not be able to reapply for a period of 12 months.</p> <p>Please note: that term 'accommodation' means any accommodation, which matches the housing needs.</p> <p>If an individual is owed a main homelessness duty, the 2 offer policy does not apply and the refusal of one suitable offer will end the homelessness duty. This will also result in the Council no longer owing the applicant a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current Policy allows an applicant to turn down as many offers as they like and remain on the Register with the same priority. This is despite the offers being suitable for them to take and would have solved their need for suitable housing. This causes issues for the operation of the SDHR as applicants are making unlimited bids but the refusal rates are high resulting in longer re-let times for vacant homes. This in turn has a negative impact on rental income levels for housing providers. Annual review information has been moved into 'Reviewing and Renewing Housing Applications' (section 6.20) of the proposed draft Policy.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>statutory homelessness duty as one offer has been refused.</p> <p>If an applicant has been awarded an ‘urgent need to move’ priority banding A, they may be removed from the Register if they refuse 1 suitable and reasonable offer which meets the housing needs in preferred locations, as the housing need is classed as an urgent priority.</p> <p>Any decision to waive the removal from the Register rule for refusing 2 offers due to exceptional circumstances will be made by the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This wording regarding ‘removal from the Register’ conditions have been added throughout the Policy where required.
12	No wording previously	<p><u>Failure to bid</u> (Ref: 10.2)</p> <p>If an applicant does not bid on any property within a period of 12 months, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register and will not be able to reapply for a period of 12 months, unless they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>The Managing Agent in consultation with the Council have the authority to waive this removal.</p> <p>Note: If the applicant is granted a priority or urgent band (A or B), the applicant may lose this priority banding if they are not bidding within a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently a person can stay on the Register even if they never bid for a property in Sevenoaks District, through the Kent Homechoice Lettings process. • At the time of drafting there were 965 applicants on the SDHR (as at 15/8/17): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 324 (34%) of these applicants had not placed a bid in the previous 12 months; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 in Band A (Urgent priority) ▪ 70 in Band B (high priority) ▪ 37 in Band C (Medium) ▪ 112 in Band D (Low) ▪ 101 in Band E (No priority) – which includes 193 of the 324 (60%) have never made a bid since joining the Register. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 in Band A (Urgent priority)

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		reasonable period of time, which could be as little of 3 months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 44 in Band B (high priority) ▪ 16 in Band C (Medium) ▪ 59 in Band D (Low) ▪ 71 in Band E (No priority) <p>– <u>Please note:</u> these figures do not include 47 new applicants who have not yet placed a bid on their first property since joining the Register after 1 April 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This amendment could help to reduce the length of the Register and remove applicants who no longer have a housing need. In turn, waiting times for applicants on the Register who have an urgent or immediate housing need may be reduced.
13	<p><u>Offences related to information given or withheld by applicants</u> (Ref: 21.0)</p> <p>The SDHR will take action to prosecute an applicant and will consider possession proceedings where an applicant has given false information and obtained a tenancy.</p> <p>21.2 The circumstances that an offence could have been committed would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Any false information given on an application form for social housing. b. Any false information given in response to subsequent review 	<p><u>Giving False Information</u> (Ref. 10.3)</p> <p>It is a criminal offence if, when applying for housing, an applicant knowingly gives false information or withhold information relevant to an application. An offence is also committed if an applicant allows a third party to provide false information on their behalf.</p> <p>If an applicant is found to have withheld or given false information and are removed from the Register, they will not be able to reapply for a minimum period of 12 months. Decisions to remove anyone from the register will be made based on the seriousness of the false information given and an assessment of why the information was withheld.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 171 of the Housing Act details that it is a criminal offence to knowingly submit false or fraudulent information on housing. • New wording aims to strengthen the fraud statements to reduce fraudulent applications.

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
	<p>letters or other updating mechanisms; or</p> <p>c. Any false information given or submitted by applicants during the proceedings of a review.</p>		
Your Information and Your Rights			
14	<i>No wording in current Policy</i>	<p><u>Confidentiality</u> (Ref: 11.1)</p> <p>Information received in relation to an application will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Confidential Information held about customers will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the individual has consented to the disclosure; • Where the Council is required by law to make such a disclosure; • Where disclosure is made in accordance with a recognised Information Sharing Protocol or for reasons of public protection. <p><u>Data Protection and Information Sharing</u> (Ref: 11.2)</p> <p>The Managing Agent and Council will ensure that all information provided by an applicant, and by third parties in relation to an application, is treated in strictest confidence. In doing so, this</p>	<p>Wording added to comply with current legislation including:</p> <p>Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Kent Information Sharing Protocols Equality Act 2010 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Housing Act 1996 (as amended)</p>

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>will comply fully with legal requirements⁴.</p> <p>We will seek an applicant's consent to share personal information about them or any member of the household.</p> <p>Where an applicant does not consent to their information being shared, this may result in an application not being complete and consequently, unless there is an exceptional reason for not consenting, the applicant will not be admitted onto the Housing Register.</p> <p>The applicant's information may be shared irrespective of whether consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act⁵ b) For the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud. c) Where there is a serious threat to the applicant or a third party, including staff or contractors. d) Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or any nominated support organisation, to ensure the 	

⁴ Data Protection Act 1998, in relation to the way the Council stores and processes the information we hold on applicants, and with s.166(4) of the Housing Act 1996.

⁵ Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 115

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>health and safety of the applicant, a member of the household or a member of staff.</p> <p><u>Equal Opportunities and Monitoring</u> (Ref: 11.3)</p> <p>Sevenoaks District Council is committed to ensuring that its policy and procedures in the letting of property are non-discriminatory and that all customers are able to access the service especially taking account of any vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>To identify the needs of our customers, the application form will have specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disabilities and other relevant criteria. This information will be used to monitor the impact of the policy on minority and specific needs groups and to make such amendments as may be required, to ensure no group is disadvantaged by the policy.</p> <p>Under the Equality Act⁶, this Council is required to give due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of</p>	

⁶ Equality Act 2010, section 149

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, in their exercise of a public function. To comply with our duties in the Equality Act, 'reasonable preference' categories are given priority for housing and the overall customer satisfaction with the scheme is monitored.</p> <p><u>Treating all applications fairly</u> (Ref: 11.4)</p> <p>Elected Councillors cannot be involved in assessing housing applications or the allocation of housing. However, this does not prevent them from seeking or providing information on behalf of their residents.</p> <p>In order to ensure that we treat all applicants fairly, any application for housing from Councillors or employees of the Council or a partner Housing Association must be disclosed to the Managing Agent or Council. Canvassing is not allowed. These applications will be assessed in the normal way, but an offer of housing must be approved by a manager at Sevenoaks District Council with responsibility for housing.</p> <p><u>Right to information</u> (Ref: 11.5)</p> <p>The Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes it a requirement for every Local</p>	

Change Ref No.	Current Housing Allocation Policy	Recommended Change to the Housing Allocations Policy	Reason for Recommended Amendment
		<p>Authority to produce a Publication Scheme which sets out all the information it makes available to the public and whether copies of that information are available free of charge. The Publication Scheme includes information that the Council is legally obliged to publish. The Scheme is also intended to assist in developing a culture in which openness and transparency are encouraged which supports the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. This duty does not apply to registered social housing providers.</p>	

DRAFT



Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy

2018

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction and Background.....	1
1.1.	What is an Allocation?	1
1.2.	Legal Framework	1
2.	Eligibility to join the Housing Register	2
2.1.	Who can join the Sevenoaks District Housing Register	2
2.2.	16 and 17 year olds and Care Leavers.....	2
3.	Qualifying to join the Register	3
3.1.	Local Connection	3
3.2.	Employment in Sevenoaks District.....	4
3.3.	Income and Asset Thresholds	4
3.4.	Older People’s properties.....	6
3.5.	Right to Move Applicants.....	7
3.6.	Exception Sites and Parish Connection	7
4.	Exemption to the local connection rules.....	8
4.1.	Armed Forces Personnel.....	8
4.2.	Over 55’s wishing to downsize	9
4.3.	Exceptions process	9
5.	Exclusions - Non-qualification rules.....	9
5.1.	Housing Register exclusions.....	9
5.2.	People who WILL be excluded from joining the housing register.....	9
5.2.1.	Immigration Status	9
5.2.2.	No Local Connection.....	10
5.3.	People who MAY be excluded from joining the housing register	10
5.3.1.	Home owners	10
5.3.2.	Shared Ownership.....	10
5.3.3.	Financial limits	11
5.3.4.	Unacceptable Behaviour	11
6.	How to Apply for Social Housing.....	12
6.1.	How to join the Housing Register	12
6.2.	Assessing Applications.....	13
6.3.	Data Sharing and Declaration	13
6.4.	Applicant checks	14
6.5.	Joint applications	14
6.6.	Households with access to children/shared residency order.....	14
6.7.	Housing for People Aged 55+	15
6.8.	Notification of Registration	15
6.9.	Change of circumstances	15

6.10.	Reviewing and Renewing Housing Applications	16
6.11.	Cancelling Applications	16
6.12.	Short Term Intermediate Rented Properties	17
6.13.	Deliberate Worsening of Circumstances.....	17
6.14.	Misrepresentation, False Statements and Withholding Information	17
7.	The Allocation Process.....	18
7.1.	How are applicants selected for allocation?.....	18
7.2.	The Banding system	18
7.3.	Banding Allocation Exceptions	19
7.4.	Type of property allocated to an Applicant	20
7.5.	What are other considerations.....	21
7.6.	Making an offer of a Property.....	21
7.7.	Refusals of Offers	22
7.8.	Local Lettings Plan.....	22
7.9.	Sensitive Letting (property)	22
7.10.	Social and Welfare Priority	23
7.11.	Special Circumstances (applicant)	23
7.12.	Specially adapted Properties.....	23
7.13.	Providing Applicants with Choice.....	23
8.	Homelessness and housing advice.....	24
9.	Requesting a Review and Making a Complaint	25
9.1.	The Review Process.....	25
9.2.	Making a Complaint.....	26
10.	Removal from the Register.....	27
10.1.	Refusal of Suitable Offers	27
10.2.	Failure to bid	27
10.3.	Giving False Information.....	27
11.	Applicant Information and Rights	28
11.1.	Confidentiality	28
11.2.	Data Protection and Information Sharing	28
11.3.	Equal Opportunities and Monitoring	28
11.4.	Treating all applications fairly.....	29
11.5.	Right to information.....	29
12.	Glossary	29
13.	Appendix 1 - Definitions	31
14.	Appendix 2 - Banding Criteria	33
15.	Appendix 3 - Documents required for Housing Register application.....	34
16.	Appendix 4 - Social and Welfare Priority Assessment Panel	36

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. What is an Allocation?

Sevenoaks District Council is a local housing authority. This policy sets out who qualifies for social housing in the Sevenoaks District and how we will make this assessment. It covers how applicants can apply for and access social housing, the priority they will be given and the order in which any offer of social housing will be made.

Sevenoaks District Council no longer owns its own housing stock, having carried out a transfer of its housing stock to West Kent Housing Association in 1989. This Allocation Policy therefore applies to all properties to which we have rights of nomination (whether by way of a legally enforceable arrangement or not).

West Kent Housing is appointed as the 'Managing Agent' for the Sevenoaks District Housing Register (SDHR) and administer the Sevenoaks District Housing Register and the Kent Home Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme on behalf of this Council. The Housing Allocations Team at West Kent Housing is responsible for assessing new applications and will assess whether an applicant qualifies for the Housing Register using this policy to assess housing needs and will award any priority Band to an application if the criteria set out in this policy are met.

1.2. Legal Framework

This Council, as a local housing authority, has a legal duty to develop and publish a Housing Allocations Policy. The legal requirements for this duty, including the Housing Act 1996 Part VI (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), Localism Act 2011, the Equalities Act 2010 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, have been considered when developing this Policy. This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated if there are any changes to relevant legislation or operational processes. The Government's code of guidance has also been considered when drafting this Policy including:

- a) Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England (2012, DCLG) "the Code";
- b) Providing social housing for local people: Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England (DCLG, December 2013) "Supplementary Code".

The following statutory regulations have also been considered when developing this Policy:

- a) Allocation of Housing (Procedure) Regulations 1997, SI 1997/483;
- b) Allocation of Housing (England) Regulations 2002, SI 2002/3264;
- c) Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294;
- d) Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/1869;
- e) Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012/2989;

- f) The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015;

To ensure this Policy meets all data protection requirements, it is regularly monitored and reviewed. This Council is committed to ensuring that this policy is non-discriminatory and that customers can access the service taking account of any vulnerability or other specific housing needs. This includes reasonable preference categories (as defined in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996) and protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), as well as being provided with a Statement of Choice through the Kent Homechoice Scheme.

In accordance with The Local Authority Order 1996 (SI 1996 No 3205), Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) has contracted out the management of the register to West Kent Housing under a series of Service Level Agreements.

2. Eligibility to join the Housing Register

2.1. Who can join the Sevenoaks District Housing Register

Subject to the exclusions outlined in section 5 below, anyone living in the United Kingdom who is over the age of 16 can apply to join the housing register if they:

- a) have a genuine reason for seeking affordable housing in Sevenoaks District;
- b) have a local connection to the Sevenoaks District (see section 3.1 for full details);
- c) are applying for a social housing property to use as their only or principal residence; and
- d) are capable of maintaining a tenancy.

Local housing authorities may only allocate accommodation to people who are defined as ‘qualifying persons’ under the Housing Act 1996. The Government has granted all housing authorities, including this Council, the power to decide the criteria of people who are, or are not, classed a qualifying person for the register. It should be noted that individual Registered Housing Providers might have their own letting and eligibility rules.

Sevenoaks District Council is part of the Kent Homechoice Partnership that advertises vacant properties in this District using an online Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Some exceptional circumstances, as outlined in this Policy, may mean that properties are advertised or allocated in partnership with the relevant housing provider.

Once an applicant has been accepted onto the Housing Register, a decision will be made as to the size of property they are eligible to bid for under the Kent Homechoice Lettings Scheme using the National Bedroom Standard.

All applications to the register should be made by completing an on-line application available at <http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk/register.aspx> .

Agenda Item 8

Those without access to the internet should contact The Housing Options Team, West Kent Housing Association, 101 London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1AX for assistance.

