

08 December 2022 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 30.11.22



This meeting will be livestreamed to YouTube here:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLT1f\\_F5OfvTzxjZk6Zqn6g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLT1f_F5OfvTzxjZk6Zqn6g)

## Cabinet

### Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Fleming; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Dickins  
Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Thornton

### 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. <b>Minutes</b>	(Pages 1 - 8)	
To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 November 2022, as a correct record		
2. <b>Declarations of interest</b>		
Any interests not already registered		
3. <b>Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)</b>		
4. <b>Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees (if any)</b>		
a) Reference from Scrutiny Committee - Covid 19 Working group	(Pages 9 - 12)	
5. <b>Changes to Appointments to Other Organisations</b>	(Pages 13 - 14)	Charlotte Sinclair Tel: 01732227165


### REPORTS ALSO CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEES

6. <b>Infrastructure Funding Statement</b>	(Pages 15 - 86)	James Gleave Tel: 01732227326
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- |     |   |                   |                                     |
|-----|---|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 7.  | <b>Making Best Use of The Social Housing Stock - Under Occupation Initiative</b>  | (Pages 87 - 94)   | Sharon Donald<br>Tel: 01732 227131  |
| 8.  | <b>Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy</b>                                   | (Pages 95 - 136)  | Sharon Donald<br>Tel: 01732 227131  |
| 9.  | <b>Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan</b>                                       | (Pages 137 - 142) | Sharon Donald<br>Tel: 01732 227131  |
|     |  |                   |                                     |
| 10. | <b>Summary of the Emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy</b>            | (Pages 143 - 212) | Alison Simmons<br>Tel: 01732227272  |
|     |  |                   |                                     |
| 11. | <b>Mill Pond Capital Works</b>  | (Pages 213 - 218) | Trevor Kennett<br>Tel: 01732 227407 |
|     |  |                   |                                     |
| 12. | <b>West Kent CCTV Control Room Hub</b>  | (Pages 219 - 236) | Trevor Kennett<br>Tel: 01732 227407 |
|     |  |                   |                                     |

 Indicates a Key Decision

 indicates a matter to be referred to Council

#### EXEMPT INFORMATION

Recommendation: That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering Appendix 1 of Agenda Item 12 above, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

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](mailto:democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk).

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Dickins (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dyball, Maskell, McArthur and Thornton

Cllrs. Harrison and Pender were also present.

49. Minutes

Resolved: That subject to the addition of "The Leader of the Council said that the Council would not purchase either Hikvision or Dahua cameras in the future. The Leader said the council has no Dahua cameras and would remove Hikvision cameras from its network in the event that advice from central government recommended this, or if central government started to remove their own Hikvision cameras," under page 25 paragraph 44, line 5, the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October be approved and signed as a correct record.

50. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

51. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)

The Chairman set out that the Member for Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway had asked him to explain why during a cost-of-living crisis has Customer Solutions employed 4 new Staff Members. The Chairman advised that the Officers in question were replacement staff for others who had left the Council. He explained that the number of Officers in Customer Solutions had remained static despite the team handling a 20% increase in calls.

The Chairman also set out that the Member had asked him about the Council's working from home policy. He explained that it was a matter for the Chief Executive but outlined that Officers were expected to attend the Office for a certain amount of time each week.

52. Matters referred from Council, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee, CIL Spending Board or Cabinet Advisory Committees

There were none.

53. Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which outlined the Council's proposals for the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) addendum to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan. The Council had received a provisional allocation of £501,000, to support the rural economy. The Finance & Investment Advisory Committee supported the report.

The Economic Development Officer explained that this support would primarily be through grants, which would be distributed through the Executive Local Action Group. She advised that the Council would be working within the West Kent Partnership to use business retention funding to facilitate grant distribution, but that the £501,000 from the REPF would be exclusively used within the District.

She advised that following comments made at the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee, if the allocation was successful, Members could be involved in identifying the projects. Members were advised of a typographic error in paragraph 23 which should read 2024/25.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the proposals, which will form the Rural England Prosperity Fund addendum, alongside the previously approved UK Shared Prosperity fund investment plan, be noted; and
- b) the Strategic Head of Property & Commercial following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take the necessary decisions and actions required to finalise the addendum and accept the allocation of funds and to implement and administer the scheme, in accordance with the requirements and priorities of the fund; and
- c) that District Councillors have an upfront role to promote the Rural England Prosperity Fund to projects that may be suitable for funding, be noted.

54. Financial Monitoring 2022- 23 To the End of September 2022

## Cabinet - 10 November 2022

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which outlined the Council's financial position to September 2022 and the forecast position as at 31 March 2023. An unfavourable variance of £572,000 was reported at the September meeting of the Committee. Since then, £140,000 had been identified within in-year savings, and investment returns were forecast to be above budget by £103,000. These items have helped to reduce the forecast overspend for the year to £153,000. The Finance & Investment Advisory Committee had considered the same report and expressed some concern regarding the level of Agency staff costs.

The Head of Finance went on to advise that Parking and Development Management incomes were expected to exceed budget, but were partly offset by forecast unfavourable variances from the loss of income of the property investment strategy, and the net cost of Direct Services.

The pay offer from April 2022 was not included in the report, as it had not yet been agreed at the date the report was written, but would be included in the future. Members were reminded that an approach was agreed in September to deal with the 2022/23 unfavourable variance resulting from the pay offer.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report and Finance & Investment Advisory Committee's comments, be noted.

55. Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy 2023/24 and beyond

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which was the first stage of the Council's budget setting process for 2023/24. The report had also been considered by the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee who had recommended that Performance Indicators were included in the budget reports provided to the Advisory Committees.

The Chief Officer for Finance & Trading further advised that no changes to future assumptions had been made, but they would be reviewed in later stages of the process.

The April 2022 pay award had now been approved, and would result in an annual budget gap of £735,000, when factoring in the £100,000 annual savings target. The Council still intended to remain financially self-sufficient, but would need to make significant savings in this budget process to do so.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) The ten-year financial planning approach, financial strategy and principles set out in the report, be endorsed;
- b) The Advisory Committees, be requested to review the Service Dashboards and advise Cabinet of possible growth and savings options; and
- c) Officers, be requested to continue to review the assumptions in the report and consider options to address the budget gap and report back to Cabinet on 12 January 2023.

56. Treasury Management Mid year Update 22/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment presented the report which set out the treasury activity in the first half of the current financial year, recent developments in the financial markets and fulfilled the reporting requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

The Head of Finance advised that the Council's investment income had a favourable variance of £102,000 against the budget. He advised that the current valuation of the Multi Asset Income Fund was lower than its initial investment, but that it was performing well in generating income. Fluctuations in its valuation were to be expected, as it was a long-term investment.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Update for 2022/23, be noted.

57. Fleet Replacement Programme 2023- 2028

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener introduced the report which outlined the recommendations for the fleet requirements for statutory waste collection and associated services over the following 5 years. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had also considered the same report and recommended the report be approved.

The Head of Direct Services advised Members that a new approach was sought to ensure that it would fall within the Council's 10 year balanced budget. This would ensure that SDC could replace its oldest and most vulnerable vehicles quickly, while also taking into account delivery lead times. For 2023-24 the Council would be leasing five 26tonne Refuse Collection Vehicles which would be in service from June 2023.

The lease would run for three years and would cost £324,000 per year for all five vehicles and would be paid for from the current Vehicle Reserve allocation for years 2023-24, 2024 - 25 and 2025-26. In 2026-27 the five leased vehicles would be purchased at a cost of £625,000, after this further vehicles would be identified for replacement and leased in the same way. Over these 5 years the balance of the vehicle reserve would be used to purchase smaller fleet vehicles, which would be electric whenever possible.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the 5 Year Fleet Replacement Programme 2023-28 as detailed in the report be approved.

58. Swanley Sunday Market Pilot Update

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener introduced the report which provided an update on the Swanley Sunday Market 6 month pilot and recommended that the pilot be extended by another 6 months. The Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report and recommended that the extension be approved.

The Head of Direct Services advised that Bray Associates commenced the proposed 6-month pilot on Sunday 3 April 2022 missing any Sunday dates agreed with Swanley Town Council. They had been responsible for the total management of the Sunday market, including publicity, marketing, operations and litter management. The Business Development Team and Direct Services had been monitoring the Sunday market pilot with planned meetings with the contractor, local businesses and the site owners, along with un-announced visits on a Sunday.

A public survey had been undertaken to engage with local people about the Sunday market pilot and to help evaluate the additional Sunday market and its operation under the pilot. The survey ran from 16 August to 16 September 2022.

The survey received 699 responses from members of the public with over 79% stating that they had visited the Sunday market. 85% of respondents were from a Swanley postal code. The results were generally split 50/50 on whether the market was a good idea, good value, good selection of goods to the opposite not needed or not good value and that it was just a copy of the Wednesday market.

It was recommended that a full procurement tender exercise was undertaken for the Swanley street markets to operate on Wednesday and Sundays as the Wednesday market contract would end on the 31 March 2023.