2.2. 16 and 17 year olds and Care Leavers

Applicants aged 16 and 17 can join the Housing Register but they must have a guarantor and their ability to manage a tenancy will need to be assessed. This is to make sure that they can cope with being a tenant at a young age and that they do not lose any tenancy offered through lack of support. This may include a referral and the need for an assessment by Kent Social Services or other support services to ensure the appropriate support is in place. If a person is 16 or 17 and if they are given a tenancy, this will be held in trust until they reach 18. This means that another suitable person (such as a parent, legal guardian, social worker or relative) will be responsible for the property as a guarantor.

Care leavers and 16/17 year olds will be considered in accordance with the relevant Kent Housing Group protocols in place between Kent County Council and Kent district and borough councils.

3. Qualifying to join the Register

Only those who can demonstrate a local connection to the District and have an identified housing need are eligible to apply for inclusion on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register.

3.1. Local Connection

An applicant can only join the Housing Register if they have a local connection to the Sevenoaks District and are also assessed as having a housing need as defined by this Policy.

There are a number of defined exceptions to the local connection qualification rules. Full details can be found below.

To demonstrate a local connection, applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a) Have lived permanently in Sevenoaks District continuously for the last 2 years, or 3 years in total out of the last 5 years;
- b) Be in paid full or part time employment in Sevenoaks District, for a minimum of 16 hours per week. See section 3.2 below for further details.
- c) Have close family (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) that has lived in Sevenoaks District for a minimum of the last 5 years and the circumstances are that they need to give or receive essential care and/or support for the foreseeable future. Documentary evidence to show the level of support will be required by the applicant to demonstrate it is significant and ongoing and is not short term or low level (e.g. to carry out shopping once a week);
- d) Applicants to whom the Council has accepted a full homelessness duty under section 193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 and they do not have a local connection with any other area.

- e) A local connection is automatically applied for any serving or ex armed forces personnel or War Widows/Widowers, see section 4.1 below for full details.

For the purposes of determining a local connection, the Council will not consider a holiday let, including bed and breakfast accommodation booked for holiday purposes, as a local connection.

There may be times when it is not appropriate to apply the local connection provision set out within this Policy. In these circumstances, the Council and the Managing Agent can on behalf of the Council, exercise discretion not to apply the local connection provisions in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be assessed on its merits.

3.2. Employment in Sevenoaks District

An applicant will be considered to have employment in the District and therefore may meet the local connection criteria if they are:

- a) In paid full or part time permanent employment for 16 hours or more per week and their actual working location is within Sevenoaks District; or
- b) Working in Sevenoaks District on a temporary or zero-hour employment contract that has been in place for at least 6 months and can demonstrate they have worked at least 16 hours per week since starting the employment contract;
- c) Self-employed, or if the employment requires them from time to time to work outside of Sevenoaks District, they will be required to demonstrate that their permanent base of operations is within the Sevenoaks District.
- d) The employment must be the actual place of work in Sevenoaks District and not employment based on a head office or regional office situated in the District but from which they do not work;

At least one adult member of the household must be employed at the point of application and at the point of nomination for a property, in accordance with validation process of the relevant housing provider. The applicant must provide evidence that a permanent job offer has been accepted and meets the above criteria. It will be the applicant's responsibility to provide documentary evidence to satisfy this Council that the work or job offer is genuine.

Appropriate evidence could include:

- a contract of employment
- wage/salary slips or bank statements covering the last three months;
- Tax and benefits information - e.g. proof that the applicant is in receipt of working tax credit (if eligible).

Where the employment status of an applicant does not meet the criteria in 3.2 a) to d) above, a decision on local connection will be made by the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council.

For details relating to employment can be found under the 'Right to Move' section of this Policy (Section 3.5).

Agenda Item 8

3.3. Income and Asset Thresholds

Maximum income limits have been set as part of this Policy and anyone above these limits will not qualify to access the Housing Register. This is to ensure that social housing is allocated to those in the greatest need due to their housing priority and affordability. These limits, together with some limited exceptions, are set out in this Policy below.

Due to the pressure on social housing in this District, those with sufficient assets and/or income will not be allowed to access the Housing Register as they can pursue other housing options. If an applicant is unsure if they qualify because of their household income and asset thresholds, they should contact the Council's Housing Advice Service or the Managing Agent for further advice. If they are above the thresholds and unable to access the Register, Housing Officers at Sevenoaks District Council can assist with other available housing options. The Housing Advice Team can be contacted on 01732 227000.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all financial information and supporting evidence relating to all members of the household and to update the Managing Agent of any changes from the original housing application immediately. Any person who knowingly withholds any financial information on their housing application about their total household finances or deliberately provides false information may be guilty of committing a criminal offence and could face a fine if convicted. This will also result in a disqualification or suspension from the Housing Register, withdrawal of a tenancy offer or further legal action.

Income Limit Summary

A household cannot qualify if they have a gross household income that exceeds that set out below. This is the total combined income across all members of the household and is based on the household size and bedroom need¹:-

Household size	Maximum Income Limit (per annum)
1 bedroom need	£30,000
2 or more bedroom need	£40,000

This gross income of all household members will determine eligibility and will include:

- Gross wages or income;
- Benefits received, excluding those listed below;
- Any regular cash deposits from others.

Financial payments not included within this calculation are:

- Guardians Allowance;
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA);

¹ In accordance with the 'Bedroom Standard' formulas in Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Housing Benefit Regulations

- Attendance Allowance (AA);
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP);
- Housing Benefit;
- Armed Forces war pensioners' mobility supplement (AFIP);
- Foster Carer Allowance from a local authority.

Capital Assets and Savings Limits

In addition to the income limits above, applicants applying for general needs properties cannot have capital assets or savings that exceed £16,000 in total across all members of the household (for all general needs household sizes). This figure is in line with the current housing benefit savings limit. Assets include equity in any home owned.

Applicants applying for housing that is designated specifically for those aged 55+ (including sheltered, supported housing and extra care schemes) may have savings and/or assets up to the value of £350,000.

Limited Exceptions - Income and Asset Thresholds

Fostering/adopting - Applicants who are approved foster carers or a prospective adoptive parent with appropriate supporting documentation, who do not meet the financial limits, but who can clearly demonstrate that they are not able to access the open housing market, may be considered for inclusion on the register. A full financial assessment will be undertaken and the application considered by the Social and Welfare Panel (see Appendix 4 for Social and Welfare Panel details). Confirmation in writing will be requested from the relevant County Council or adoption agency.

Low Cost Ownership Schemes (LCHO) - This restriction does not prevent applicants being considered for any Low Cost Home Ownership schemes as set out in section 5.7 (Shared Ownership). The rules for being accepted onto these schemes are different and are applied on a scheme by scheme basis. If the gross household income exceeds the Income and Asset limits in this Policy, the applicant may still apply for a LCHO assessment. Those with an income below £80,000 (the current government set 'Help to Buy limit) may be eligible for affordable housing through a LCHO scheme. Those above a household total annual income of £80,000 will not be eligible for any affordable housing options. These amounts are subject to change in line with the government's 'Help to Buy' limits.

Exception Sites - Where an applicant is applying to the Housing Register in order to be considered for rented housing on a specific Exception Site, they may have an income up to the current 'Help to Buy' or LCHO limit. **It is the applicant's responsibility to make this clear on the application form.** See section 3.6 for further details on Exception Sites.

Special Circumstances - The Managing Agent in consultation with the Council may choose not to apply these criteria where the applicant or a member of their household, despite having the financial means to resolve their housing situation,

Agenda Item 8

cannot resolve the situation in a reasonable period of time and their housing needs are so urgent and exceptional as to require social housing.

Vulnerability - Vulnerable clients whose income exceeds the financial limits but who have documentary evidence to show that they cannot access private rented accommodation or LCHO may be assessed by the Social and Welfare Panel to be able to join the Housing Register.

3.4. Older People's properties

Anyone who is over the age of 55 and meets the qualification to join the Housing Register can apply for sheltered or supported housing (specifically for this age group) if they:

- are either aged 55 or over or;
- are within 3 years of state pensionable age and;
- can provide evidence that their projected income is anticipated to fall below the current income limit at the time of retirement.

The size of the housing specifically designed for over 55's (including sheltered or Extra Care), may include one bedroom more than they require e.g. enabling the applicant to bid on two bedroom sheltered housing even if they only have a one bedroom need. Any offer is subject to an affordability assessment to ensure rental costs can be met.

The support and housing needs of an applicant will be assessed by sheltered housing team of the relevant housing association. Where it is identified that an applicant is bidding on accommodation that is not suitable for their needs, an assessment will be made to support them to identify a suitable home. Individual housing associations may vary this age criteria.

Applicants for extra care housing schemes in the District will be assessed by a Joint Allocations Panel who will consider the applicant's care, support, social and housing needs. The Panel will include representatives from Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, housing association and care provider. On occasions, extra care properties may be advertised and allocated outside the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

If required, the Managing Agent will support the applicant to apply and bid on properties advertised via the Choice Based Lettings scheme. Where applicants are a current tenant of a housing association, this support should be provided by their existing landlord.

3.5. Right to Move Applicants

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/ 967) and corresponding statutory guidance, allow existing social housing tenants to be allocated social housing across local authority boundaries within England for work related reasons. This may include a need to move to be closer for work or to take up a job offer.

The onus is on the applicant to provide the information needed to evidence the 'Right to Move' to alleviate hardship. In determining hardship, this Council will take into account:

- a) Distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home;
- b) The availability and affordability of transport, taking into consideration the level of the applicant's earnings;
- c) The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home;
- d) Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move;
- e) The length and type of the work contract;
- f) Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve the applicant's employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship.

Work which is short term and voluntary (unpaid) is not included. The work should be for at least 16 hours per week and for at least the minimum wage, or an apprenticeship, and expected to last for at least a year.

3.6. Exception Sites and Parish Connection

This section applies if the applicant does not have a housing need, but has been accepted onto the Housing Register because they qualify for housing designated under a Planning Agreement Rural Exception Site, because of a Parish connection.

In these circumstances, the applicant must not have an income that exceeds the current Low-Cost Home Ownership (sometimes referred to as shared-ownership) eligibility criteria². Any bids that do not come under the definition of a Rural Exception Site Agreement will be considered ineligible.

Some properties or developments have a specific local connection requirement in their planning or funding conditions, such as rural exceptions sites and those developed under planning agreements. In these cases, there will be restrictions on who can bid for the home and this will be made clear in the advert for the vacant property. This type of qualifying criteria is usually agreed as part of planning or funding conditions (known as a Section 106 Agreement). In these circumstances, local connection criteria will usually mean connection to a village or parish rather than the district as a whole.

Local Lettings Plans will be used for some properties or developments where, for example, housing associations need to allocate properties sensitively to ensure that community safety issues have been taken into account, to promote the sustainability of the area, or to earmark suitable properties for those who are currently under-occupying their social housing home. In these cases, preference will be given to those with a local parish connection and this will be clearly stated in the advert for the vacant property. The introduction of a Local Lettings Plan is subject to the Registered Provider/Housing Association obtaining

² For more information, please visit www.gov.uk/affordable-home-ownership-schemes/shared-ownership-scheme

Agenda Item 8

the agreement of the Council's Chief Officer for Housing. More information on these policies are detailed in section 7.8.

4. Exemption to the local connection rules

4.1. Armed Forces Personnel

One exception to the District's local connection criteria is Armed Forces Personnel³ or War Widows/Widowers meeting the criteria below. The following people are able to apply to the Housing Register in this District regardless of whether or not they meet the District local connection criteria. This exception is set by housing legislation⁴ and has not been decided locally. This includes:

- Those who are currently serving in the regular forces or who were serving in the regular forces at any time in the 5 years proceeding their application to the Housing Register;
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased to be, or will cease to be, entitled to reside in Service Family Accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly connected to their service;
- Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to live in the District because of a serious injury, illness, medical condition or disability that is wholly or partly connected to their service.

4.2. Over 55's wishing to downsize

If an applicant is aged over 55 and currently living in Sevenoaks District wishes to downsize, they may be considered for sheltered or supported housing (specifically designated for this age group) even if they do not meet the local connection rules. This would ensure that their required support and housing needs are met and to release another property in this District.

Households applying for extra care housing will be subject to a Joint Allocations Panel when allocating properties. See section 3.4 above for full details relating to properties for older people.

4.3. Exceptions process

Sevenoaks District Council retains the authority to exercise its discretion when making decisions with regard to someone being accepted or banded awarded on the Housing Register. This will be related to 'exceptional circumstances' which is defined as an additional social and/or welfare need above the housing need which has been evidenced by the Housing Officer, support or partner agency. See Appendix 4 for further details regarding social and welfare needs.

5. Exclusions - Non-qualification rules

³ as defined by S.374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006

⁴ The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1879)

5.1. Housing Register exclusions

Some people are excluded from the Housing Register either due to government regulations or because the Council has decided to exclude them. This could be because they are not considered suitable to be tenants (because of their previous recorded conduct) or because the Council has to prioritise the use of housing stock.

We cannot nominate someone for housing if they are ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by being subject to immigration control or a person from abroad who is ineligible⁵. See section 5.3 below for further information.

If it is considered that an applicant is not eligible to apply for the Housing Register, the Managing Agent will inform them in writing of this decision, stating the grounds for the decision. This letter will include how the applicant can request a review of this decision. If the applicant is affected by these exclusions, they can contact the Housing Advice Service at the Council for further advice.

5.2. People who WILL be excluded from joining the housing register

Current legislation states or allows that the following are ineligible to join the Housing Register and they **will be excluded**:

5.2.1. Immigration Status

- People from abroad subject to immigration control or regulations, or people prescribed as 'ineligible' by Regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- A person from abroad who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be ineligible, unless they are of a class of persons prescribed by the Secretary of State who are subject to immigration control but are eligible for an allocation.
- Certain persons from abroad, who are not subject to immigration control, and fail the habitually resident test in the Common Travel Area (as defined in the Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for local housing authorities).
- Any application identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act.

The Council reserves the right to seek independent advice and assistance to resolve the issue of eligibility. This may mean contacting the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

5.2.2. No Local Connection

- Details of local connections are set out in section 3.1.
- Applicants who do not have a local connection with the District will be excluded from the Sevenoaks District Housing Register. They may still be able to access housing advice and support through the Council's Housing Advice Service and apply for other types of properties in the area such as the

⁵ Housing Act 1996, s.160ZA (1), (2) and (4) and Regulations 3 and 4 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294

Agenda Item 8

private sector lettings scheme. An exception to this is Armed Forces Personnel or War Widows/Widowers meeting the criteria set out in section 4.1.

- Anyone who is aged over 55, living in the District already and who wishes to downsize to a smaller property may apply to the Register, even if they do not meet the local connection rules. However, they will only be considered for accommodation specifically designated for this age group and the financial limit rules will apply.
- Applicants with a local connection to an exception site, who do not meet the District local connection criteria, will only be eligible to place bids on properties where they are considered to be an exception site applicant. Such applicants will not be considered for general properties advertised within the District (see section 3.6 for full details on exception sites).

5.3. People who MAY be excluded from joining the housing register

5.3.1. Home owners

If an applicant (including anyone in the household covered by the application) owns a property, they are not eligible to join the Register (this includes properties owned and rented out to other persons and or properties in other countries). The exemption is **unless** the applicant can demonstrate there are exceptional financial and personal circumstances that prevent them from living in this accommodation or securing other suitable accommodation to meet a housing need. For example: they have insufficient resources to pursue low cost home ownership and/or a medical condition or disability, or other vulnerability including risk of homelessness due to mortgage arrears following illness or job loss). This will be assessed the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council on a case-by-case basis.

Owner occupiers aged 55 and over whose savings and assets fall within the limits (set out in section 3.3), and they meet the local connection criteria, can apply to the Register, but will only be considered for housing designated for this age group (this includes sheltered or extra care housing).

5.3.2. Shared Ownership

All applicants are required to provide details of their income and assets. If applicants exceed the financial limits for the Register but have sufficient funds to access home ownership options, then the housing advice service can advise accordingly. Those with an income that exceeds the current government 'Help to Buy' limit of £80,000 will not be able to register for LCHO and will not be eligible for any form of affordable housing.

Help to Buy is a range of home ownership products designed to assist people who cannot afford to buy a property on the open market. Local Help to Buy Agents are appointed by the Government to administer the schemes to support how to access these low cost home ownership (LCHO) options. For details of the Help to Buy Agents, visit www.helptobuyese.org.uk. Other options available may include Help to Buy, shared ownership and shared equity.

5.3.3. Financial limits

Applicants will be required to provide proof of income and assets for all members of the proposed household over the age of 16. Savings and financial assets will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not the applicant is able to secure suitable housing.

Applicants with a household income above the financial limits, as outlined in Section 3.3 of this Policy, will not qualify to be included on the Housing Register. Applications who are assessed as having savings and/or financial assets (including capital), which are sufficient to allow them to meet their housing needs, will not qualify for the Housing Register.

5.3.4. Unacceptable Behaviour

This will apply where the applicant (including any member of the current or prospective household) has a history of serious unacceptable behaviour or former rent arrears, which in our view makes the applicant unsuitable to be a tenant⁶.

We will determine whether the behaviour and/or former or current rent arrears means that they cannot qualify for the Register. We will not be restricted to applying a test of whether the behaviour would entitle the landlord to a Possession Order (if the applicant was a tenant).

Whether the behaviour and/or former or current rent arrears means that the applicant cannot qualify for the Register will be decided by a register officer working for the Managing Agent. A right to have a review will then be carried out by a senior officer for the Managing Agent in consultation with Sevenoaks District Council.

Reasons for non-qualification, including but are not limited to anti-social behaviour, where:

- The Applicant, or any member of the household, has assaulted a member of staff and an injunction is being sought or has already been obtained. This may include violence, threats of violence or aggressive behaviour;
- Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours including anti-social behaviour;
- The Applicant, or any member of the household, have knowingly given false or misleading information or withheld information that has been reasonably requested;
- The Applicant has rent arrears and a recoverable housing related debt (except where this has been verified by the Council as being through no fault of their own). This includes failing to uphold repayments as part of a housing debt repayment plan;
- The Applicant has been non-compliant with a current or former tenancy agreement. This may include obtaining a tenancy by deception, allowing the condition of a property to deteriorate, using the property for illegal or immoral behaviour.

⁶ In accordance with s160ZA (8) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

Agenda Item 8

As rent arrears or recoverable housing-related debt may prevent the applicant from being considered for an allocation of a property, it is important that the applicant demonstrates they taken reasonable steps to address the debts.

For further advice can be provided by the Housing Advice Service at Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227000 or email housing@sevenoaks.gov.uk. For independent advice and support, contact a local Citizens Advice service.

Applicants who are excluded will be informed in writing and will be advised of their statutory right to request a review of this decision; see section 9.1 for further details of the review process.

For the applicant to be able to re-apply for the Register at a later date, it is important that you can demonstrate that you have taken reasonable steps to address the issues within the original exclusion.

6. How to Apply for Social Housing

6.1. How to join the Housing Register

Any applicant interested in joining the Register can undertake the pre-assessment process on the Kent Homechoice website at www.kenthomechoice.org.uk to find out whether they qualify. If an applicant qualifies to join the Register, they must apply through the Kent Homechoice website by completing the online application form, this is a choice based lettings scheme, and it is used all across Kent. They must include on their application all members of the household, i.e. people who normally live with them, or would reasonably be expected to live with them.

Applicants who are verified as meeting the eligibility and qualification rules will be registered on Kent Homechoice. It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that the information provided on the application form is correct and all the required supporting documents must be provided within 28 days of making the application or within an appropriately agreed timescale. See Appendix 3 for details of the required documents. The applicant will then receive a registration letter and a Welcome Pack that contains a user guide. The letter will also state the Band according to the housing needs, the size of property they are eligible for and a unique Kent Homechoice reference number. This letter may be sent electronically to the applicant's email address on the Register application.

Once registered, the applicant can bid on advertised social housing properties in the area of their choice within Sevenoaks District.

The Managing Agent is able to set up an auto-bid process on behalf of the applicant if required, and this can be discussed directly with the Managing Agent. This enables bids to be made automatically on behalf of the applicant, in accordance with this Policy and in line with the applicant's banding and preferred areas.

Failure to bid on suitable and reasonable properties within the applicants chosen and preferred areas within a 12 months' period may result in the

applicant being removed from the Housing Register; see section 10.2 for further details.

Any applicants without access to the internet can contact the Allocations Team, West Kent Housing Association, 101 London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1AX, or call 01732 749400 for assistance with applying and bidding on the Register.

6.2. Assessing Applications

In order to assess the applicant's housing need, a housing register officer will use a needs based Banding System scheme, Banding A to D. The full details of the Banding system are set out in Section 7.2 and Appendix 2 of this policy.

The Bands are awarded to reflect the applicant's housing need, based on the information provided on the application and supporting documents. The housing needs reflected in the highest Band (A) indicates the greatest need for housing. Usually an application may be linked to several factors across different priority bands; the highest factor that applies to applicant's circumstances will determine which Band they are placed in. For example, an applicant with an emergency medical condition will go into Band A, even if their other circumstances are linked to a lower band.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all the required information and supporting documentation are provided to within 10 working day from request. Incomplete applications will not be made active until such time when all information has been received to complete an assessment. If the application is incomplete, it will be cancelled after a period of 28 days from the date the information was requested.

A cancellation of this nature does not prevent the applicant from making another application at a later date. In these cases, the effective date of registration will not be backdated to the earlier application date.

If the applicant is a current or previous tenant, a reference may be requested from the current or previous landlord. If applicable, references may also be requested from a recent landlord. Where a landlord does not reply, a reminder will be sent and, if still not forthcoming, any other information or records available will be checked to try to determine whether there have been any concerns over the way an applicant may have conducted their tenancy.

The applicant will not be disadvantaged if, despite every effort, it is not possible to obtain a reference from current or previous landlords.

6.3. Data Sharing and Declaration

As part of the online Register application, the applicant will be required to sign a declaration to:

- a) Confirm that the information given is correct and that any changes of circumstances will notified the Managing Agent or Council;

Agenda Item 8

- b) Give consent to allow enquiries to be made concerning their eligibility for housing and level of priority;
- c) Give consent to allow information to be provided to other partner organisations in the scheme.

To determine eligibility for the Housing Register, the Managing Agent or Council will make any enquiries they deem necessary in order to assess the application. This may include information sharing with professionals such as health professionals, Kent County Council, other Council departments and the Police etc. By submitting personal information on the Housing Register application form, the applicant is giving permission to share information with other housing providers and statutory agencies as needed to process and verify the application, in accordance with Kent Data Sharing Protocols.

6.4. Applicant checks

In the interests of assessing an applicant's eligibility to join the Register, all members of the prospective household will be requested to disclose any pending court cases or unspent criminal convictions.

The Managing Agent or Council may use any information disclosed during the application, assessment and allocation of property processes to find out whether the applicant qualifies for joining or remaining on the Register.

Where a criminal conviction is spent⁷, this will not be taken into account. The assessment will reflect whether there is evidence of any current serious unacceptable behaviour regardless of any previous convictions of this nature.

If during the assessment process it is felt that there is a need for a police check, the Disclosure and Barring Service may be contacted for information to establish if there has been any involvement in serious crimes that may come under the unacceptable behaviour non-qualification criteria.

Information gained will not automatically exclude the applicant from the Register. It may also be used to make informed decisions about any nomination for vacant property. All assessments will be carried out in accordance with the data protection and information sharing policies and legal requirements.

6.5. Joint applications

Joint applications will be accepted and will be treated as one application. The housing need of the full household will be considered in assessing housing needs. When allocating to two or more persons jointly, at least one of the persons must qualify and all of them must be eligible (see section 3 for details). However, in relation to the housing associations that are part of this Policy, some individual association may decide whether to allow a joint tenancy depending on their own rules.

6.6. Households with access to children/shared residency order

⁷ In accordance with the 'spent convictions' definitions outlined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974

As part of the assessment process, the applicant will record whether children live with them part of the week, whether or not this arrangement is set by the court or not. All children should be detailed on the application; however, applicants should be aware that this does not automatically mean they will be guaranteed an additional bedroom(s) for the child/children.

Social housing is a scarce resource and therefore social housing can only be allocated to those who have a housing need. In certain situations, a child will have a permanent place of residence with another parent and it will only be in exceptional circumstances that it would be reasonable to expect a child who has a home with one parent to be provided with another⁸.

It is the applicants responsibility to ensure they provide evidence of any court order or residency order and proof of child benefit and tax credits as part of the application process.

6.7. Housing for People Aged 55+

Some housing within the District is advertised and offered to specific target groups. The need for supported/sheltered properties for people aged over 55 is a priority in this District as the older population increases. See section 3.4 above for further information.

6.8. Notification of Registration

When an application has been fully assessed, the applicant will be notified in writing and this notification will include the following information:

- Whether they qualify for the register and, if not, why not;
- If the applicant does qualify, they will be notified of the registration date and unique Kent Homechoice registration reference number to enable the applicant to start bidding on properties, and;
- The allocated Band according to the assessed housing need and the type of property the applicant can bid for;
- Details of the applicant's right to request a review of the decision. This may include querying the allocated banding or in certain other specified circumstances (see the review section 9.1 below for further details).

6.9. Change of circumstances

It is the applicants' responsibility to let the Council or Managing Agent know of any change of circumstances for any and all members of the household and, where requested, provide proof of that change. Notification of a change in circumstances should be done as soon as possible and within 2 weeks of any change. Registered applicants should fill in the online change of circumstances form available at www.kenthomechoice.org.uk and submit evidence. Examples of a change in circumstances include, but are not limited to:

⁸ Holmes-Moorhouse v Richmond upon Thames 2009

Agenda Item 8

- a. A change of address or contact details, for any members of the prospective household;
- b. A change in medical condition or disability (either existing or newly diagnosed);
- c. A request for additional family members or other people wishing to be added to the application (This will be subject to an assessment and the rules set out in this policy);
- d. Any family member or any other person(s) on the application who is no longer part of the household; and
- e. Any significant changes in income, savings or assets that may require a reassessment of the application.

It does not follow that every change in circumstance will result in a change in priority. The information provided by the applicant will be used to reassess their priority and may result in no change to priority band, change to higher or lower priority or may result in your application being removed from the register if you no longer qualify under this policy.

The applicant will not actively be considered for social housing whilst the change of circumstance is being verified and we undertake to assess the change of circumstances as quickly as possible. Checks will be made on an application's current circumstances before an offer of a tenancy is made. Failure to notify the Managing Agent of a relevant change in circumstance may result in the application not being valid at the time of offer and they will not be offered a property.

6.10. Reviewing and Renewing Housing Applications

Every applicant on the Housing Register will have their application reviewed annually or more frequently, as required. This will be on a rolling basis depending on the operational processes adopted at any time for reviewing the Register. A letter will be sent to all applicants requesting confirmation of the current circumstances and whether they wish to remain on the Register, this may be sent electronically to a given email address. Failure to complete the annual review will result in the application being cancelled and the need to re-apply. If a reply is not received within 28 days of the date sent, the application will be cancelled in line with 6.11 below.

The Allocations Policy is monitored to make sure that allocations made reflect current housing needs and meet legislation requirements. This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly, particularly when changes in legislation and/or operational processes are required, to ensure the Housing Register continues to meet local housing needs.

6.11. Cancelling Applications

An application will be cancelled from the Housing Register in the following circumstances:

- a) At the request of the applicant;
- b) If the applicant (including all household members) become ineligible under one of the eligibility and qualification rules;

- c) When the applicant has been housed;
- d) On failure to reply to a review letter or requests for further information within a given time period;
- e) Where it is discovered that the applicant has given false or misleading information;
- f) If the applicant fails to bid on any properties, which are suitable to the household size and within preferred locations within a 12 month period.
- g) If the applicant refuses two suitable and reasonable offers of a property, for which the applicant has placed a bid.

In circumstances b), e), f) and g), the applicant will be notified in writing including the reason why the application has been cancelled and detailing the right to request a review of the decision. It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the Managing Agent of any changes which may result in the application being cancelled.

6.12. Short Term Intermediate Rented Properties

On occasions, where a property is hard to let, some homes may be available for short term lets for people with exceptional circumstances or who are waiting on the Housing Register and are about to be made homeless.

6.13. Deliberate Worsening of Circumstances

Where there is evidence that someone has deliberately made their housing situation worse in order to gain a higher priority on the Register, the assessment of their needs will be based on the circumstances before their situation changed through their deliberate worsening of their circumstances.