The Head of Direct Services confirmed that he had also kept in constant consultation with the Town Council and the survey had received a high response rate. As the results of the survey had been divided, it was recommended that the pilot be extended for another 6 months to allow time for the Market to progress.

Members discussed the report. Some Members had attended the Market and had received lots of positive feedback from attendees as well as support for the Market from local shops and services. Some Members raised concerns over the lack of diversity of the stalls and the rubbish that the Market produced.

The Head of Direct Services confirmed that he had attended a meeting of the Town Council in which the concerns over rubbish had been expressed and had

increased waste management services for the Market as a result. He had also encouraged Bray Associates to increase litter pickers on the days of the Market as well as visiting local shops to remind them of their duties to collect any rubbish from their premises. Cabinet had also approved a £25,000 Grant for the Town Council which could be used to provide extra relief for the rubbish.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the additional Swanley Sunday Market extension request be approved.

59. Parking Payment Machine Update

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report which advised Members of the essential upgrade to the District's parking payment machines. National phasing out of the 3G network would be taking place and this would provide the simultaneous opportunity to convert the machines to allow contactless card payment. The Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee considered the same report and were in support of option 2.

The Head of Direct Services advised that there were two options for consideration by the Cabinet. Option 1 - 4G Upgrade: Install all machines with 4G modem & antenna kits. A software update would be required for every tariff in the district, estimated at 14, with copies to other terminals on the same tariff at significantly reduced price. Engineer and labour costs would be fixed, and indicate an estimated 47 hours of work involved.

Option 2 - Contactless Payment + 4G Upgrade Combination - Install A1000 contactless pads, extended keyboards and all supporting parts to all terminals. Install all machines with 4G modem & antenna kits. A software update would be required for every tariff in the district, estimated at 14, with copies to other terminals on the same tariff at significantly reduced price. Engineer and labour costs would be fixed, and indicate an estimated 186 hours of work involved.

He advised that the favourable option was option 2 as there was a strong desire to pay by card in Council owned car parks. Members asked questions about so-called 'convenience charges', card payment transaction fees and affordability. Members made clear that they wished for a cash payment option to continue to be available to customers.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That option 2, for contactless payment + 4G Upgrade Combination, be approved. The details of option two were as follows: Contactless Payment and 4G Upgrade Combination; Install A1000 contactless



## Cabinet - 10 November 2022

pads, extended keyboards and all supporting parts to all terminals; install all machines with 4G modem & antenna kits; a software update would be required for every tariff in the district, estimated at 14, with copies to other terminals on the same tariff at significantly reduced price; engineer and labour costs would be fixed, and indicate an estimated 186 hours of work involved.

## EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved: That under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering agenda item 12, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information was involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 (Relating to the business or financial affairs of a particular person (or the authority holding that information)).

60. SDC Food Safety Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the exempt report which proposed the SDC Food Safety Plan 2022. She advised that the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee had considered the same report and recommended adoption of the plan.

The Environmental Health Manager advised that the food safety plan detailed how the Environmental Health Team intended to meet and discharge its statutory obligations in respect of Food Safety. The Team had worked hard to meet and exceed objectives. The Food and Safety Team Leader explained the item further.

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 Council, that the contents of the plan be adopted.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 11 November 2022. The decisions contained in Minute 54, 55, and 56 take effect immediately. The decisions contained in Minute 53, 57, 58, and 59 take effect on 21 November 2022. The decision contained in Minute 60 is a reference to Council.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.23 PM



**IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - COVID 19**

**Cabinet - 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** In-depth Scrutiny Working Group

**Status:** For Consideration

**Key Decision:** No

**Contact Officer:** Charlie Sinclair, Ext. 7165

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** Consider the recommendations in the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2022.

**Introduction and Background**

- 1 At its meeting on 9 November 2021, the Scrutiny Committee resolved to set up an In-depth Scrutiny Working Group to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2 The Working Group considered the actions taken in response to the pandemic and considered the effectiveness of the Council's Emergency Plan.
- 3 The Working Group was made up of the following members of the Scrutiny Committee:  
Cllr Osborne-Jackson (Chairman)  
Cllr London  
Cllr Pender  
Cllr Layland
- 4 The working group's report was considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2022.

**Recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee**

- 5 Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that
  - a) a small peer review of the Emergency Plan be undertaken
  - b) the Emergency Plan be reviewed by the Chief Executive every 2 years, to ensure it remained up-to-date
  - c) the Emergency Plan be reviewed by Members every 4 years, either at Cabinet or the relevant Advisory Committee

## Agenda Item 4a

- d) the process for getting volunteers be formalised to create a body of trained volunteers with available contact details
- e) scenario exercises be undertaken every 4 years with the involvement of Gold and Silver Commanders
- f) the inventory of the Emergency Command Centre be regularly audited and kept in better condition

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Sevenoaks District Council operates within a balanced, 10 year budget. Any recommendations would therefore need to be subject to further investigation to remain within the current allocated budgets.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

No relevant legal implications or Risk Assessment.

#### 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.

#### Net Zero 2030

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Report of the Covid-19 In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group

#### **Background Papers**

None

## **Report of the Sevenoaks District Council Covid-19 response In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group**

Report of the Sevenoaks District Council Covid-19 response In-Depth Scrutiny Working Group

At a meeting of The Scrutiny Committee it was agreed that an in-depth working group would be formed to consider the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and assess the effectiveness of the Emergency Plan and District Emergency Centre (DEC) and identify areas of improvement.

Members were Cllr James Osborne-Jackson (Chairman), Cllr George Pender, Cllr James London and Cllr Alan Layland.

Sevenoaks District Council Officers who gave evidence were Pav Ramewal (Chief Executive), Adrian Rowbotham (Chief Officer), Richard Morris (Chief Officer) and Sarah Robson (Chief Officer)

Cllr Peter Fleming (Leader of the Council) also gave evidence.

This working group has provided an important role in scrutinising decisions and spending which happened throughout the pandemic and it is only right that Members and Officers are held to account and scrutinised for their decisions.

The majority of members were hesitant about the reliance on volunteers in the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, all members were impressed with the efforts and effectiveness of the volunteers within their communities

Sevenoaks District Council led by example in a number of ways across departments, including adding additional items to the food boxes delivered to vulnerable people, sending planning site notices via the post for applicants to display and hiring Community Ambassadors to represent the Council and serve our District.

Although the geographic allocation of the Community Ambassadors did take into account the opinions of Local Members, the Working Group felt that discussion on how more proactive engagement with all Members would have meant that they were more informed on the Council's response

The working group has agreed to recommend that the Emergency Plan be reviewed at least every 2 years by the Chief Executive, as it was found the Emergency Plan was out of date by having staff members listed who had long left the Council. The emergency plan should also be used after a major incident.

## Agenda Item 4a

### Appendix A

The Working Group also reviewed the Emergency Command Centre, and found that many of the supplies therein were expired, broken, or lost. The Working Group recommends stricter auditing to ensure that all resources are kept up to date and organised

The Chairman, Cllr Osborne-Jackson visited Dunbrik Depot to hear how the Direct Services team found working throughout the pandemic. It was clear that they were well looked after and provided with PPE.

It is clear that by having the Direct Services in house that loyalty was provided by the team and the weekly waste collection continues. Parking Enforcement Officers quickly swapped roles and started delivering food boxes, another example of how fantastic in-house services are.

A special mention to the Elections team, who assisted Estates with cleaning the building during the lockdown and distributing PPE. This clearly was not within their job description however they served their colleagues well.

The working group feels that it took longer than planned for the Emergency Plan to be put into action and it is recommended a mini peer review take place on the Emergency Plan to provide friendly and impartial advice.

#### **Recommendations of the report (to Scrutiny to recommend that Cabinet approve):**

- o A small peer review of the Emergency Plan be undertaken
- o The Emergency Plan be reviewed by the Chief Executive every 2 years, to ensure it is up-to-date
- o The Emergency Plan be reviewed by Members every 4 years, either at Cabinet or the relevant Advisory Committee
- o The process for getting volunteers be formalised to create a body of trained volunteers with available contact details
- o Scenario Exercises be undertaken every 4 years, with the involvement of Gold and Silver Commanders
- o The inventory of the Emergency Command Centre be regularly audited and kept in better condition.

As Chairman, I would like to thank all the Members and Officers who provided input to this report.

ENDS

## CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Cabinet - 8 December 2022

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Customer & Resources

**Status:** For Decision

**Key Decision:** No

**Contact Officer:** Charlie Sinclair, Ext. 7165

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That Cllr Streatfield be appointment to Becket Trust Housing Association

### Introduction and Background

- 1 The Cabinet is asked to agree the changes to the appointments of certain Outside Organisations following the vacancy. If agreed the appointment will form part of Appendix H of the Council's Constitution.

### Key Implications

#### Financial

Attendance at meetings of Outside Bodies to which an Elected Member has been appointed by the Council constitutes an approved duty and there are costs involved.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Appointments to represent the Council on outside bodies are made in accordance with s.111 Local Government Act 1972 where the Council is satisfied that such appointments are necessary to, conducive to, or calculated to facilitate the discharge of their statutory functions. In not appointing to those Outside Bodies listed within the Appendix, there is a risk that the Council's designated representation on such organisations would not be fulfilled.