Examples of this may include, but not limited to:

- Allowing family members or others to move into a property who previously had suitable accommodation or the financial means to secure their own accommodation and this has resulted in the property being overcrowded;
- Moving from previously suitable or more suitable accommodation which it was reasonable for the applicant to continue to occupy, into a less suitable property;
- If the applicant was a Homeowner and has transferred their property to another family member within the last 5 years from the date of application to join the Housing Register.
- Giving up affordable and suitable private rented accommodation, which could have been kept to move in with other relatives or friends, creating a situation of overcrowding and/or sharing of bathroom/kitchen and/or a split household;
- Requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit.
- Where a customer fails to report or to cooperate with the landlord to get repairs done to the property which worsens the housing condition or where advice has been provided of appropriate actions the tenant needs to take to reduce or prevent a condition such as condensation but fails to do so which exacerbates a medical condition

Agenda Item 8

These are examples only. There will be other circumstances considered to decide whether someone has deliberately worsened their circumstances. The Managing Agent in consultation with the Council reserve the right to review and make a decision based on the information provided by the applicant. Further information may be requested from other sources (including family members and/or landlords) before a decision is made.

6.14. Misrepresentation, False Statements and Withholding Information

Applicants must supply full information about their circumstances, and must provide supporting evidence where required to do so. It is an offence to provide false information, or to withhold information, in order to fraudulently obtain a tenancy (Section 171, Housing Act 1996).

Any person who knowingly withholds any information about their housing application or deliberately provides false information, will be guilty of committing a criminal offence, and could face a conviction.

If an applicant has knowingly given false information the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council will:

- Suspend or disqualify the applicant from the housing register and/ or;
- Withdraw any offer of a tenancy and/ or;
- Work with the landlord to take County Court action for misrepresentation and/or eviction from a tenancy.

7. The Allocation Process

7.1. How are applicants selected for allocation?

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and are validated for the Register will have their individual housing needs assessed and their application will then be placed in a band according to their circumstances and housing priority. Each year the total amount of vacant social housing stock varies. Applicants and nominations for homes are made in accordance with the rules in section 7 of this policy. Allocations of a home is made by the relevant housing association/landlord in line with their own Eligibility Policy.

Nominations to the landlord to made the offer are made in line with the banding system. The banding system gives preference to those most in need. Properties will be offered to the bidder in the highest band who has the earliest Banding Date, some exceptions may apply to this process due to exceptional circumstances.

Further validation of the application details may be undertaken by the landlord, in line with their own Eligibility Policy, before an offer of accommodation is made. This is to determine that the applicant is still eligible to receive the nomination for a property and circumstances are up to date.

As part of this Policy, vacant homes will be advertised for two Kent Homechoice bidding cycles. If after two bidding cycles an applicant is not allocated to a property because either

- a) no eligible bids have been received for the property
- or
- b) those who have been offered the property have refused it

other means of identifying a suitable application for the property will be considered to minimise the time the property is vacant. This may include a direct let from a Registered Housing Provider’s waiting list or advertising it using other methods.

7.2. The Banding system

The banding system will normally be used to decide when to make an offer of accommodation and to whom. On occasions, properties may be allocated outside of this system in exceptional circumstances and as agreed by the Council and the Managing Agent. Once an application has been verified and all documents received, the Managing Agent will allocate an A to D banding criteria based the applicant’s housing needs based on their identified reasonable preference groups⁹

There are 4 bands and properties will be allocated in the following order based upon housing need:

Band A: Urgent need to move	These are applicants in need of the highest priority with an urgent need to move.
Band B: High Priority	These applicants in need of a high priority need to move.
Band C: Medium Priority	These applicants have a medium priority need to move.
Band D: Low Priority	These applicants have a low priority need to move.

Priority for an offer of housing is normally determined by the band and then the length of time the applicant has been placed in that Band. Medical priority will be assessed by the Managing Agent with the option of referring the case to an independent medical advisor if considered appropriate.

See Appendix 2 for the full definitions for each priority group awarded a banding. Usually, an application is linked to several factors across different priority bands but the highest factor will normally determine the band.

⁹ as defined in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996

Agenda Item 8

Applicants for older people's extra care housing schemes in the District will be assessed by a Joint Allocations Panel who will consider the applicant's care, support, social and housing needs. The Panel will include representatives from Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, the relevant housing association and care provider. On occasions extra care properties may be advertised and allocated outside the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

7.3. Banding Allocation Exceptions

Priority within a Band will be determined by the length of time the application has been placed in that Band and most allocations will be made to people in the highest band, and then by the time they have waited within that Band. In some exceptional circumstances an offer will be made to someone outside of the priority band and 'time registered' procedure. This is where there is an urgent need for an individual household to be housed or where there is an operational or financial need to house certain categories of applicants.

For example, if there are additional preferences due to an exceptionally urgent need for housing, an applicant may be placed at the front of the priority band and made an offer of housing as soon as possible. A decision whether a need to be housed is exceptionally urgent would be made by the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council. Examples of the circumstances, but are not limited to:

- A need to move due to a fire or flood or severe storm damage to a home;
- An imminent risk of violence and/or are to be housed through a witness protection programme;
- An applicant needs to house urgently as part of a multi-agency protocol such as a Public Protection arrangement (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) etc.;
- Where an applicant is homeless and in temporary accommodation that would not be suitable for more than a short period of time or where there is a need to move out of temporary accommodation to manage the budgetary impact on the Council as a whole.
- Where a vacant adapted property or a property designed to disability standards becomes available, it may be offered if an applicant has an established need for this property type, regardless of the date they were registered or banding.

In some circumstances, qualification criteria for a property will be restricted to households that meet specific criteria. Restrictions may apply to:

- properties subject to a local lettings policy;
- properties situated on rural exception sites;
- properties subject to an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Further details of exceptions to the banding criteria and local connection rules can be found in this Policy. The Managing Agent in consultation with the Council has the authority to allocate properties in exceptional circumstances outside the current banding system.

7.4. Type of property allocated to an Applicant

The Council wants to make the best use of affordable housing properties that become available in the District. When deciding the size and type of property for which applicants are eligible, the Government's National Bedroom Standard¹⁰ will normally apply. A summary of how a property size is calculated can be found below.

When bidding for properties, there are a number of very important considerations that an applicant should take into account. These include property size, location and affordability.

Applicants should note that not all types of accommodation are available in all of the towns and villages in the Sevenoaks District. Therefore, to maximise opportunities of being offered a property, it is important that an applicant bids for all types of properties that meet their housing needs in their preferred locations. **Applicants who do not bid on any suitable properties within a 12 month period and/or decline two reasonable offers on properties, including where an applicant has placed a bid AND the property meets their bedroom size within their preferred areas, this will result in the applicant being removed from the Housing Register, see section 10 for full details.**

Alternatively, if the applicant has been awarded an urgent (Band A) or high priority (Band B) and fails to bid or accept suitable properties, this priority banding may be removed at the discretion of the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council.

National Bedroom Standard Summary

When the National Bedroom Standard is used to calculate the size of the property (based on the household size), the following rules will apply:

The Bedroom Standard allocates a separate bedroom to each:

- married or cohabiting couple;
- adult aged 21 years or more;
- pair of adolescents aged 10-20 years of the same sex;
- pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex.

7.5. What are other considerations

The following circumstances may be taken into account when assessing the bedroom and household size requirements of an application for a property:

- Where an applicant has been identified as requiring a live-in carer (by Kent County Council Social Care Service), a need for a spare bedroom would be taken into account, subject to affordability checks;
- Prospective foster carers or adopters who would require an extra bedroom to accommodate a foster or adoptive child;

¹⁰ In accordance with s.169 of the Housing Act 1996

Agenda Item 8

- Where a property has been substantially adapted for the needs of a disabled person, the property will only be allocated to applicants if their household would benefit from those adaptations;
- Where an additional room may be required for medical or welfare reasons, applications would be assessed by the Social and Welfare Panel;
- Older people's sheltered housing will only be available if the applicant is over 55. However, the age criteria may vary for exceptional circumstances, including high support and care needs, and may differ for individual Registered Housing Providers.

7.6. Making an offer of a Property

Once an applicant has bid on a property and the advert closes, the details of the applicants who have bid on the property are passed to the relevant housing provider (who owns the property). Prior to an offer being made, the housing provider will contact the successful applicant to carry out further verification on eligibility and priority based on the housing provider's own Eligibility Policy.

Once verification is completed, the successful applicant will receive an offer of a tenancy in writing from the Registered Housing Provider (the landlord) which will include details of the weekly rent and any service charges. Once the applicant has been offered a property, they will be unable to place any further bids on other properties.

In certain situations, the offer will not be made, or, if made, may be withdrawn if:

- Since joining the scheme, the applicant has become ineligible;
- On verification of their details, the priority band has been incorrectly awarded due to the information received by the applicant, or due to mistakes in the assessment of the application itself;
- The circumstances of the applicant have changed since the priority band was awarded or they are no longer entitled to the same level of priority;
- The landlord has a good housing management reason not to offer a property.

If the applicant does not reply to an offer within 2 working days of receiving an offer, then the offer will be deemed to have been refused and the property will be offered to the next applicant on the shortlist who qualifies for that offer.

All offers will be formally made in writing. Notification in writing may be made by letter, e-mail or, in an urgent situation, by text.

7.7. Refusals of Offers

Unless the applicant is being housed under the homelessness legislation (see section 8), the applicant may refuse a maximum of two suitable and reasonable offers of accommodation¹¹. If both offers are considered suitable and reasonable and are refused, the applicant will be removed from the register and will not be able to re-apply for 12 months.

¹¹ 'suitable offers' is defined by the Homelessness (suitability of accommodation) (England) Order 2012)

Before any applicant is removed, checks will be made to determine if both the offers were reasonable in relation to the applicant's housing circumstances. The Applicant will have the right to request a review of the decision to be removed from the Register. See section 9.1 on the review process.

It is within the discretion of the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council to waive this removal.

7.8. Local Lettings Plan

The Housing Register may sometimes use local lettings plans (LLP) to nominate a property. A local lettings plan is an agreement between a developer and the Council about how properties will be allocated. It is used to facilitate sustainable communities:

- Where there have been particular management problems identified in an area;
- When nominating a new or refurbished development to ensure the creation of a balanced and sustainable community. This could include, for example, consideration of child density levels. In these circumstances a nominations agreement will be made between the housing provider and the Council during the development phase.
- To fulfil requirements under Planning Agreements (also known as section 106 conditions).
- To assist with wider strategic objectives of the Council, e.g. to remedy under-occupation of existing social rented homes.

The Council will monitor to ensure that allocations reflect the Local Lettings Plan and do not discriminate on equality grounds.

7.9. Sensitive Letting (property)

An individual property may be a 'sensitive let'. This could be where there is a confirmed history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity at that property involving the previous tenant or members of their household. A property will only be named a sensitive let with the approval of a senior manager for the Managing Agent or Council.

7.10. Social and Welfare Priority

The Social and Welfare Panel is able to consider and make decisions on applications relating to register eligibility, exemptions and banding when information on the application does not clearly fit within the assessment criteria, and additional social and/or welfare priorities may be taken into account. The Panel is made up of representatives from the Managing Agent, Sevenoaks District Council and the Registered Housing Provider. The Panel meets at least monthly to consider the supporting evidence and documentation provided by a relevant

Agenda Item 8

support worker or professional (this may include Housing Officer, Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer etc.) to consider urgent social and welfare priorities.

For further details on the Social and Welfare Panel can be found in Appendix 4.

7.11. Special Circumstances (applicant)

Under some special circumstances, it may be necessary to consider other priorities when assessing a person's need for housing. This will be decided at the time of application and/or when the Managing Agent or Registered Provider/Housing Association receives relevant information, usually having considered the advice of relevant professionals and in agreement with the applicant. This would generally be when the applicant would be at risk of harm if housed in a particular location, or may pose a risk to others.

Examples could be where there has been a breakdown in a violent relationship, or where someone is at serious risk of harm because they have acted as a witness in court, or where we have information from the Police or Probation Service that they may be a risk to the community.

Applicants are entitled to details of any criteria attached to their housing application, although provision will be made to ensure that confidentiality is not breached that would put others at risk. If a bid made under Choice Based Lettings (CBL) results in an applicant being at risk, the Managing Agent will discuss the suitability of the offer with the applicant. This may result in the offer of accommodation not being made. If a bid under the CBL scheme is made that may place an applicant at risk, the suitability of the offer will be discussed and a decision may then be made not to make such an offer of accommodation.

7.12. Specially adapted Properties

Some homes have been specially adapted to meet people's needs or have the potential to be adapted to meet people's needs, for example; homes for the disabled and for older people. To ensure we match people to appropriate homes and make the best use of the accommodation, properties currently adapted or suitable for adaptation will be advertised for those with a recognised need. The Council, in partnership with the housing provider, reserve the right to allocate such a property outside of the Choice Based Lettings scheme, band and date order system in order to best match that property to an applicant who requires an adapted property.

7.13. Providing Applicants with Choice

As far as possible, the Council wishes to give choice to anyone who is looking to obtain an offer of social housing. This is why the Council operates Choice Based Lettings scheme to give applicants the best possible choice over where they may wish to live. However, this must be set against the need to resolve a situation where there is an urgent need to provide settled or alternative housing. For example, where there are homeless households to whom there is a statutory duty to provide housing. Therefore, in certain circumstances, choice may be limited.

In very exceptional circumstances, the Council or Managing Agent may make a direct offer of suitable accommodation at any time in order to resolve a threat of homelessness, homelessness itself, or to reduce the financial burden on the Council of the cost of temporary accommodation:

- a. If an applicant is accepted by the Council as statutorily homeless and owed a duty to house¹²;
- b. If an applicant is granted homeless status¹³; or
- c. If an applicant has been awarded Homeless Prevention banding under this policy.

Please note that if an applicant falls into the categories listed above and refuse a suitable offer of accommodation, they will lose the allocated A or B priority banding.

An offer of suitable accommodation made will also bring to an end any statutory homeless duty owed¹¹. **The applicant will be warned of this consequence at the point the property is formally offered.** It is unlikely that the applicant would then receive a second offer within 12 months given lower banding. However, if they do receive such an offer and refuse that second offer, this applicant will be removed from the Register for a minimum period of 12 months.