#### 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.

#### Net Zero 2030

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact

## Agenda Item 5

regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

### **Appendices**

None

### **Background Papers**

[Council's Constitution](#)

**Jim Carrington-West**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Customer & Resources**



**Item 06 - Infrastructure Funding Statement - Priorities**

The attached report was considered by the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee on 1 December 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT - PRIORITIES**

**Cabinet - 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services

**Status:** For recommendation to Cabinet

**Also considered by:**

- Development & Conservation Advisory Committee - 1 December 2022

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive Summary:**

The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require local authorities to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), containing income and expenditure information for CIL and Section 106 contributions. The IFS should also highlight infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to be funded by CIL over coming year.

This report focuses on the infrastructure priorities to be contained in the new IFS, which needs to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. These priorities do not bind local authorities, but they do provide transparency for developers and the community as to what our intentions are.

To assist members, this report details last year's infrastructure priorities and explains how recent developer contributions have been spent. It then considers the evidence to support infrastructure or projects for prioritisation over the coming year and concludes by making recommendations on our funding priorities.

**This reports support the Key Aim of: Ensuring that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit and that development is supported by the most appropriate infrastructure.**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Julia Thornton

**Contact Officer:** James Gleave ex 7326, Carlyn Kan ex 7264, Emma Henshall 7358

**Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee:**

That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported.

### **Recommendation to Cabinet:**

To agree the following:

1. The criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects as set out in paragraph 6 should remain.
2. That the specific projects and types of Infrastructure recommended in paragraphs 25-34 of this report are identified in the IFS as having a priority for full or partial funding.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To endorse the spending priorities for Section 106 contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts for the coming year.

### **Introduction and Background**

- 1 Members will be aware that the Council has been a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority since 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014. From this date until middle of September 2022, the Council has collected just over £13 million in CIL contributions.
- 2 The Government's updated CIL Regulations came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 and included a requirement for local authorities to report on their CIL and Section 106 income and expenditure by producing an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). This document is also expected to state the types of infrastructure or projects the authority intends to prioritise and fund wholly or partially through CIL.
- 3 All local authorities are required to prepare an IFS, for publication on or before 31st December of each year.
- 4 This report follows on from last year's IFS and considers whether any changes need to be made to the Council's priorities for infrastructure spending in its new IFS.

### **Discussion**

- 5 The following considerations are relevant in considering the Council's priorities for allocating CIL and Section 106 monies:
  - Existing priorities and the projects and type of infrastructure that were put forward last year;
  - Recent CIL and Section 106 spend;
  - Any changes in circumstances and new evidence that has come forward in the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). This will enable officers to consider how this will impact on what infrastructure should be prioritised; and

- In light of all the evidence, the report will identify what the priorities and projects for spending should be.

**Priorities for allocating CIL and Section 106 monies already in place:**

- 6 The Council's Development and Conservation Advisory Committee agreed the following criteria for infrastructure funding in October 2021:
- The projects should fall within the infrastructure types/projects identified in the IFS report.
  - The projects have been identified in the IDP. (This ensures that the infrastructure prioritised supports the Local Plan).
  - The project supports and is clearly related to proposed site allocations or new development in the District. There is a strong link between development and the proposed project.
  - There is a strong social, environmental or economic justification for the proposed project.
  - Projects have not previously received CIL funding.
  - The project has support from infrastructure providers.
  - There is an existing need for the project or it will be expected to be delivered within the next 5 years.
  - That it is identified as having a critical or high need, where the project has to be delivered to support new development.
  - There are no significant issues with funding or landownership.
  - Where there is a clear plan as to how the project would be funded.
- 7 A copy of the report to the October 2021 Development and Conservation Advisory Committee is attached at Appendix A. In addition to the provisions of paragraph 6, the following types of infrastructure and projects were agreed as priorities in last year's IFS:

**Flooding**

- 8 It was proposed that the Upper Darent flood alleviation scheme should be included as a priority in this year's IFS.

**Highways and Transport**

- 9 The following highways or transport projects were identified and remain a priority:
- Swanley Transport Improvement Measures;
  - Junction 3 M25 Swanley - improvements required to address increased capacity and accessibility for pedestrians;
  - Improvements to bus services in and around Swanley;
  - Junction improvements at Bat & Ball;
  - Edenbridge Junction improvements; and
  - Edenbridge - sustainable transport improvements.

## Agenda Item 6

### Utilities

10 The following projects were identified as priorities for funding:

- Badgers Mount water supply upgrades; and
- Swanley supply water upgrades.

### Health and Social Care

11 The following areas were identified as particular priorities for additional capacity in healthcare services and will be kept under review:

- Northern Sevenoaks Health;
- Swanley;
- Hextable;
- Farningham;
- New Ash Green;
- Hartley;
- Fawkham;
- South Darenth;
- Expansion of GP Practices in Sevenoaks town;
- To increase the capacity of Otford Health Services (related to Fort Halstead); and
- Edenbridge Medical Hub

### Affordable Housing

12 Meeting the need for affordable homes across the District was identified as a continued priority, in accordance with up to date evidence and policy.

### Other Corporate Priorities

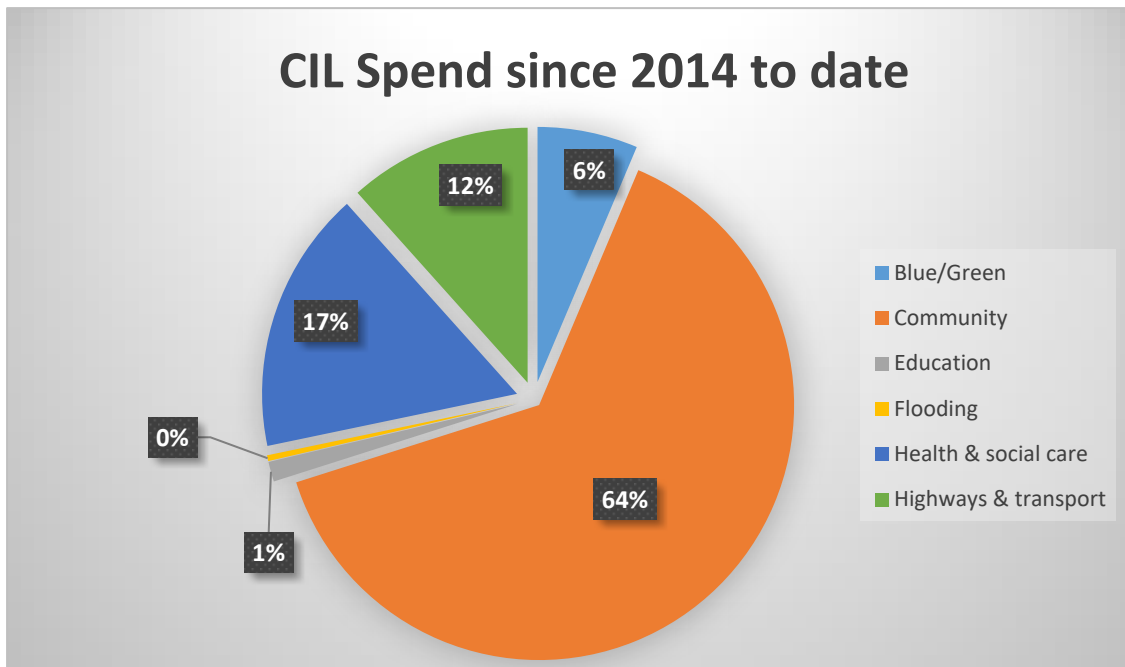
13 It was proposed that projects that contribute towards meeting the Council's corporate priorities should remain a funding priority, particularly those that support Net Zero ambitions and mental health and wellbeing ambitions.

### Broadband

14 Any infrastructure proposals that seek to improve existing rural broadband services or propose new broadband infrastructure in rural areas will continue to be considered as a priority.

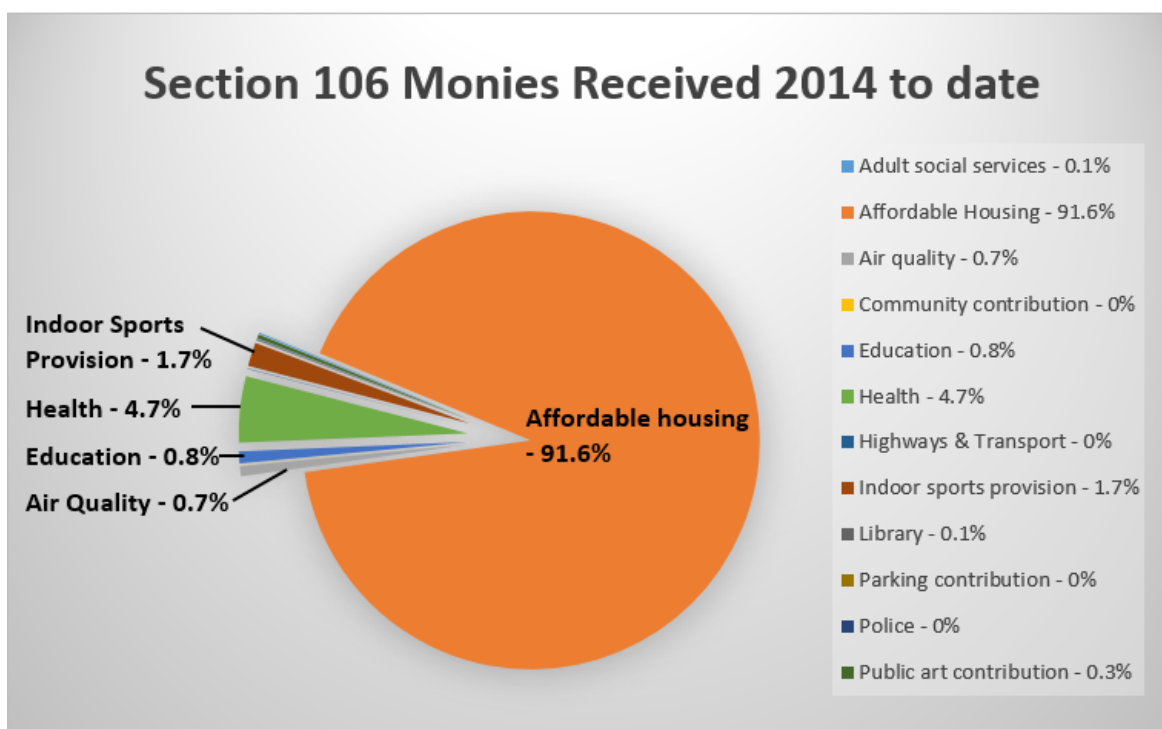
### What have we funded so far?

15 The following chart shows how CIL funding has been allocated since the introduction of the Council's Charging Schedule in 2014. Further detail can be found at **Appendix C**.



16 The largest amount of spend has been on Community Facilities (64%), which has included village halls, public toilets and play areas. The next largest amount falls under Health and Social Care (17%), where money has been awarded to a medical centre/hub and a health pod. Highways and transport have received 12% of funding, where money has been awarded to projects including train stations and footpath improvements. All of these projects have been funded in accordance with the provisions of the Council’s Constitution regarding CIL Governance (Appendix X1 of the Constitution).

17 The following chart shows how funding through Section 106 agreements has been allocated since 2014.



- 18 In light of this information, members are asked to consider the projects and types of Infrastructure that should be prioritised. A particular issue for consideration is whether the Council continues to follow previous patterns of CIL and Section 106 spending.

### **Evidence in the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

#### **Local Plan**

- 19 Members will be aware of the Council's emerging Regulation 18 draft Local Plan, which focuses on the potential to make best and most efficient use of land in existing settlements. This document will contain policies on infrastructure provision to reflect the latest evidence.

#### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**

- 20 The most recent IDP can be found at Appendix B of this report. As part of updating our evidence base for the Regulation 18 document, consideration will be given to the preparation of a joint IDP with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. In the meantime, infrastructure providers have been requested to provide an update on any planned works, identified need and pinch points for Sevenoaks District.
- 21 The IDP is a live document and will continue to develop in conjunction with the emerging Local Plan, as sites are identified and more site specific information becomes available. The final version of the IDP will contain a schedule of infrastructure provision, with costs, time horizons, standards of provision and capital programme information. Members will be kept updated on the development of this important document.

#### **Key Sites**

- 22 Infrastructure requirements for major development sites coming forward for development in the District will be included in the latest version of the IFS.

### **Priorities for spending this year**

- 23 Notwithstanding the progress on the emerging Local Plan and its associated evidence, there have been no significant alterations to the IDP and the spending priorities for the coming year are proposed to remain largely unchanged. The criteria set out in paragraph 6 of this report continue to be relevant and recommended for approval.

#### **Community Facilities**

- 24 The community infrastructure projects identified in our current IDP do not fall within the priority timescales. Most are proposed over a period of 16-20 years and have been given a medium to low priority. It is therefore proposed that the provision of CIL towards community facilities is not an identified priority in this year's IFS.



### **Flooding**

- 25 As the Upper Darent Flood alleviation scheme has not been implemented and the CIL money returned to us, it is recommended that this continues to be a priority.

### **Highways and Transport**

- 26 A number of projects are identified as a high priority and it is recommended that these remain as:
- Swanley transport improvement measures;
  - Junction 3 M25 Swanley - improvements required to address increased capacity and accessibility for pedestrians;
  - Improvements to bus services in and around Swanley;
  - Junction improvements at Bat & Ball;
  - Edenbridge junction improvements; and
  - Edenbridge - sustainable transport improvements.

### **Utilities**

- 27 The following projects should continue to be included as funding priorities, unless evidence is submitted to the contrary:
- Badgers Mount water supply upgrades; and
  - Swanley supply water upgrades.

### **Health and Social Care**

- 28 As previously stated, the increase in the capacity of Otford Health Services has been identified as a high priority. A bid to extend the Kemsing branch received partial funding at the March 2021 CIL Spending Board. However, as development at Fort Halstead will continue to have an impact on Otford Health Services, this should remain a priority.
- 29 In the light of this and the information in the IDP, the additional capacity required for health services in the following areas should be identified as a priority:
- Northern Sevenoaks Health;
  - Swanley;
  - Hextable;
  - Farningham;
  - New Ash Green;
  - Hartley;
  - Fawkham;
  - South Darent;
  - Expansion of GP Practices in Sevenoaks Urban Area; and
  - To increase the capacity of Otford Health Services (related to Fort Halstead).

## Agenda Item 6

- 30 Notwithstanding the identified needs in these areas, the relevant healthcare organisations will still need to apply for funding. Inclusion in the IFS does not guarantee that schemes will be fully or partly funded, but will be given weight by the Spending Board. Edenbridge Medical Hub has now received two amounts of CIL funding and is not identified as a future funding priority.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 31 Funding for affordable housing will reflect our current planning policies and Supplementary Planning Documents. The income will be spent in accordance with the appropriate legal agreements and portfolio holder discussions.

### **Corporate Priorities**

- 32 It is proposed that projects which would contribute towards the Council's corporate objectives should remain a priority, particularly projects that support and facilitate the Council's Net Zero ambitions and its mental health and wellbeing agenda.

### **Education**

- 33 Whilst no specific projects are identified in the IDP for the next 5 years, the need for education facilities will be on going over the plan period and subject to change as new development comes forward. It is therefore proposed to include education as a funding priority in the forthcoming IFS.

### **Broadband**

- 34 Infrastructure proposals that seek to improve existing rural broadband services or propose new broadband infrastructure in rural areas will continue to be considered as a priority.

### **Other options considered and/or rejected**

- 35 The provisions of this report are based on the latest available evidence and discussions with officers and members across the Council.
- 36 The Committee could determine that the priorities or projects put forward are not acceptable. This could result in an incomplete IFS being produced by the Council. The Committee could also recommend other priorities that they consider more appropriate.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

There are no financial implications regarding this report.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications regarding 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.

### Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

### **Conclusions**

It is requested that the Committee agree to the following:

1. The criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects for funding in the Infrastructure Funding Statement.
2. That the specific projects and types of infrastructure recommended in paragraphs 25-34 of this report are identified in the IFS as having a priority for full or partial funding.

#### **Appendices**

**Appendix A** - Last year's IFS Report to DCAC October 2021 and Cabinet November 2021

**Appendix B** - Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019

**Appendix C** - Full details of CIL expenditure and Section 106 monies received

#### **Background Papers**

[Governance of Community Infrastructure Levy](#) - (Appendix X1) of the Council's Constitution.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019

Sevenoaks District Council's Supplementary Planning Document; Affordable Housing.

**Richard Morris**

**Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services**

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**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT - PRIORITIES****Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 19 October 2021****Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services**Status:** For recommendation to Cabinet**Also considered by:** Cabinet - 11 November 2021**Key Decision:** Yes**Executive Summary:**

As members are aware, it is a mandatory requirement, as set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) for Local Authorities to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). This should include a CIL report, a section 106 report and the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that Sevenoaks District Council intends to be funded at least in part by CIL over the next year.

This report therefore looks at what was proposed last year and what projects and type of infrastructure should be prioritised in the Council's new Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for the next year. This does not mean that local authorities are bound by the priorities laid out in the IFS but that it will provide transparency to developers and the community as to what our intentions are.

To assist members this report considers the type of projects and types of infrastructure that was prioritised last year, it then looks at what we have spent money on through Section 106 and CIL over the last few years. The report then considers if there is any further evidence through circumstances or evidence which would indicate what infrastructure or projects should be prioritised this year. It will then concludes by making recommendations for our funding priorities.

**This reports support the Key Aim of: of ensuring that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit and that development is supported by the most appropriate infrastructure.**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Julia Thornton**Contact Officer:** Claire Pamberi ex 7221 and Carlyn Kan ex 7264**Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee:**

That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

To agree and adopt the following:

- a) The criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects as laid out in paragraph 7 remains.
- b) That the specific projects and types of Infrastructure recommended in paragraphs 28 - 38 of this report are identified in the IFS as having a priority for full or partial funding.