8. Homelessness and Housing Advice

As part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, this Council has a statutory duty to provide 'advisory services' to anyone who is threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. As part of this service, the Council will work with individuals to complete a Personalised Housing Action Plan and help prevent them becoming homeless. This may include supporting them into alternative suitable accommodation, liaising with the current landlord and assessing their affordability to maximise income.

Not all housing problems can be dealt with through the Housing Register, or at least not in the required timescale, for example if someone is homeless or at threat of becoming homeless, or if there are problems with a landlord, or disrepair of a property.

If an individual is homeless or at risk of homelessness, the Council's Housing Advice Service can assess the housing needs under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

Someone requiring housing advice about housing problems, housing options or wish to make an application as homeless should contact the Housing Advice Service at Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG, tel: 01732 227000.

9. Requesting a Review and Making a Complaint

¹² & ¹¹ Housing Act 1996, sections 193(2) or 195(2)

¹³ Under section 166A (3) (a) (people who are homeless within the meaning of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996)

Agenda Item 8

9.1. The Review Process

Any applicants have the right to query a decision made in relation to a housing application to join the Register and any subsequent decisions. The applicant has a right to ask for a formal review of the decision within 21 days of receiving the notification letter.

An applicant has a legal right to a review of a decision in the following circumstances if they:

- a) Do not agree with the allocated Band, or with a banding change;
- b) Consider that a decision has been reached based on incorrect information;
- c) Disagree with a decision made on the basis of immigration status;
- d) Disagree with a decision made based on serious unacceptable behaviour;

If an applicant wishes to request a review of a decision, the process is set out below:

- i. The applicant will be notified in writing of any decisions made in respect of the application stating their right of review;
- ii. If an applicant wishes to seek a review, they must request a review of a decision within 21 days of being notified in writing, unless there are exceptional circumstances outside this timescale. The applicant must give reasons why they wish to have the decision reviewed, including where they believe an incorrect decision has been made, based on the facts.
- iii. The review request must be in writing (email is acceptable) stating the reasons for the review. The request for a review should be addressed to:

Housing Allocations Team
West Kent Housing Association
101 London Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 1AX
Email: housing.options@wkha.org.uk

- iv. The Managing Agent will undertake the review, which will be checked by a Housing Manager at Sevenoaks District Council who has not been involved in making the original decision.
- v. The review will be considered on the basis of the allocation scheme, any legal requirements and all relevant information. This will include information provided by the applicant on any relevant developments since the original decision was made.
- vi. Aim to complete the process and inform them in writing of the decision within 21 working days of receipt of the request and supporting information, after taking into account any additional information that is provided. Alternatively, the applicant will be advised of any time extension required to make the decision.
- vii. The applicant may also raise their dissatisfaction through the West Kent Housing Association's Complaints Policy which is detailed on their website at www.westkent.org.

- viii. The right to a review of a decision does not prejudice the applicant's right to direct complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman, the Housing Ombudsman or other appropriate bodies.

9.2. Making a Complaint

To make a complaint about this Policy, complaints should first be made using the Stage 1 and 2 of the Council's complaints procedure. A copy of the current procedure is available on the Council's website at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk.

If the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, a further complaint can be made direct to the Local Government Ombudsman service. The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service run by central government to make sure that Local Authorities provide the required standard of service to customers.

The Ombudsman will normally deal with a complaint if a customer feels they have been treated unfairly as a result of maladministration.

All complaints to the Ombudsman must be in writing. Applicants can request assistance from their local Councillor or get someone else to write on their behalf. The contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint about how the Managing Agent has handled a housing application or the operational process of an application, please use West Kent Housing Association's Complaints Policy which is detailed on their website at www.westkent.org, in the first instance before using the Council's Complaint's procedure as detailed above.

10. Removal from the Register

10.1. Refusal of Suitable Offers

If any applicant refuses 2 suitable or reasonable offers¹⁴ in a 12 month period they will be removed from the Housing Register and will not be able to reapply for a period of 12 months.

Please note: that term ‘accommodation’ means any accommodation which matches the housing needs.

If an individual is owed a main homelessness duty, the two offer policy does not apply and the refusal of one suitable offer will end the homelessness duty. This will also result in the Council no longer owing the applicant a statutory homelessness duty as one offer has been refused.

If an applicant has been awarded an ‘urgent need to move’ priority banding A, they may be removed from the Register if they refuse 1 suitable and reasonable offer which meets the housing needs in preferred locations, as the housing need is classed as an urgent priority.

Any decision to waive the removal from the Register rule for refusing two offers due to exceptional circumstances will be made by the Managing Agent in consultation with the Council.

10.2. Failure to bid

If an applicant does not bid on any property within a period of 12 months, the applicant will be removed from the Housing Register and will not be able to reapply for a period of 12 months, unless they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

The Managing Agent in consultation with the Council have the authority to waive this removal.

Note: If the applicant is granted a priority or urgent band (A or B), the applicant may lose this priority banding if they are not bidding within a reasonable period of time, which could be as little of 3 months.

10.3. Giving False Information

It is a criminal offence if, when applying for housing, an applicant knowingly gives false information or withhold information relevant to an application. An offence is also committed if an applicant allows a third party to provide false information on their behalf.

If an applicant is found to have withheld or given false information and are removed from the Register, they will not be able to reapply for a minimum period of 12 months. Decisions to remove anyone from the register will be made

¹⁴ ‘suitable offers’ is defined by the Homelessness (suitability of accommodation) (England) Order 2012)

based on the seriousness of the false information given and an assessment of why the information was withheld.

11. Applicant Information and Rights

11.1. Confidentiality

Information received in relation to an application will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Confidential Information held about customers will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- Where the individual has consented to the disclosure;
- Where the Council is required by law to make such a disclosure;
- Where disclosure is made in accordance with a recognised Information Sharing Protocol or for reasons of public protection.

11.2. Data Protection and Information Sharing

The Managing Agent and Council will ensure that all information provided by an applicant, and by third parties in relation to an application, is treated in strictest confidence. In doing so, this will comply fully with legal requirements¹⁵.

We will seek an applicant's consent to share personal information about them or any member of the household.

Where an applicant does not consent to their information being shared, this may result in an application not being complete and consequently, unless there is an exceptional reason for not consenting, the applicant will not be admitted onto the Housing Register.

The applicant's information may be shared irrespective of whether consent has been obtained in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will include:

- a) In accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act¹⁶
- b) For the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime and fraud.
- c) Where there is a serious threat to the applicant or a third party, including staff or contractors.
- d) Where information is relevant to the management or support duties of the proposed landlord or any nominated support organisation, to ensure the health and safety of the applicant, a member of the household or a member of staff.

11.3. Equal Opportunities and Monitoring

Sevenoaks District Council is committed to ensuring that its policy and procedures in the letting of property are non-discriminatory and that all customers are able to access the service especially taking account of any

¹⁵ Data Protection Act 1998, in relation to the way the Council stores and processes the information we hold on applicants, and with s.166(4) of the Housing Act 1996.

¹⁶ Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 115

Agenda Item 8

vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

To identify the needs of our customers, the application form will have specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disabilities and other relevant criteria. This information will be used to monitor the impact of the policy on minority and specific needs groups and to make such amendments as may be required, to ensure no group is disadvantaged by the policy.

Under the Equality Act¹⁷, this Council is required to give due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, in their exercise of a public function. To comply with our duties in the Equality Act, 'reasonable preference' categories are given priority for housing and the overall customer satisfaction with the scheme is monitored.

11.4. Treating all applications fairly

Elected Councillors cannot be involved in assessing housing applications or the allocation of housing. However, this does not prevent them from seeking or providing information on behalf of their residents.

In order to ensure that we treat all applicants fairly, any application for housing from Councillors or employees of the Council or a partner Housing Association must be disclosed to the Managing Agent or Council. Canvassing is not allowed. These applications will be assessed in the normal way, but an offer of housing must be approved by a manager at Sevenoaks District Council with responsibility for housing.

11.5. Right to information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes it a requirement for every Local Authority to produce a Publication Scheme which sets out all the information it makes available to the public and whether copies of that information are available free of charge. The Publication Scheme includes information that the Council is legally obliged to publish. The Scheme is also intended to assist in developing a culture in which openness and transparency are encouraged which supports the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. This duty does not apply to registered social housing providers.

12. Glossary

AA	-	Attendance Allowance
AFIP	-	Armed Forces war pension
CBL	-	Choice Based Lettings Scheme
DBS	-	Disclosure and Barring Service
DCLG	-	Department of Communities and Local Government

¹⁷ Equality Act 2010, section 149

DLA	-	Disability Living Allowance
HERO	-	Housing, Energy, Retraining and Options
KCC	-	Kent County Council
LCHO	-	Low Cost Home Ownership
LLP	-	Local Lettings Plan
MAPPA	-	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement
MARAC	-	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
PIP	-	Personal Independence Payment
SDC	-	Sevenoaks District Council
SDHR	-	Sevenoaks District Housing Register
SLA	-	Service Level Agreement
TA	-	Temporary accommodation

13. Appendix 1 - Definitions

Adult	An adult is a person aged 18 or over who has legal control over their person, actions and decisions and is therefore regarded as independent, self-sufficient and responsible.
Affordable Housing	Accommodation provided by 'Registered Housing Providers'.
Allocation	A housing authority allocates accommodation (under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996) when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selects a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by that authority • nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority • nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a Private Registered Provider
Assured tenant	A person with an assured shorthold tenancy, including of an Affordable Rent property.
Child	A dependent child is defined as being under 16 years of age, or under 18 and in, or about to begin, full-time education or training. A 16 or 17 year old may not be seen as dependent if they are living independently, have been excluded by parents or are leaving care etc.
Common Travel Area	Includes the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland.
Council	Sevenoaks District Council or its Managing Contractors.
District	The whole locality area for the Council of the Sevenoaks District.
Employment	Paid employment in the District.
Exception Site	A site outside the normal development boundary of a village or market town that has been granted planning permission to provide accommodation for local people. Allocation arrangements are specified in a Section 106 Agreement.

Guarantor	Person who holds the responsibility to ensure rent is paid as well as any losses, expenses or damages where the young person fails to carry out their obligations under the agreement.
Homeless	An individual who lacks housing including a person whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility (Shelter) that provides temporary living.
Housing Register	A list of applicants who are eligible to apply for housing in the District.
Intentionally homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a person deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence ceases to occupy accommodation (or the likely result of being forced to leave accommodation) and; • the accommodation is available for the person's occupation; and • it would have been reasonable for the person to continue to occupy the accommodation.
Managing Agent	'West Kent Housing Association' who manages the Sevenoaks District Housing Register on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council as part of a Service Level Agreement.
Secure tenant	A person with a flexible tenancy granted under s.107A of the Housing Act 1985
Statutory homelessness	Statutory duties on local housing authorities to ensure that advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness is available free of charge
We/our	This is intended to mean Sevenoaks District Council

14. Appendix 2 - Banding Criteria

Full definitions within each priority group to be added.

Banding System A-D	Housing Need Priority Group or Circumstance
Band A Urgent Need to Move	Imminent risk of serious harm
	Demolition or Compulsory Purchase Order
	Major works
	Statutory overcrowding
	Emergency medical condition, welfare need or disability
	Young people in care
	Releasing adapted housing
	Agricultural workers (Rent Agriculture Act)
Band B High Priority to Move	Homeless households in TA for over 6 months
	Qualification under Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
	Serious Medical, Welfare or Disability needs
	Hardship (support or employment)
	Under-occupying in social housing
	Overcrowding in social housing
	Serious hazards assessed in private sector housing
	Moving to housing specific for older people
	Members of the Armed Forces
	Parental eviction - at home for over 12 months
Applicants in supported housing	
Band C Medium Priority to Move	Homeless households in TA under 6 months
	Made and eligible for homeless application but not in priority need
	Rough Sleepers (verified)
	Parental eviction - able to remain for 12 months
	No or shared access to facilities essential to health and wellbeing
	Overcrowding (as defined by the Bedroom Standard) with no priority need (as defined by Housing Act 1996)
	Non-successor - low priority
	Intentionally homeless
	Non critical or serious Medical, Welfare or Disability needs
No access to a kitchen	
Band D: Low Priority to	Need to share kitchen, bathroom, WC or living room

Move	Rural Exception site applicants and Parish Connection
	Over 55 year olds with no housing priority need but want to move into housing designated for older people
	Applicants banding reduced for a period of time

15. Appendix 3 - Documents required for Housing Register application

Proof of an applicant's identity, current address, household details and finances are required before the application can be accepted onto the Housing Register to verify the information provided.

Required documents	Examples
Proof of identity At least one proof of identity must include a photograph	Birth certificate Valid Passport
Current proof of residence One of the following for each person aged over 16 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent card/book • Recent bill or credit payment book for gas, electricity, water supply or telephone • Confirmation from Employer or DSS • Tenancy Agreement • Full UK driving licence • Council tax bill • Notice to quit, Section 21 or Property repossession order if applicable
If the applicant is a Council or Housing Association tenant	Copy of the tenancy agreement
Proof of Income All of these are relevant for each member of the household over 16 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last three months' wage slips (or 13 weeks if paid weekly) or latest tax return if self employed • Proof of all benefits received i.e. income support, DLA, etc. • Disbursement details (if there has/will be a house sale in last 3 years)
Proof of Financial details	<p>The most recent three months' full bank statements for every account held by each person aged over 16 years. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank, building society, savings and post office accounts. <p>Each statement must show all transactions because summary statements or balance sheets will not be accepted.</p>
Proof of any other assets held	<p>Copies of other assets including stocks, shares and bonds - including any assets owned outside the UK.</p> <p>A current valuation of any property owed including outside the UK.</p>
Proof of income from child benefits or equivalent	<p>Children living with the applicant - Proof of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child benefit

Agenda Item 8

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Tax and Working Tax Credits• Custody or Residence Order• A letter from a Solicitors confirming that they acted for the applicant in relation to a dispute regarding custody/ residence of children & how it was resolved• Confirmation from DSS or Social Services
Maternity Certificate	If pregnant, a copy of the Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) which a doctor/midwife will provide at the 26 weeks pregnant stage.

16. Appendix 4 - Social and Welfare Priority Assessment Panel

The purpose and frequency of the Panel

Social and Welfare Panel is able to consider and make decisions on applications, exemptions and banding when information on the application does not clearly fit within the assessment criteria, and additional social and/or welfare priorities may be taken into account.