**Reason for recommendation:**

For the Council to agree on spending priorities for the Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy for the next year.

**Introduction and Background**

- 1 As Members are aware, Sevenoaks District Council have been a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) charging authority since 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014. From this date until middle of September 2020, the Council have collected just over £11 million of CIL contributions.
- 2 New CIL Regulations came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019, which included a requirement for local authorities to report on their CIL and Section 106 income and expenditure by producing an annual report. The annual report, named an Infrastructure Funding Statement, is also expected to state the types of infrastructure or projects the authority intends to fund wholly or partially through CIL.
- 3 As you are aware, this is required for all Local Planning Authorities and is expected to be issued on or before 31st December of each year.
- 4 This report follows on from last year's Infrastructure Funding Statement and considers whether any changes need to be made to the Council's priorities for infrastructure spending in its new IFS.

**Discussion**

- 5 In considering what Sevenoaks District Council's priorities should be for allocating CIL and Section 106 monies, it is proposed to lay the report out in the following way:
  - A. Firstly, it will consider what priorities are already in place and what projects and type of infrastructure were put forward last year.

- B. The report will then consider what Sevenoaks District Council have spent CIL and 106 money on recently.
- C. It will then consider any changes to circumstances and any evidence that has come forward in the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will enable us to consider how this will impact what infrastructure should be prioritised.
- D. In light of all the above evidence, it will then propose what the priorities and projects for spending should be.

A - Priorities for allocating CIL and Section 106 monies already in place:

- 6 Looking at the report that determined the priorities for the Infrastructure Funding Statement last year (See Appendix A). The following was agreed:
- 7 Firstly, a number of criteria were agreed, which stated that infrastructure projects should be prioritised for funding if they meet them:
  - The projects fall with the infrastructure types/projects identified in the IFS report.
  - The projects have been identified in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (This ensures that the infrastructure prioritised supports the Local Plan).
  - The projects support and are clearly related to proposed or allocated development in the District. They therefore provide a strong link between development and the proposed project.
  - That there is a strong social, environmental or economic justification for the scheme.
  - That projects have not received CIL previously.
  - The scheme has support from infrastructure providers
  - That there is a need or it will be expected to be delivered within the next 5 years.
  - That it is identified as having a critical or high need where the project has to be delivered prior to any development to support it.
  - Where it is likely that the infrastructure project can be delivered within the plan period as there are little or no issues with funding or landownership.
  - Where there is a clear plan as to how the project would be funded.
- 8 In addition to this, the following types of infrastructure and projects were agreed to be priority in last years IFS:

**Highways and transport:**

- Swanley Transport Improvement Measures
- Junction 3 M25 Swanley - improvements required to address increased capacity and accessibility for pedestrians.
- Improvements to bus services in and around Swanley
- Junction improvements to Bat & Ball

## Agenda Item 6

- Edenbridge Junction improvements
- Edenbridge - sustainable transport improvements

### Utilities

- Badgers Mount water supply upgrades
- Swanley supply water upgrades

### Health and Social Care

- CIL funding is provided to deliver the additional capacity required in the next 6 - 10 years to health services in the following areas:
  - 1 Northern Sevenoaks Health
  - 2 Swanley,
  - 3 Hextable,
  - 4 Farningham,
  - 5 New Ash Green,
  - 6 Hartley,
  - 7 Fawkham,
  - 8 South Darenth
- Expansion of GP Practices in the Sevenoaks Urban Area (Time scale 11- 15 years).
- To increase the capacity of Otford Health Services (related to Fort Halstead) (Timescale 6 - 10 years).

### Affordable Housing

- It was agreed to follow our current planning policies, Government Guidance and SDC's Supplementary Planning Document.

### Local Infrastructure Projects

- any local project that provides evidence to show that it addresses a clear community need or provides a clear community benefit will be considered a priority.

### Net Zero 2030

- over the next year any infrastructure projects which clearly support our ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse emissions should be considered as a priority to receive CIL funding.

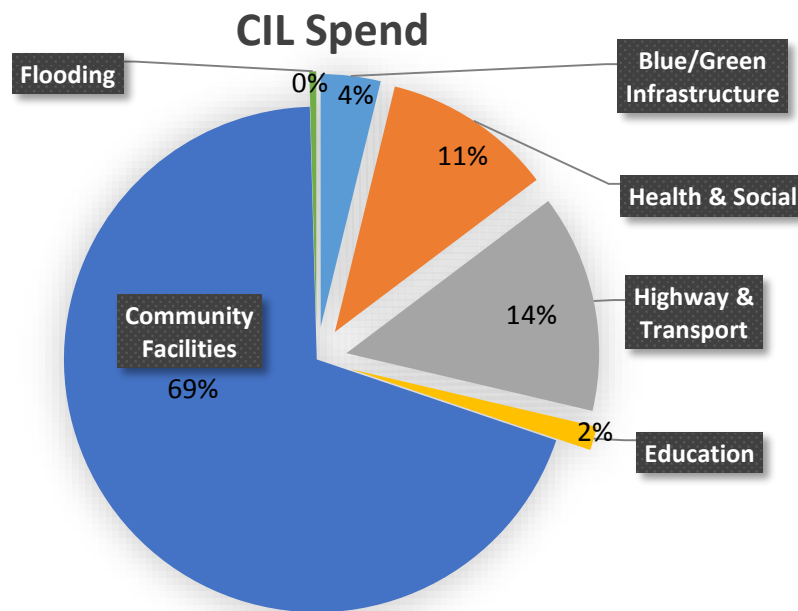
### Broadband

- any infrastructure proposals that seek to improve existing rural broadband services or propose new broadband infrastructure in rural areas will be also considered as a priority.



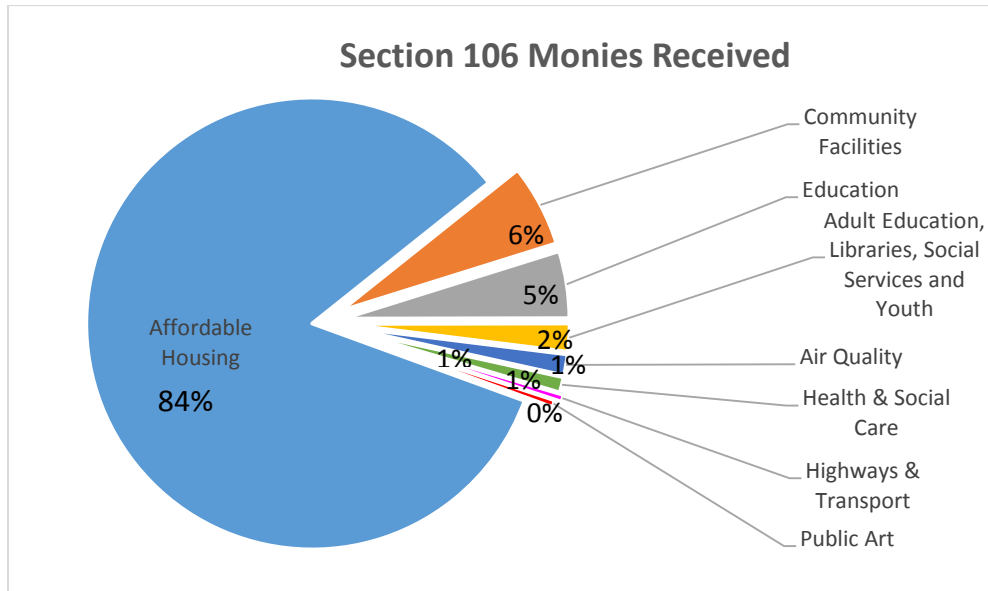
**B - What have we funded so far?**

- 9 As the types and categories of infrastructure were identified, in the report which came to DCAC last year, it is considered that it may be helpful to show you what has been funded through CIL and 106 over the last few years. Full details of this can be found at **Appendix B**.
- 10 For CIL, since 2014 we have awarded the following to the following types of infrastructure projects through the CIL Spending Board:



- 11 You can see in this pie chart shows that the largest amount of spend has been on Community Facilities (69%), which has included village halls, public toilets and play areas. The next largest amount falls under Highways and Transport (14%) which has included train station and footpath improvements. The next is Health and Social care (11%) where money has been awarded to a medical centre/hub and a health pod. These projects have all been awarded funding by following the criteria laid out in the Councils Constitution regarding CIL Governance (Appendix X1) of the Constitution.

- 12 For Section 106s, we looked previously at the period between 2011 and 2016 (as we have the best data over this period):



13 A total of £ 93,362.55 towards Affordable housing contributions were the only Section 106 funds received in the April 2020 to March 2021 period.

13 It is interesting to note here that the money received and spent is different to that allocated through CIL with Affordable Housing being the majority (84%) and with Community Facilities (5.9%) and Education (4.8%) being the next amount. The last two would have been secured before CIL was introduced.