The Panel meets at least monthly (more frequently if required) to consider the supporting evidence and documentation provided by a relevant support worker or professional (this may include Housing Officer, Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer etc.) to consider urgent social and welfare priorities. Any evidence will be sent to Panel representatives in advance for consideration.

Panel Representatives

The Panel will consist of the following representatives:

- Sevenoaks District Council - Housing Advice Team Leader or relevant representative with responsibility for Housing;
- West Kent Housing Association Senior Officer or their relevant representative;
- Additional members co-opted as and when required.

Panel Process

A written assessment and supporting evidence is considered by the Panel to establish whether a social and welfare priority should be awarded, as the evidence indicates an exceptional reason for a change in priority banding or housing. **All options for resolving the applicant's difficulties will be considered before any additional priority may be awarded.**

Some examples of social and welfare priority that may be considered by the Panel include:

- Urgent welfare needs in order to deal with child protection issues arising under the Children Act;
- To provide further protection and reduce the risk level to vulnerable adults or children, as the current home could contribute to deteriorate to the household member at risk;
- Where an applicant requires a type of special housing provision such as where additional care or support is required for a long term medical condition or disability;
- Families with a child with medical or behavioural difficulties, which may require an additional bedroom or a particular type of accommodation;
- Requiring additional space to accommodate a carer or to foster/adopt (confirmation in writing will be requested from the relevant County Council or adoption agency);
- The need for rehousing due to irreconcilable neighbour disputes when all other options have been exhausted including mediation etc. This may include

acts (or attempted acts) of violence, threats, witnesses of crime, harm, intimidation and harassment.

- Applicant requests for exceptions to this Policy, such as increase affordability due to a change of circumstances (ill health, loss of work etc.) or to alleviate hardship;
- Requests for a transfer or rehousing where there has been a bereavement or personal tragedy in the property or area;
- Applicants that may be excluded from this Policy but where exceptional circumstances need to be considered to establish qualification.

Monitoring and Outcomes

All decisions and reasons for that decision will be recorded and the applicant informed of the decision. Additional evidence or information may be required before the Panel can make a final decision. In exceptional cases, an applicant may be asked to attend the Panel to provide clarification on their case.

A review date will be set (at least annually) to ensure that the priority award remains valid; the applicant at review may be required to re-apply for a Panel assessment. If the applicant has been awarded an 'urgent need to move' priority banding is A, they will be removed from the Register if they refuse 1 suitable and reasonable offer which meets the urgent housing needs and is within their preferred locations. Applicants who have been awarded as an urgent priority banding of A will be reviewed on a six monthly basis to see if any help or support is required with bidding and to ensure this urgent priority awarded is still valid and appropriate.

It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Managing Agent of any changes in their housing and/or social and welfare circumstances to enable priority to be re-assessed. Failure to notification may result in the loss of any priority banding.

This page is intentionally left blank

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

Appendix C

This template should be completed alongside proposals that will be subject to decision by Councillors.

Summary of decision to be made:	Draft Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy for consultation		
Lead Officer (job title):	Hayley Brooks, Head of Housing and Health		
Date the final decision is due to be made:	27/02/2018	Date this assessment commenced:	1/10/2017
Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty?	Yes / No		
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes / No		
Advance equality of opportunity	Yes / No		
Foster good relations	Yes / No		
If the answer is yes to any of the above, proceed with the assessment. If the answer is no, please say why and summarise any evidence:			
For each of the following characteristics, summarise any existing data, consultation activity, interpretation of the impacts and actions that can be taken to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts:			
Characteristic:	Data and consultation	Summary of impact	Actions
Disability	Sevenoaks District Housing Needs Survey 2017, Health Profiles, 2011 Census, Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy, West Kent Homelessness Strategy	The updated 'reasonable preference' criteria and clearer definitions and processes for the applicants relating to banding priorities will ensure openness and transparency for people who may have a disability.	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Carers	As above	Enhanced wording which supports the role of carers as part of a social housing application ensures that carers needs are considered at all times	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Race	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of race	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Gender	As above	None - the allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Age	As above	Updates within the 'reasonable preference' criteria ensures 16/17 care leavers and over 55	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

Appendix C

		year olds with an identified housing need are given priorities and will provide greater clarity and transparency.	
Religion / Belief	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of religion or belief	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Sexual Orientation	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of sexual orientation	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Pregnancy / Maternity	As above	The current allocations policy prioritises pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic, no changes are recommended to this.	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Marital or Civil Partnership Status	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of this status	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Gender reassignment	As above	The allocations policy aims to treat all applicants equally irrespective of gender reassignment	WKEP Aim: Other actions as a service provider
Summary of impacts : (to be included in committee reports)	<p>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 impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people.</p> <p>The decisions recommended through this paper will result in updating the Housing Allocations Policy to provide clearer definitions and transparency for those in the greatest of need including reasonable preference groups and protected characteristics. This will provide greater opportunities for people with</p>		

Agenda Item 8

Draft EqIA Template – for DECISIONS

Appendix C

	an identified housing need to join the Social Housing Register in this District and prioritise those where the need is the greatest.		
Please tick the outcome of this assessment:	No impact	Adjust the policy	Continue the policy
Date assessment will be reviewed:	28/02/2018		

This page is intentionally left blank

HOUSING STRATEGY 2017 - PROGRESS REPORT (NUMBER 1)

Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 27 February 2018

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status For Information

Key Decision No

This report supports the Key Aim of delivering the District Council’s Housing Strategy and which, in turn, supports wider community strategy as set out in the Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Gavin Missons, Ext. 7332

Recommendation to the Housing and Health Advisory Committee: That Members note the content of this report.

Reason for recommendation: To advise Members of progress against a wide-range of agreed objectives in the District Council’s latest ‘Housing Strategy 2017: *Wellbeing Starts at Home*’.

Introduction and Background

- 1 In July 2017, the District Council adopted its new ‘Housing Strategy 2017: *Wellbeing Starts at Home*’. This sets out the District Council’s key housing objectives for the coming years. In this latest edition, there is a particular focus on health outcomes through a wide-range of housing interventions - all of which will help to contribute to health and wider community strategy.
- 2 As set out under Governance and Monitoring, Officers are required to provide the Housing and Health Advisory Committee (HHAC) with bi-annual progress reports in order to monitor the effectiveness of the new Housing Strategy. A summary of progress across each of the three strategic objectives and in the first reporting period (Jul - Dec 17) is set out at Appendix A, therefore.
- 3 At present, there are no proposed adjustments to the approved Housing Strategy framework, though, as would be expected, operational activity has been continuing to develop.

Agenda Item 9

Summary

- 4 In summary, there has been significant progress against the new Housing Strategy and across its three strategic objectives during its first 6-months of implementation.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no further financial considerations at this stage.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no further legal implications or risks to consider at this stage.

Equality Assessment

The Housing Strategy was subject to an equality impact assessment at its development stage and there are no further considerations required at present.

Appendices

Housing Strategy 2017: Wellbeing Starts at Home

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/file/1028/housing_strategy_2017

Background Papers None

Richard Morris

Chief Planning Officer

HOUSING STRATEGY 2017: PROGRESS REPORT (NUMBER 1) - APPENDIX A

Officer responsibility - GM: Gavin Missons / HB: Hayley Brooks / JC: James Cox

NO	OBJECTIVE		PROGRESS	STATUS
1.1	The Council will consider its surplus land for housing.	GM	<i>This is now a routine consideration and we have continued to explore opportunities on a number of District Council-owned sites in recent months. Where on-site provision has not been an option, we have been negotiating commuted sum payments to invest in affordable housing elsewhere and/or to deliver other supporting housing strategy. This will also be a key consideration of the proposed affordable housing company, should it proceed.</i>	Ongoing
Page 103	The Council will seek to develop sites to maximise land use and inform future housing strategy.	GM	<i>Through the 'Issues and Options' stage of the Local Plan review, increased density is being put forward as a potential option to increased house building. In addition, the 'Call for Sites' process could potentially create other new opportunities to explore. We are also exploring the possibility of developing micro-homes and, in doing so, would be able to maximise land use through high-density development. Through working with social housing providers, we are also developing schemes to maximise available space and to minimise, where possible, under-used communal space through good design. In this financial year, we are expecting to complete 49 new affordable homes.</i>	Ongoing
1.3	The Council will promote housing that is technology-ready and with space to enable home working.	GM	<i>This is being factored into current developments and through the Local Plan review. For instance, we are considering targets for 'Lifetime Homes' on new development and this will also support technology-ready housing for older and vulnerable people. In respect of home working, we have explored modular units with workstation areas. Broadband provision continues to be taken forward corporately as a priority and will</i>	Ongoing

			<i>contribute to this area of our work. We are also continuing to explore potential pilot project funding for emerging technologies.</i>	
1.4	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.	GM	<i>As above, this is a developing area of our work and we are exploring different systems and devices. In addition, the District Council's partners are starting to introduce plug-and-place telecare systems through a retrofit programme and the effectiveness of this all will be monitored. Monitoring is also underway on several energy savings devices installed in properties as part of a joint project delivered by the District Council with Dartford BC and Government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (at time of project delivery, DECC). With the potential for modern modular provision, again this is an opportunity to supply and test IT-based technologies.</i>	Ongoing
1.5 Page 104	The Council will aim that all new affordable housing developments will be fit for life.	GM	<i>All new and planned affordable housing developments will meet related Building Regulations and where possible, other nationally prescribed standards - some of which have superseded the 'Code for Sustainable Homes', which was a previous target we applied to social housing. In addition, the Enterprise Way scheme in Edenbridge, which will include 120 x new units of affordable housing, will be to 100% 'Lifetime Homes Standard' (LHS). The Council's recently completed Local Housing Needs Study (LHNS) has recommended targets for LTH and fully wheelchair accessible housing. These recommendations have now been transferred across to the 'Issues and Options' stage of the Local Plan review and are to be considered in the new planning framework.</i>	Ongoing
1.6	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	GM	<i>This study was completed in August 2017 and the results are being fed into relevant strategy. The study is also now available on the District Council's website. The results have been provided to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and will be used as additional evidence in the new economic development strategy. In addition, we created an online survey and undertook further consultation - and received good feedback. This work will also help to inform our intermediate housing work programme and the potential for a grant product to assist households into shared-ownership housing, which is</i>	Completed

	housing planning gains).		<i>currently being explored. We are also looking to develop planning policy for essential workers in response to the local employer survey.</i>	
1.7	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.	GM	<i>All new housing is now being actively marketed by the District Council well ahead of completion to increase local take-up. Previously, marketing was the responsibility of the relevant provider. This was most recently undertaken on a new affordable housing development at the old Churchill School site in Westerham, which includes 38 new homes and 9 of those being for shared-ownership, where an advert was placed in the District Council's In Shape magazine. In addition, we actively promoted 8 new shared-ownership units at Gunpowder Cottages in Leigh, this time through the Sevenoaks Chronicle, and these were all secured for households with a local connection. In doing so, we have maximised local take-up of new housing units by making local people aware of housing well ahead of completion. Three shared ownership homes have also just completed on the United House site in Swanley and even without proactive marketing by SDC, these have all been sold to households with a local connection to SDC. Planned housing surgeries will also enable us to actively promote upcoming schemes. We have been approached several times by households wishing to explore shared-ownership housing and have provided relevant information. We have produced an information leaflet with intermediate housing options and these have been made available (due to be updated to take account of new products). We have also been in discussion with the Zone Agent and are looking at the option to include a promotional flyer with Council Tax bills or through a similar method.</i>	Ongoing
1.8	The Council will encourage housing associations to work towards the <i>Chartered Institute of Housing's Shared-Ownership: Charter for Housing Framework</i> to promote the benefits of shared-ownership housing.	GM	<i>This is to be further explored in 2018 and also on any District Council housing through its company, should this go ahead.</i>	Ongoing

1.9	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.	GM	<i>We are increasingly working with a wider range of providers and will continue to identify others that operate with different models of delivery. For instance, we have recently started working with Hastoe Housing Association on a potential rural housing project and Clarion Housing Association was in the running for one of our new housing schemes. We have also met with Golding Homes to explore partnership working and the organisation is considering taking on a phase of an existing scheme. In doing so, we are increasing our chances of creating financially viable projects through different business models and this has already proven to be a successful approach. The requirement for any new landlord to provide a strong local customer base will be an important aspect of our negotiations.</i>	Ongoing
1.10	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.	GM	<i>No projects have required additional funding during this reporting period, though we have considered several and which we are working up with partners.</i>	Ongoing
1.11	The Council will explore the possibility of a new shared-equity rural affordable housing product as a potential alternative and to overcome issues associated with the new ‘Starter Homes’ product.	GM	<i>We are still awaiting final guidance on ‘Starter Homes’ before making on a decision on this option. However, we have been in early discussions with English Rural Housing Trust about a potential alternative product. Current professional commentary is that the Starter Homes initiative has been effectively shelved.</i>	Ongoing
1.12	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	GM	<i>The Council is currently in the process of investigating the potential to set up a new arms-length affordable housing company. We have been exploring several models of delivery during this process. We have also secured commuted sums on sites where affordable housing has been deemed unsuitable. These funds are currently invested in other housing strategy objectives.</i>	Ongoing

	Strategy.			
1.13	Through the 2016-21 affordable homes programme, the Council will work with <i>Homes England</i> in order to identify any sites suitable for it to purchase directly for 'Starter Homes' provision.	GM	<i>We are still awaiting further guidance from Government on the new 'Starter Homes' product, though are already considering and modelling such provision when developing planned future scheme tenure mixes and with financial viability considerations. Current professional commentary is that the Starter Homes initiative has been effectively shelved.</i>	Ongoing
1.14	The Council will seek new investment opportunities for affordable housing through the <i>Kent & Medway Economic Partnership</i> .	GM	<i>No funding opportunities in this reporting period.</i>	Ongoing
1.15	The Council will cross-reference data from the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> 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 <i>Kent Rural Housing Protocol 2017</i> .	GM	<i>The Council's new LHNS has provided data down to ward level and this is being used, along with several completed bespoke rural housing needs surveys, to assess need. With two key sources of evidence, we can much more accurately assess need when working up potential housing projects in the District's rural areas. At present, there are several projects at various stages of progress and we have had considerable activity in this area of our work in recent months - which is quite rare. We are also exploring the potential for specialist housing on rural exceptions sites - for instance, to provide suitable downsizing market housing options for local older people and key worker housing. This, again, is being considered as part of the Local Plan review. The newly-formed 'Community Land Trust (CLT)' product, which we have set up in partnership with TMBC and TWBC, will also help to contribute to this objective in a positive way. We have continued to work with Kent partners to promote this work programme more widely and have also worked with 'Action with Communities in Rural Kent' to introduce its new 'Coffee Caravan Project' into a number of villages and to promote the support service more widely.</i>	Ongoing
1.16	The Council will review its remaining land in order to identify any possible	GM	<i>We are working with West Kent Housing Association to potentially develop a number of sites for new affordable housing, including some joint ventures. This is part of a drive to achieve additional affordable</i>	Ongoing

	development opportunities and any potential joint ventures with partners by combining sites.		<i>housing units through a supplementary small sites programme, e.g. old housing, garage and in-fill sites. Although small in scale, this work will create much needed additional affordable housing in areas where supply is typically limited. Examples are a scheme which will involve the demolition of 2 x homes and the potential 4 x new affordable homes in Sevenoaks Weald and another site which will provide 2 x new affordable homes in Seal.</i>	
Page 108	1.17 Through the <i>Community Housing Fund</i> , the Council will work with <i>Action with Rural Communities in Kent</i> , 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.	GM	<i>We have progressed these two projects and have now agreed an SLA with Action with Communities in Rural Kent to deliver the CLT project. Through external funding from the then CLG, we have created a West Kent Hub branded and named 'Community Housing: West Kent' to promote the setting up of community land trusts with the aim of delivering rural housing. The idea of these schemes is to then potentially progress to looking at delivering and/or operating other community assets such as village shops. We are also continuing to work up a self-build agreement with additional funding received from the then CLG - again, potentially as a West Kent project and linked in with the CLT project. This area of our work is likely to grow through 2018 and we are already in contact with a number of parishes to explore options.</i>	Ongoing
	1.18 Additional action to be considered in the Local Plan review: To adopt a rural policy that allows specialist housing on exceptions sites.	GM	<i>This was included in the Issues and Options paper as part of the Local Plan review and will potentially be put forward for formal consideration as formal policy.</i>	Ongoing
	1.19 In partnership with the <i>South East England Council's Group</i> , 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.	GM	<i>This has been undertaken in several ways by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and is also now being undertaken at Kent level through the Kent Housing Group. On a recently completed scheme, we managed to secure rents on 5 x new 4-bed houses (Ryewood) that were well below the relevant LHA levels and this enabled us to overcome affordability issues on larger 4-bed housing - something that has typically been an issue since the introduction of the Affordable Rent tenure back in 2012. Even so, rent levels are at £250</i>	Ongoing

			<i>per week so affordability for those in low paid employment is questionable. The Government's new grant programme for Social Rented housing will provide us with an opportunity to try to secure truly affordable larger family homes.</i>	
1.20	The Council will review related data down to ward level in the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> and feed this into the review of the <i>Local Plan</i> .	GM	<i>As above, the Housing Strategy and supporting evidence has been fed into the Local Plan review. In addition, data is being overlaid with other evidence at local level to better enable us to understand current needs and, in doing so, much better plan over the long-term.</i>	Ongoing
1.21	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.	GM	<i>We are continuing to explore options and seeking to develop the institutional private rented sector and we have already looked at 'Build to Rent' units on a particular site. There is also scope for this tenure, should the affordable housing company go ahead. This is likely to be a growing area of our work and one which could support those groups which do not typically qualify for affordable housing and may not be able to afford to buy, or those simply wanting an option other than home ownership. The revision to National Planning Policy Framework (expected Summer 2018) will clarify the status of private rented housing as an affordable housing tenure.</i>	Ongoing
1.22	The Council will work with its housing association partners to explore suitable cross-subsidy projects with an element of private rented housing.	GM	<i>No opportunities have arisen in this period, though this is being considered in the Local Plan review. Again, this is likely to be a growing area of our work, however, and one which will help us to create viable schemes which include an element of affordable housing.</i>	Ongoing
1.23	The Council will consult private landlords to identify other potential incentives and seek to develop a more attractive landlord package.	HB	<i>The Private Sector Lettings Scheme has been revised to include more incentives for landlords. A Letting Agent Business Breakfast is being held to see how the Council can work better with them on identifying rental properties. A new Landlord Liaison Officer is being recruited to proactively encourage and source landlords to offer housing options. Annual West Kent Landlords' Forum being held in March to gather</i>	Ongoing

			<i>information from landlords.</i>	
1.24	Through its company, the Council will explore direct provision of private rented housing.	GM	<i>As above, too early to progress.</i>	Ongoing
1.25	The Council will cross-reference local market intelligence with data from the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> and feed this into the <i>Local Plan</i> review and with a particular emphasis given to the need for market housing for older people.	GM	<i>Again, this has been fed into the Local Plan review and market housing for older people has been identified as a priority to enable downsizing/rightsizing through a better choice of product and in areas where such housing is required. We are currently working on such a project in one of the District's villages and are already speaking to the provider to ensure that local marketing is undertaken to ensure those local to the village with have first choice.</i>	Ongoing
1.26	The Council will cross-reference specific <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> data on micro-homes with wider market research and feed this into local housing strategy and the emerging the <i>Local Plan</i> .	GM	<i>The potential for micro-homes was included in the Issues and Options paper and will be formally considered as part of the Local Plan review. However, we are researching several different types/products and building up in-house knowledge. We are also due to visit a scheme to view micro-homes. We are also monitoring provision with other local authorities that are increasingly turning to this form of housing, both as a temporary and/or permanent solution.</i>	Ongoing
1.27	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.	GM	<i>Until such time as a company is set up, this cannot be progressed.</i>	Ongoing
1.28	Should a pilot prove to be successful, the Council will also seek to work with	GM	<i>Again, as above, too early to progress.</i>	Ongoing

	<i>Homes England</i> , housing associations and other partners to deliver additional micro-homes schemes.			
1.29	The Council will explore external funding opportunities for modular housing, including Government's Accelerated Construction initiative.	GM	<i>No opportunities with this programme, though we will monitor this and any successor programmes for opportunities.</i>	Ongoing
1.30	The Council will explore other larger modular products with a view to widening its enabling role through alternative construction methods and related business models.	GM	<i>Investigations have taken place to identify different models and products which could be considered in upcoming developments. Again, this is all being considered in the Local Plan review.</i>	Ongoing
Page 111	The Council will share any consequent best practice in this new area of modular housing provision.	GM	<i>As above, too early to progress.</i>	Ongoing
1.32	The Council will cross-reference data from the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> 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.	GM	<i>The District Council's Local Housing Needs Study has provided additional data and this will be considered as part of the development of a West Kent hub to take forward the delivery of this initiative. External funding has been received to do so. The District Council now operates a live register.</i>	Ongoing
1.33	The Council will also seek to work with <i>Homes England</i> , housing associations and other partners to explore the delivery of self-build and custom-build	GM	<i>As above, this will be progressed when the hub is set up. That said, we have already considered such provision on a number of sites as we seek to determine tenure/type options. We are also exploring the potential for 5 x self-build plots on a site in Swanley.</i>	Ongoing

	housing.			
1.34	The Council will work with the <i>Right-to-Build Taskforce</i> to further develop its current database and to prepare plans for land identification and allocation.	GM	<i>This is all in the early stages, though CLG funding has been secured to progress this objective and we are currently looking at a West Kent project. In addition, the Local Plan review and ‘Call for Sites’ process will also address this objective.</i>	Ongoing
1.35	Through its recent <i>Community Housing Fund</i> and additional <i>Self and Custom Build Housing</i> funding allocations, the Council will explore the potential to develop a joint West Kent approach with its partner local authorities.	GM	<i>Now we have set up the West Kent CLT project, work is underway to explore a similar arrangement with TMBC and TWBC.</i>	Ongoing
1.36	The Council will share any consequent best practice in this developing form of housing provision.	GM	<i>Too early to progress.</i>	Ongoing
2.1	The Council will review and update its <i>Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy</i> placing much greater emphasis on health outcomes.	JC	<i>A new Housing Assistance Policy came into effect on 22nd November 2017 and emphasis has been placed on speeding up the Disabled Facility Grant process, assisting in accelerated hospital discharge because of housing issues and providing financial assistance in preventive measures.</i>	Completed
2.2	The Council will review its enforcement role to identify any further potential regulatory interventions to improve the private sector housing stock condition.	JC	<i>Current enforcement activity is consistent with national guidance. However, the Council’s enforcement role is being increased with the introduction, in 2018, of an extension of mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).</i>	Ongoing

2.3	The Council will monitor progress on the Decent Homes Standard and also work with providers to explore any potential for a local housing standard.	GM	<i>From the latest stock modelling, 99% of social housing meets the Decent Homes Standard. Levels in the private sector are lower at 97%. With the current rent reduction programme and revenue being reduced, local social housing providers will be unable to invest in enhanced standards. This will be reviewed at a later date, therefore.</i>	Ongoing
2.4	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.	JC	<i>Activity regarding energy efficiency and fuel poverty is undertaken via the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership (KMSEP) and by contributing to the warm homes call centre residents can obtain advice and financial support to reduce fuel costs and fuel poverty.</i>	Ongoing
2.5	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 <i>Housing and Health Advisory Committee</i> to consider as potentially new energy initiatives.	JC	<i>A retrofit initiative is in its early stages and aims at providing modern technologies in improving energy efficiency to mobile homes. Once the initiative has been undertaken and the results collated then a report can be produced on its beneficial effects on health and wellbeing.</i>	Ongoing
2.6	The Council will, where required, integrate energy strategy with health strategy through the <i>Health Action Team</i> .	JC	<i>Energy strategy is already an essential component in the assessment of dwellings through the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Financial assistance has become accessible via the new Housing Assistance Policy to undertake small measures including new boilers that are essential to facility hospital discharge or prevent further GP/NHS costs.</i>	Ongoing
2.7	Once received, the Council will review EPC data from its recent stock condition survey and develop strategy	JC	<i>The overall EPC rating for the District is 56 although the rating for the private sector is 55. From the recent stock modelling survey, statistical evidence is available on the dwellings with low ratings so a targeted</i>	Ongoing

	to tackle properties with low ratings.		<i>approach can be devised.</i>	
2.8	The Council will undertake another campaign to help raise awareness of the <i>Sevenoaks Switch and Save</i> scheme.	JC	<i>Promotion of the service continues and is part of the overall assessment of a customer's needs or concerns. Further awareness raising will be undertaken through the One You advisors and HERO, along with articles in In Shape.</i>	Ongoing
2.9	The Council will cross-reference data relating to under-occupation in the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> and update its existing <i>Under-Occupation Action Plan</i> .	HB	<i>This work is ongoing in partnership with West Kent Housing Association. The Council funds the 'Small is Beautiful' scheme with West Kent Housing to incentivise and support people to downsize. This scheme is being revised to be more effective and re-commissioned for 2018/19.</i>	Ongoing
Page 114	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.	HB	<i>The new 'One You, Your Home' Adviser is working in the Edenbridge with targeted older people identified by the GP Surgery. As part of the holistic assessments for home adaptations and health and wellbeing, support will be available to assist people with housing needs into alternative housing including support to downsize if required by the customer. No work has yet been undertaken with estate agents.</i>	Ongoing
2.11	The Council will explore additional measures to help facilitate mutual exchanges with a view to reducing under-occupation and over-crowding.	HB	<i>This work is being progressed through the West Kent partnership with Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells borough councils. The Partnership is exploring options for a dedicated onsite service to support mutual exchanges and house shares.</i>	Ongoing
2.12	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	HB	<i>To be reviewed when action plan is updated.</i>	

	housing market.			
2.13	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.	HB	<i>The Housing Projects Officer continues to work closely with KCC on the 'No Use Empty' scheme. Two drop-in sessions have been held for home owners to get information about what support and funding is available to bring empty homes back in to use.</i>	Ongoing
2.14	The Council will review and update its <i>Empty Homes Action Plan</i> when it expires at the end of 2017/18.	HB	<i>The Action Plan is being updated at the end of 2017/18.</i>	Ongoing
2.15	The Council will track occupancy to disrepair rates and review related housing and health strategy accordingly.	JC	<i>The latest stock model is allowing the identification of areas with high levels disrepair and this will inform the activity aimed at reducing the existing levels.</i>	Ongoing
2.16	The Council will actively promote Disabled-Facilities Grants (DFGs) on mobile home parks to raise awareness and improve accessibility.	JC	<i>Promotion of DFG has been undertaken and has resulted in adaptations being undertaken on most mobile home sites. General promotions and the new Housing Assistance Policy will ensure the maximum use of DFG funding for applicants residing in mobile homes.</i>	Ongoing
2.17	The Council will actively promote its Sevenoaks Switch and Save Service on mobile home parks to help reduce energy costs amongst older occupiers.	JC	<i>Additional promotion in areas with significant mobile homes will be undertaken along with assessing each DFG applicant within a mobile home to determine if they are on the best tariff.</i>	Ongoing
2.18	The Council will pilot an energy efficiency grant project to provide new	JC	<i>Such a scheme has just begun on a mobile home site in Hedge Barton.</i>	Ongoing

	boilers and other measures on a mobile home park.			
2.19	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.	JC	<i>An extension of the mandatory HMO licencing has been announced and information on the proposed changes will shortly be going out to all letting agents.</i>	Ongoing
2.20	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.	JC	<i>Given the extension of HMO licensing links with estate agents and landlords via the quarterly forums will be improved. Internal links are also existing including with Community Safety, Environmental Health and Social Housing.</i>	Ongoing
2.21	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 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.	GM	<i>We are currently mapping all of the District's almshouses schemes and building up evidence related to the use, condition and potential for each scheme. This will all then be used to create a plan of action and, once a draft is produced, this will be taken to the Housing and Health Advisory Committee for comments/approval. We are also helping to rebase rents to appropriate levels in order to create self-sufficient projects.</i>	Ongoing
2.22	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	HB	<i>This Council is working with West Kent Housing Association which is looking to introduce fixed-term tenancies for their properties, which is the majority of social housing in this District. Working with housing associations including Moat and Orbit to promote shared ownership opportunities in the District.</i>	Ongoing