14 If we are now considering again what projects should be prioritised, one issue that needs to be considered is whether we continue to following the patterns of CIL and 106 and ensure that Affordable Housing and Community facilities continue to be a priority.

**C - Evidence in the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan**  
**Local Plan**

15 As members are aware, the Council received confirmation from the Court of Appeal that its application to challenge the judgement of Mr Justice Dove regarding our approach to meeting the Duty to co-operate (DTC) had not been successful.

16 Since this time officers have been looking to move the local plan forward, with an aim to meet the objective of ensuring that we have a Local Plan in place by 2023.

17 We have been carrying out discussions with promoters of the larger sites and we are also updating our evidence base. As this is currently on going there is nothing that has taken place or finalised that would influence our priorities for spending at this current time.

### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**

- 18 A full review of this document is laid out in last years report in Appendix A. As stated above as we are still in the early stages of reviewing our Local Plan, and therefore this document has not been recently updated.
- 19 It is likely to be reviewed once our evidence base is finalised, and it is likely that this will impact on our priorities next year.

### **Circumstances**

- 20 It is important to note that the situation has changed for some projects and types of infrastructure.

### **Community facilities**

- 21 Firstly community facilities have been awarded the highest amount of CIL, disproportionately higher than any other type of infrastructure since CIL was introduced. Whilst it is acknowledged that local community projects are of importance, officers question whether they should be considered a priority in this year's IFS. It is considered that there may be more strategically significant infrastructure projects, which should be a priority for CIL. Should Community facilities not be proposed as a priority within the IFS, this would not prevent applicants from submitting or being granted local community projects to the next CIL Spending Board to be assessed on their own merit. It will however show the Council's intention to fund other projects.
- 22 In addition looking at particular projects, the Upper Darent Flood was identified as a high priority through the current IDP. This was previously granted funding at the May 2018 CIL Spending Board. However, the Environment Agency advised that the scheme would not be pursued in the near future and so the allocated CIL Spending Board funds have been returned to be spent at the next CIL Spending Board. All the other schemes in regard to flooding in the IDP are either for 16-20 years or their timescales are unknown and they are of medium to low priority.
- 23 Whilst the Darent Valley flood alleviation scheme proposed at the May 2018 CIL Spending Board could not be implemented at this time, this should not prejudice against other projects being put forward to assist this area. It is considered that this should therefore be included in the IFS priorities this year.
- 24 It should also be noted that in March the CIL Spending Board approved CIL money to expand the Kemsing Doctors Surgery (Part of the Otford Health Service). It is therefore questioned as to whether this should be removed from the list of priorities.

### **D - Priorities for spending this year**

- 25 Looking at the evidence above, as there have not been too many changes to the Local Plan or the evidence to support it, that there seems no reason to change most of the priorities.
- 26 It is however suggested that some of the priorities and projects are amended in light of the discussion above. It is therefore considered the following should be priorities for the next year:

#### **Community Facilities**

- 27 In regard to Community Facilities, all the infrastructure projects proposed for community facilities within our current IDP do not fall within the priority timescales. Most are proposed for a time scale of 16-20 years, and been given a medium to low priority. In light of the above it is therefore proposed that the provision of CIL towards community facilities is not a priority for the Sevenoaks District Council in this years IFS.

#### **Flooding**

- 28 In light of the above circumstances, it is proposed the Upper Darent Flood alleviation scheme is included as a priority in this year's IFS.

#### **Highways and Transport**

- 29 There are a number of projects already identified as a high priority for projects that are for Highways or Transport. It is considered that these remain the same:

- Swanley Transport Improvement Measures
- Junction 3 M25 Swanley - improvements required to address increased capacity and accessibility for pedestrians.
- Improvements to bus services in and around Swanley
- Junction improvements to Bat & Ball
- Edenbridge Junction improvements
- Edenbridge - sustainable transport improvements

#### **Utilities**

- 30 In light of the evidence in the IDP, it is considered that the following projects are still considered as a priority for funding in the Councils IFS:

- Badgers Mount water supply upgrades

- Swanley supply water upgrades

### **Health and Social Care**

31 As stated above, the increase of capacity of Otford Health Services has been identified as a high priority. A bid to extend the Kemsing branch successfully received partial funding at the March 2021 CIL Spending Board. However it is considered that as development at Fort Halstead is likely to still have an impact on the services of the Otford Health Services.

32 It is therefore considered that this remains a priority for this year's IFS.

33 In light of this and the information in the IDP it is considered that additional capacity required to health services in the following areas should be identified as a priority:

- Northern Sevenoaks Health
- Swanley,
- Hextable,
- Farningham,
- New Ash Green,
- Hartley,
- Fawkham,
- South Darent
- Expansion of GP Practices in Sevenoaks Urban Area
- To increase the capacity of Otford Health Services (related to Fort Halstead)

34 Whilst these proposals have been given a high priority, the developers will still need to apply for funding through the CIL Spending Board and therefore this does not guarantee that the schemes will be fully or partly funded. The fact that they have been identified as priority projects in the IFS will mean that this will give weight to the consideration of these bids at the Board.

### **Affordable Housing**

35 This is proposed to follow our current planning policies and Supplementary Planning Document. The income will be spent in light of the portfolio holders decision as to how we spend the money allocated to affordable housing.

### **Corporate Priorities**

36 It is proposed that projects which would contribute towards SDC's corporate priorities should remain as a priority, in particular projects that support and facilitate our Net Zero ambitions and mental health and wellbeing.

### **Broadband**

37 Any infrastructure proposals that seek to improve existing rural broadband services or propose new broadband infrastructure in rural areas will continue to be considered as a priority.

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### Notes

- 39 It should be noted that whilst the proposals above have been given a high priority, an application to the CIL Spending Board for funding will still need to be made and therefore this does not guarantee the schemes will be fully or partly funded. However, the fact that they have been identified as priority projects in the IFS will mean that this will give weight to the consideration of these bids at the Board.
- 40 Members will also be aware of the new Government White Paper, that was produced last year. This sets out the Governments vision for a new planning process and proposes introducing an “Infrastructure Levy.” No further details of this has been provided to date, but it is likely that the CIL and 106 system will change in the future.

### Other options Considered and/or rejected

- 41 Officers have based their decision on the evidence before them and through discussion with officers and Members across the Council and therefore consider that there is no alternative to those put forward.
- 42 The Committee could determine that these priorities or projects put forward are not acceptable. This could result in an incomplete IFS being produced by the Council. The committee could also recommend other priorities that they consider others are more suitable.

### Key Implications

#### Financial

There are no financial implications regarding this report.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications regarding this report.

#### Equality Assessment (Compulsory heading - do not delete)

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.

#### Net Zero

This has been addressed in the main report.

### Conclusions

It is requested that the Committee agree to the following:

1. The criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects for funding in the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

2. That the specific projects and types of infrastructure recommended in the conclusion are identified in the IFS as having a priority for full or partial funding.

### Appendices

Appendix A - Last year's IFS Report to DCAC 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

<https://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=361&Mid=2545&Ver=4&J=4>

Appendix B - Full details of CIL expenditure and Section 106 monies received

### Background Papers

[Governance of the Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) \(Cabinet - July 2020\)](#)

(Appendix X1) of the Council's Constitution.

[Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019](#)

Sevenoaks District Council's Supplementary Planning Document; Affordable Housing.

**Richard Morris**

Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

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**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT**

# **INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN**

**MARCH 2019**



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**ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

<b>AMR</b>	Authority Monitoring Report
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>DBC</b>	Dartford Borough Council
<b>GBC</b>	Gravesham Borough Council
<b>GLA</b>	Greater London Authority
<b>HRA</b>	Habitats Regulations Assessment
<b>IDP</b>	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
<b>KCC</b>	Kent County Council
<b>LBBe</b>	London Borough of Bexley
<b>LBBr</b>	London Borough of Bromley
<b>MUGA</b>	Multi Use Games Area
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>NR</b>	Network Rail
<b>PROW</b>	Public Right of Way
<b>SCC</b>	Surrey County Council
<b>SDC</b>	Sevenoaks District Council
<b>SuDS</b>	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
<b>TDC</b>	Tandridge District Council
<b>TMBC</b>	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
<b>TWBC</b>	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
<b>WDC</b>	Wealden District Council

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Sevenoaks District Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is an evidence base document that supports the Local Plan and its objectives. The IDP provides a summary of the infrastructure required for the District, according to the level of development proposed to meet the District’s needs for housing, employment and retail.

The term “infrastructure” is broadly defined to include highways, flood defences, educational facilities, health and social care facilities, community facilities, green blue infrastructure etc. It is expected that where new infrastructure provision or where improvements to existing infrastructure is required, it would be funded through developer contributions (Section 106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy).

Sevenoaks District Council has been a CIL charging authority since February 2014 and has been charging on qualifying developments since August 2014. The Regulation 123 List adopted in November 2014, sets out the types of infrastructure that CIL could fund. It is the expectation of the Council that CIL will fund the infrastructure required across the District and will only use Section 106 agreements for site specific needs and where strategic sites in the Local Plan are being proposed.

A number of infrastructure providers and delivery partners have been engaged in producing the IDP through extensive consultation and Duty to Co-operate discussions to create the IDP and should be used to demonstrate the types and levels of infrastructure, which may be required to meet any deficiencies in the District.

The IDP will be treated as a “live” document as infrastructure planning is an iterative process and will be reviewed regularly. Additional infrastructure not mentioned in this IDP might be required in order to enable a development as a result to potential changes to plans/strategies or priorities provided by infrastructure providers.

**What this document DOES...**

- Sets out the known infrastructure deficiencies and needs of the District, and identifies where improvements are required.
- It is an evidence base document for the Local Plan identifying any infrastructure priorities
- It is a live document which will be updated as and when more information is obtained throughout the Local Plan.

**What this document DOES NOT do...**

- It does not limit the infrastructure that may be sought in order to support development coming forward as part of the Local Plan.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The provision of the right infrastructure, serving the right location at the right point in time is essential when considering the sustainable development of communities. The delivery of the correct types of infrastructure should support the Local Plan in providing new homes, employment opportunities and economic growth, viable town centres as well as improving the quality of the environment.

We have taken the view that in order to achieve sustainable communities, the balance of meeting infrastructure requirements must be two-fold;

- Ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of existing residents at this moment in time; and
- Ensuring that additional capacity can be provided to accommodate any future growth across the District.

Planning for infrastructure helps to ensure that there is a common understanding between service providers, developers, local communities, businesses, neighbouring authorities and the District Council as to the local infrastructure needs. This should also provide a clear strategy to how infrastructure will be delivered in tandem with any future development across the District as a whole. Where possible, the Sevenoaks Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will provide estimated costs associated with each piece of required infrastructure, as well as setting out the proposed timescales to deliver the project.

For the purposes of the Local Plan, the IDP will be treated as a “live” document and will be reviewed regularly, which will be updated when further information is made available to the Council. This may include (but not limited to):

- Updating projects where feasibility assessments and studies becomes available to deliver the infrastructure;
- Where bids have been successful for securing funding at a national, regional or local level; and
- Where the infrastructure project has been completed/delivered.

### Purpose of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The IDP supports the objectives within our Local Plan and provides commentary on what infrastructure would be required to support future growth and development across Sevenoaks District. The Local Plan sets out the local policies and locations for development for us to create sustainable and cohesive communities, which are served by adequate services, facilities and infrastructure to support the day-to-day needs of the local population.

To assist the delivery of sustainable communities, the IDP identifies the infrastructure requirements across the District and any potential deficits, the priority of the infrastructure to be delivered, details any costs associated with the infrastructure delivery (if known) and how the infrastructure will be funded. The IDP also serves an important role in the review of

the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and the preparation of our Regulation 123 List. Both of these documents will support how infrastructure will be funded in the future across Sevenoaks District.

For meeting our needs across Sevenoaks District, the preferred development strategy for the Local Plan is:

- Focusing growth in existing settlements, including at higher densities;
- Redevelopment of previously developed land in sustainable locations; and
- Development of greenfield Green Belt land only in “exceptional circumstances” where social and community infrastructure is being proposed in addition to housing, which could help address evidenced infrastructure deficiencies in the area.

Therefore, there is potential for a number of sites that demonstrate “exceptional circumstances” to be included in the Local Plan. The IDP will consider how the infrastructure proposed on these sites will be delivered for the development to come forward.

While we must look at the need for infrastructure within Sevenoaks District, it is essential to note that the need for infrastructure is not confined to the boundaries of the District. Therefore, consideration must also be given to any cross-boundary infrastructure requirements as part of the IDP.

It should be recognised that infrastructure needs are discussed in broad terms and other infrastructure might be required in order to enable a development to go ahead. This might be as a result to changes in national legislation or Government priorities as well as changes in the plans/strategies provided by infrastructure providers.

## 2 DEFINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure can be identified as the various services and facilities that are necessary to help build sustainable communities, which include the delivery of new infrastructure or upgrading of the existing facilities to accommodate additional capacity from either new or existing developments.

The term “infrastructure” is broad and can compass many aspects of social, economic and environment issues. As there is no set definition of infrastructure within the NPPF, we have taken forward the application of infrastructure as set out in the Planning Act 2008 under Section 216(2). This includes:

- Transport schemes;
- Flood defences;
- Water quality;
- Education;
- Health and social care facilities;
- Police and emergency services facilities;
- Community facilities;
- Communications (including broadband); and
- Blue Green infrastructure.

This list is not restrictive and can include utilities (i.e. electricity, gas, and water and wastewater networks). For the purposes of the IDP, the following types of infrastructure could be included within each category described:

Infrastructure Category	Type of Infrastructure / Project
<b>Transport</b>	Road networks Rail networks Bus services Cycling and walking routes Public Rights of Way (PROWs) Car parking facilities (including electric vehicle charging points)
<b>Flood defences</b>	Flood defences and water quality schemes – Blue Green Infrastructure can also provide solutions to mitigate any effects.
<b>Water quality</b>	
<b>Education</b>	Pre-school and nursery schools Primary education Secondary education Post 18 / higher education Adult education Special educational needs
<b>Health and social care facilities</b>	GP surgeries Dental services

	<p>Hospitals and community trusts</p> <p>Mental health services</p> <p>Adult social care services</p> <p>Children’s social services</p>
<b>Police and emergency services facilities</b>	Schemes involving physical infrastructure for the police, fire and rescue services, and ambulance services.
<b>Community facilities</b>	<p>Places of worship</p> <p>Sport venues</p> <p>Playing pitches</p> <p>Meeting places</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Cultural buildings</p>
<b>Communications (including broadband)</b>	<p>Telecommunications</p> <p>High speed broadband</p>
<b>Blue Green Infrastructure</b>	<p>Natural / semi-natural open space</p> <p>Parks / country parks</p> <p>Local Wildlife Sites</p> <p>Local Nature Reserves</p>

### 3 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING CONTEXT

#### National Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) stresses the importance of taking a positive, proactive approach to local plan-making and the strategic priorities of an area. The expectation of the NPPF is that local planning authorities look beyond the requirements to meeting housing needs, and focus on creating sustainable communities during the course of the plan period and beyond. This should be extended to consider additional provision for infrastructure, community facilities and transport.

The NPPF is clear that infrastructure should be integrated with future development and that should be considered as part of the plan-making process and should include the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at the local level. The NPPF also highlights the role of developer contributions play in supporting the delivery of infrastructure. Local Plans should set out from the outset the contributions which are expected to come forward from development while not undermining the delivery of the Plan (NPPF paragraph 34)<sup>1</sup>.

Planning practice guidance for Local Plans emphasises the importance of engaging with infrastructure providers early in the plan-making process, as it is essential to understand their investment plans, development strategies and critical dependencies. As the PPG states:

*“At an early stage in the plan-making process strategic policy-making authorities will need to work alongside infrastructure providers, service delivery organisations, other strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, landowners and site promoters. A collaborative approach is expected to be taken to identifying infrastructure deficits and requirements, and opportunities for addressing them. In doing so they will need to:*

- *assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands. Where deficiencies are identified, policies should set out how those deficiencies will be addressed; and*
- *take account of the need for strategic infrastructure, including nationally significant infrastructure, within their areas.”<sup>2</sup>*

Guidance also states that the deliverability of infrastructure is an important consideration, to ensure that the Local Plan provides alternative strategies to provide critical infrastructure. The provision of infrastructure must also not affect the viability of development coming forward, including the considering the impact of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Yet it must be recognised that as a CIL charging authority, SDC does not receive many developer contributions to bring forward necessary infrastructure improvements to meet the demands of development across the District. Therefore it is the firm expectation of the Council that CIL will be used to help provide funding to meet the infrastructure needs of the

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework 2019

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2019) – Plan Making (Paragraph 59 Reference ID: 61-059-20190315)



District, while considering the appropriate use of Section 106 to deliver site specific improvements and bring forward infrastructure on strategic sites proposed in the Local Plan (see Chapter 5). This approach between CIL and Section 106 agreements is consistent with the Council's Regulation 123 List.

### Local Planning Context

The Local Plan sets out the strategic priorities of Sevenoaks District, and considers a number of non-strategic policies to manage development, as well as influence the provision of infrastructure to meet both the existing community and the new development. The IDP forms part of the evidence base to support the Local Plan and outlines the infrastructure requirements to mitigate the impacts of development, whether that is the provision of new infrastructure or upgrading the existing facilities. This can be dealt with at a strategic level, while seeking specific improvements through design guidance on particular development sites allocated in the overall Local Plan.

### Preparation of the IDP

National guidance stresses the importance of engaging with infrastructure partners early in the Local Plan process, so local authorities can understand their future development and investment plans for an area during the course of the plan period. By engaging early, local authorities can also understand the existing deficiencies in infrastructure in relation to the development site allocations proposed in the Plan.

In October 2015, a revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan was produced by Sevenoaks District Council to monitor infrastructure delivery against the Core Strategy as well as considering any deficiencies in infrastructure across the District. Infrastructure providers submitted responses based on the District's housing requirements in the Core Strategy (3,300 units) up to 2026.