	option to support selective use for high demand areas, adapted properties and encouraging higher income households into tenures such as shared-ownership.			
2.23	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.	HB	<i>The Sevenoaks District Housing Allocations Policy is being reviewed and updated and an updated draft Policy will be going out to consultation in February 2018. This updates include more stringent information to exclude people who are considered to be unsuitable tenants due to unacceptable behaviour which is serious enough to make them unsuitable as social housing tenants, this includes anti-social behaviour (in accordance with Housing legislation). The Community Safety Unit Daily Briefing meetings provide an opportunity for partners to discuss anti-social behaviour within housing association properties and agree actions.</i>	Ongoing
2.24	The Council will lobby Government for stronger exclusions to the Right-to-Buy in rural areas.	GM	<i>This has been done through direct feedback with MPs and also via formal consultation feedback - as well as being highlighted as in issue in the main Housing Strategy. This has also been raised Kent-wide and through the Rural Housing Working Group. Current professional commentary is that the voluntary Right to Buy initiative has been effectively shelved.</i>	Ongoing
2.25	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.	GM	<i>Too early to progress. See comment in 2.24.</i>	Ongoing
2.26	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	JC	<i>With the assistance of the Health and Housing Co-ordinators and the 'One You, Your Home' advisor more inspections of domestic dwellings are being undertaken along with a greater number of substandard premises to be identified.</i>	Ongoing

	then tackle.			
3.1	The Council will develop and launch its new <i>Super-HERO</i> service.	HB	<i>This new service was formally launched at the Council's 2017 Housing Forum in November 2017.</i>	Complete
3.2	The Council will work with its West Kent partner local authorities to adopt and implement the new <i>West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy</i> .	HB	<i>The new West Kent Homelessness Strategy has been adopted by this Council and has been published on the Council's website and circulated to relevant housing partners.</i>	Complete
3.3	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.	HB	<i>Work is continuing to train housing advice staff, update policies and amend operational processes to develop new duties as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act commencing from 3 April 2018. The then CLG's draft Code of Guidance has been published and the team continue to work to redesign services in line with the new legislation.</i>	Ongoing
3.4	The Council will undertake a survey of private landlords to identify potential incentives to encourage take-up as part of a new landlord package.	HB	<i>This work will be undertaken by the new Landlord Liaison Officer being recruited as part of the work to increase the capacity of the Housing Advice Team. The PSL Officer post is currently vacant.</i>	March 2018
3.5	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.	HB	<i>This pilot commenced in January 2018, with a 'One You, Your Home' Adviser being recruited in partnership with the Council's health team, housing standards and Age UK in Sevenoaks. Quarterly evaluation will take place once the service commences to monitor customer outcomes using GP data, customer evaluations for the target 25 customers identified as a priority by Edenbridge GP Surgery.</i>	Quarterly
3.6	The Council will implement a tenancy sustainment training programme through the <i>Behavioural Insights Project</i> .	HB	<i>The tenancy sustainment training programme 'Flying Start' is being redesigned by the HERO Officers and will be relaunched for targeted clients in February 2018.</i>	Ongoing

3.7	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.	HB	<i>The Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government has now released a new renters' guide and private landlords must supply tenants with a copy. The Council is also due to feedback to Government on the proposed Tenants' Fees Bill.</i>	Ongoing
3.8	Following the review of the <i>Sevenoaks District Housing Register</i> , and if required, the Council will make adjustments to its policy to better meet local housing needs.	HB	<i>The Housing Allocations Policy is being updated and will be going out to consultation in February 2018. This will review the Housing Register operational process and procedures to apply greatest restrictions to ensure those with the greatest need for housing at given priority, in line with Housing legislation.</i>	July 2018
3.9	The Council will feed results from the Local Housing Needs Study into the <i>Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership</i> and its sub-groups to determine group priorities going forward.	GM	<i>On 23/11/17, the LSP was updated regarding the survey and Housing Strategy. The LSP subsequently agreed to participate in any task-and-finish groups (relevant partners for each issue) to look at any individual issues/barriers whilst implementing the new Housing Strategy - a method agreed to be more effective than previous approaches. This will be taken forward as and when required, therefore.</i>	Ongoing
3.10	The Council will cross-reference <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> data with the Supporting People needs analysis and subsequently work with Kent County Council, the NHS and other care providers to identify common priorities.	HB	<i>This Council is participating in KCC task and finish groups which are reviewing the Supporting People funded accommodation and services. West Kent partners are also addressing local needs against services to identify opportunities for targeted partnership working.</i>	Ongoing
3.11	The Council will cross-reference <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> data and related	GM	<i>Work has begun to map all older people's accommodation across the District and to overlay this with data from the study - the idea being to then, through a much better understanding of need and supply by type</i>	Ongoing

	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.		<i>and tenure, create a plan of action for future provision of housing and related support services.</i>	
3.12	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.	JC	<i>No such demand or request for such IT based assistive technologies has been received. With greater access into older and vulnerable people's accommodation if such needs are identified then funding is currently in place to provide such assistive technologies.</i>	Ongoing
3.13	The Council will seek to maximise DFG funding through the Integration and Better Care Fund.	JC	<i>Improvements in maximising DFG funding continue with new initiatives with health providers, the third sector and other SDC sections continuing, examples of which include the One you - Your home coordinator and the recently approved new housing assistance policy.</i>	Ongoing
3.14	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.	HB	<i>This Council is working closely with West Kent Housing and KCC to develop White Oak Court in Swanley into a full extra care scheme with a 24/7 care contract by KCC in place. Resident and staff consultations took place during January 2018 and the contract should be in place in April 2018.</i>	April 2018
3.15	The Council will feed evidence from the <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> into the Kent Accommodation Strategy as part of the cross-agency assessment process	HB	<i>This work is ongoing with local housing and health services being developed targeted on the data provided within the Local Housing Need Study. This data has also been used to update the Homelessness Strategy, the Kent Accommodation Strategy and inform potential</i>	Ongoing

	<p>and as part of the <i>Adult Social Care Transformation Programme</i>.</p> <p>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.</p>		<p><i>changes in income thresholds in the new Allocations Policy.</i></p>	
3.16	<p>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 <i>Local Housing Needs Study</i> and KCC Accommodation Strategy).</p>	GM	<p><i>We are currently working with a partner to demolish an outdated care facility and to replace it with a new extra care housing scheme with a mix of tenure options for all price ranges. Work is also underway on a scheme in Swanley to replace outdated accommodation and this will provide modern housing for older people.</i></p>	Ongoing
3.17	<p>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.</p>	GM	<p><i>We supported a bid for an extra care facility and this was successful - significant external funding has been secured, therefore.</i></p>	Ongoing

3.18	The Council will maintain contact with Government as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) supported housing review progresses to ensure that local issues are fully considered as a part of that process.	GM	<i>Government has now announced that it is scrapping Local Housing Allowance (LHA) on social housing and is considering a flexible funding approach on supported housing - so this is not considered to be an issue, though we will continue to monitor the situation.</i>	Complete
3.19	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.	GM	<i>This has all been fed into the Local Plan review and is working its way through the process - this is also seen as a priority group.</i>	Ongoing
3.20	Through the LSP sub-group for Adult Health and Social Care for the Sevenoaks District, and linked to the Sevenoaks Health Action Team, the Council will look at further integrating health and social care issues.	HB	<i>Work is continuing to link older people work, mental health, housing, health and social care with voluntary sector partners through LSP sub-groups. This work to date has included the development of the Edenbridge GP pilot project and setting up new community MARAC. Projects are discussed at quarterly sub-group meetings which include outreach mental health cafes.</i>	Quarterly
3.21	Through the LSP sub-group for Adult Health and Social Care for the Sevenoaks District, and linked to the Sevenoaks Health Action Team, the Council will set up a working group to look specifically at isolation and loneliness amongst older people.	HB	<i>This is being taken forward by the Health Action Team.</i>	Ongoing
3.22	The Council will work with providers to identify a suitable site for a Help to	GM	<i>This will be taken forward once we have completed the mapping of older people's accommodation project, which is underway. We have discussed</i>	Ongoing

	Buy project specifically for those aged 55 and over.		<i>this option with two key providers, however, and there is some appetite to deliver such a project.</i>	
3.23	In partnership with town and parish councils, the Council will develop housing elements of a toolkit to work towards Dementia-Friendly Communities.	HB	<i>Dementia friendly communities projects are being developed further across the District, Health officers are supporting Eynsford and West Kingsdown Members and communities to become dementia friendly villages. The Shop Safe scheme has been launched and continues to be promoted across the District. Also developing a new Dementia Running event in May and looking to set up a new Dementia Film evening at the Stag with local Sevenoaks District Dementia Forum partners</i>	Ongoing
3.24	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.	HB	<i>This Council continues to be represented on the Kent JPPB, the Board has updated essential protocols including the 16/17 care leavers and over 18's vulnerable protocols recently. Working on piloting social prescribing and hospital discharge schemes linking with housing across Kent.</i>	Ongoing
3.25	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.	GM	<i>This has been included in the Local Plan review and is making its way through the process.</i>	Ongoing
3.26	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.	HB	<i>Accommodation for a young persons supported housing scheme continues to be a priority for this Council however a suitable location and property is yet to be identified. Working with KCC on the redesign and consultation on young person's support accommodation across Kent.</i>	Ongoing

3.27	The Council will monitor the effects of changes to Housing Benefit, including the Shared Accommodation Rate, and seek to develop supporting housing strategy to tackle any negative effects.	HB	<i>Data for residents affected by Benefit Cap and Welfare Reforms are set to the HERO service monthly by the Benefits Team. Proactive appointments are made with the residents affected by the greatest reduction in benefits to support them with affordability.</i>	Ongoing
3.28	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.	GM	<i>Despite finding several potential sites for a project, none of these has proved to be viable - so we are continuing to explore sites for a scheme. Our current areas of focus are Sevenoaks and Swanley, as per KCC Supporting People recommendations.</i>	Ongoing
3.29	The Council will develop a housing information pack for younger people seeking housing.	HB	<i>Personalised action plans and leaflets are now provided.</i>	Complete
3.30	The Council will consider an enhanced enabling role following the national rent-a-room review.	HB	<i>To be reviewed.</i>	Ongoing
3.31	The Council work with Government's Behavioural Insights Team to take forward a potential shared-lodgings project for under-35s.	HB	<i>Discussed at KHOG. WKHA exploring the idea.</i>	Ongoing
3.32	The Council will work with partners to deliver the Adult Social Care	HB	<i>We are still looking for a site for the scheme for vulnerable younger people.</i>	Ongoing

	Transformation Programme in relation to vulnerable 16-25 year olds.			
3.33	The Council will explore a co-housing project for younger people.	GM	<i>No opportunities have arisen as yet.</i>	Ongoing
3.34	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.	HB	<i>The HERO Team now has three officers as a result of a successful then CLG Trailblazer funding bid. Customers are referred directly from the Council Tax and Housing Benefits Team who may be getting into financial difficulties so HERO can assist them with affordability. HERO has seen over 250 clients in 2016/ 17 and the demand for the service continues to grow.</i>	Ongoing
3.35	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.	GM	<i>We are looking to hold a surgery in Summer 2018.</i>	Ongoing
3.36	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.	HB	<i>The housing register gives priority B ratings to assist occupiers back into general needs housing.</i>	Ongoing
3.37	Through the Community Safety Partnership, the Council will work	HB	<i>Those within 6-months of leaving supported housing are placed in Band B of the housing register to assist those back into general needs housing.</i>	Ongoing

	across departments and with external partners to identify additional measures to better support transitions back into general needs housing.		<i>Currently working with KCC around better moving on residents of supported housing.</i>	
3.38	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.	HB	<i>Underway.</i>	Ongoing
Page 126	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.	HB	<i>A successful Armed Forces Day event was held in Westerham in June 2017, HERO has attended a number of armed forces events to give information on Council services and present what is available. Supporting armed forces personnel and their families continues to be a priority to support this Council's signed Community Covenant. This will be identified as a priority within the updated Allocations Policy due later this year.</i>	Ongoing
3.40	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.	HB	<i>No progress has yet been made on this work with Michael Fallon MP</i>	Ongoing
3.41	The Council will work to deliver suitable housing for older ex-service personnel by providing a number of dedicated places in any future extra	GM	<i>Subject to planning consent, a new extra care scheme will be built in the District and we have already spoken to the provider about the possibility of allocating some apartments for this purpose.</i>	Ongoing

	care housing schemes.			
3.42	Filthy and verminous - 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.	JC	<i>Hoarding and filthy and verminous dwellings are being increasingly identified especially as part of the Your home/Hospital discharge co-ordinator. Funding is available to assist in removing such accumulations and if this is not accepted then statutory powers will be used.</i>	Ongoing
3.43	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.	GM	<i>A list of pet-friendly providers has now been produced and this will be developed into an information leaflet for older people looking to move.</i>	Ongoing
3.44	The Council will develop a pet-friendly policy with its recommendations for affordable and supported housing providers.	GM	<i>This work is ongoing.</i>	Ongoing
3.45	Where pets are not permitted, the Council will signpost to services such as the pet fostering scheme.	HB	<i>Information provided to operational officers to include in housing advice package.</i>	Ongoing
3.46	The Council will promote the Cinnamon Trust and its pet walking services for older people and those suffering from ill health.	HB	<i>Information provided to operational officers to include in housing advice package.</i>	Complete
3.47	The Council will explore a dog DNA scheme to encourage pet-friendly	GM	<i>Recent research has found that dog fouling has been halved in a London borough as a result of such a scheme. We will work to identify a social</i>	Ongoing

	housing policies.		<i>housing provider to agree to undertake a pilot.</i>	
3.48	Within any new housing that the Council develops through its company, it will aim to achieve the RSPCA's Gold Standard pet policy.	GM	<i>Too early to progress.</i>	Ongoing

Housing and Health Advisory Committee Work Plan 2017/18 (as at 13.02.18)

27 February 2018	12 June 2018	18 September 2018	27 November 2018
<p>Health Liaison Board update Draft Housing Allocation Policy</p> <p>West Kent Housing Association presentation on social housing provisions and the emerald scheme</p> <p>Housing Strategy Progress Report (Number 1)</p> <p>Be Inspired be Active project report and Sustainability</p>	<p>Health Liaison Board update</p> <p>SDC health activity update</p> <p>Update on temporary accommodation and emergency planning provision</p>	<p>Budget: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)</p>	<p>Health Liaison Board update</p>

This page is intentionally left blank