However, the District's housing needs have increased significantly. Our Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) published in late 2015, suggested that 12,400 homes (620 units per annum) were required over the new plan period. This has been since superseded by the revised NPPF and the Government's standardised methodology for calculating housing need (February 2019) which has increased the District's housing need to 13,960 homes (698 units per annum) over the new plan period.

Therefore, a revision to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan was essential to form part of the Local Plan evidence base to reflect the revised housing needs of the District. It is also important to identify any potential deficiencies in local infrastructure, and any potential costings that might be associated to its delivery.

### Process of Engagement

Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, we have consulted widely and engaged with a number of infrastructure providers and delivery partners including (but not limited to):

- Kent County Council (including Public Health, Economic Development, Highways, Education, Planning, Waste and Minerals, Public Rights of Way etc.)
- Highways England
- Network Rail
- Bromley / Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley / West Kent Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Transport for London
- Greater London Authority
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Education & Skills Funding Agency
- Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue
- National Grid
- UK Power Networks
- South East Water
- Southern Water
- Thames Water
- Arriva Buses
- Go-Coach Buses
- Southeastern Railway
- Govia Thameslink Railway

Infrastructure providers and delivery partners were contacted on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 following the publication of the Draft Local Plan; a second Regulation 18 consultation which detailed the potential development sites that could be taken forward with the District's housing need figure. A further letter was sent to infrastructure and service providers on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018, asking them for further information on any potential infrastructure improvements, which would be required to meet the needs of future development in the District. This could be site-specific or District-wide improvements. Any responses received as part of the Draft Local Plan consultation were included as considerations for the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The responses were assessed and categorised to produce the full Infrastructure Schedule to support the development of the Local Plan. The categorisation of infrastructure was based on the type of infrastructure (outlined in Section 2), before considering how the infrastructure would be delivered over the course of the Plan period.

- *Timescale – infrastructure providers giving a estimate to when a infrastructure project would be delivered over the Plan period:*

- 1-5 years (expected to be delivered between 2015-2020)
  - 6-10 years (expected to be delivered between 2021-2025)
  - 11-15 years (expected to be delivered between 2026-2030)
  - 16-20 years (expected to be delivered between 2031-2035)
- *Priority – infrastructure providers giving an indication on how likely the infrastructure project would be delivered to support development.*
    - *Critical – the infrastructure project would have to be delivered prior to any development in order to support it*
    - *High – the infrastructure project would have to be delivered in tandem with the development in order to support it*
    - *Medium - the infrastructure project would support the delivery of development but there no plans to bring it forward in the immediate future (1 – 10 years)*
    - *Low - the infrastructure project would support the delivery of development but there no plans to bring it forward within the Plan period.*
  - *Risk to Delivery – while infrastructure providers may have the statutory right to carry out the infrastructure project, there could be a potential risk to delivering it. This could include landownership issues, uncertainty over funding streams and other factors.*
    - *High – based on the information submitted, it is highly unlikely that the infrastructure project will be delivered within the Plan period due to the uncertainty of funding / landownership issues etc.*
    - *Medium – based on the information submitted there is a possibility that the infrastructure project may be delivered by the provider.*
    - *Low – it is highly likely that the infrastructure project will be delivered within the Plan period as there are little or no issues with funding or landownership*
  - *Funding Position – a summary of how the infrastructure would be funded. The statement also includes whether any funding has been secured or sought through capital investment.*

A summary of the responses received can be found in Chapter 6. The full infrastructure schedule can be found in Appendix A of this evidence paper.

## 4 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AND MECHANISMS

Where new infrastructure or infrastructure improvements are required, from the result of new development, the planning system allows, through planning obligations, for developers to provide or appropriately contribute towards, the provision of this new or improved infrastructure. Local planning authorities have a number of options available to them when considering the funding of infrastructure. In the context of the Sevenoaks District, the following approach to funding and delivering infrastructure is as follows:

- 1) Using contributions collected through CIL to provide funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure (where funding gaps are identified);
- 2) To secure site-specific improvements (including strategic sites infrastructure) through a Section 106 agreement where justified;
- 3) Look to secure funding to deliver infrastructure through partnership working via third party sources (e.g. central Government programmes, Local Enterprise Partnerships, agencies and other public bodies)

### Using CIL Contributions

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to set rates on specific types of development to raise capital for the purposes of delivering infrastructure for the area. The levy is set out in the local authority's Charging Schedule. The Charging Schedule sets out the rates for qualifying developments and how contributions are calculated. The Charging Schedule gives developers a clear understanding of what contributions are expected to fund infrastructure across the District.

CIL can only be used for infrastructure, and is expected to be raised on mainly residential developments in the District. The Government has placed automatic exemptions on particular types of development where the levy cannot be sought.

It must be noted that there is a clear expectation that CIL will be used to provide infrastructure as SDC does not receive many developer contributions through Section 106 agreements. The IPD and the Council's Regulation 123 List will inform the types of infrastructure that can be delivered through CIL contributions. For the purpose of clarity, SDC is aware that CIL will not be able to fully fund all infrastructure requirements across the District.

Under the CIL Regulations, the District Council is required to pass a percentage of CIL contributions collected in the parish to the relevant town or parish council where qualifying development has occurred. The proportion of how much is passed to the relevant town/parish council is dependent on whether the town or parish council has a neighbourhood plan in place.

However, in November 2014, the Council agreed that all town and parish councils within the District will receive 25% of contributions collected in their parish area, regardless of charging area and whether a neighbourhood plan is in place. This would be calculated against the top

CIL charging rate (£125 per sq. m.), resulting in discretionary “top-up” payments being made by the Council. Further information on the total value of CIL collected by the Council and the total values of contributions being passed to Town and Parish Councils can be found on our website ([www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/cil](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/cil)).

Where town and parish councils have received payments from SDC, they can spend their proportion of CIL on local infrastructure needs, which would mitigate the impacts of development in the parish area.

The remaining proportion of CIL is allocated to local and strategic infrastructure projects across Sevenoaks District. This is administered by the Council’s CIL Spending Board. Infrastructure providers, town and parish councils or interested third parties are invited to bid for “top up” funding to deliver the infrastructure project. This is conducted through an application bidding process where applicants must provide:

- The need for the scheme being proposed;
- Information that the project demonstrated clear social, economic and environmental benefits;
- Whether any match funding has been secured to deliver the proposal;
- Whether planning permission is required to deliver the project or whether the applicant has permitted development rights to carry out the project;
- Whether the project will be delivered by multiple organisations; and
- Whether the project has support from the local community.

However, it is important to note that we still maintain the right as a Charging Authority to review and revise the Charging Schedule and CIL Governance procedures to reflect the need for infrastructure in District, without prejudicing the viability of development coming forward.

### Planning Obligations and Section 106 Agreements

The application of planning obligations assist in mitigating the impacts of unacceptable development to make it more acceptable in planning terms. This can include the provision of affordable housing or providing specific infrastructure improvements for that development. This could include:

- The provision of physical infrastructure on site;
- The availability of land for the infrastructure to be developed; or
- The developer providing financial contributions to aid the delivery of infrastructure or contribute to the necessary infrastructure improvements.

Section 106 agreements are legal documents detailing the planning obligations agreed between the local planning authority and the developer, and any other third party that is required for the development to occur. Third parties could include:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Local Education Authority
- Local Highway Authority
- Highways England (in relation to the Strategic Road Network)
- Lead Local Flood Authority or the Environment Agency
- Emergency services (Police and Fire & Rescue)

As it is expected that CIL will aid the delivery of infrastructure across the District, the Council will only use Section 106 agreements to bring forward any site specific improvements where required. Section 106 agreements will also be used to deliver infrastructure on strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan (see Chapter 5). This approach is broadly consistent with the Council's Regulation 123 List on how infrastructure will be delivered.

### Other Sources (Third Party Organisations and Agencies)

While developers and local authorities work to deliver a development scheme, local authorities also work with a number of public bodies, organisations and agencies to help secure funding for the delivery of infrastructure. Organisations could include:

- Central Government departments (e.g. Department for Health, Department for Education, Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government);
- NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups;
- Skills and Funding Education Agency;
- Environment Agency;
- Kent County Council;
- Homes England etc.

It is likely that should funding come forward to deliver these projects it may come forward as part of the provider's Capital Forward Programme and/or Asset Management Plan. These documents highlight the delivery of new infrastructure or maintenance/improvements to existing infrastructure provision, how it will be delivered, the potential funding gaps (where applicable) and the timeframes for delivery.

The NPPF places great weight on the Duty to Cooperate between the local authority and other organisations that are integral to the plan-making process to ensure that local and cross-boundary infrastructure issues are addressed adequately. Where funding and support is sought from third party organisations, the delivery of necessary infrastructure is dependent on a national or regional bidding process where a number of criterion may be considered against the need for the infrastructure proposed. This is usually reserved for "stalled" development sites (i.e. sites that are unable to progress unless the necessary infrastructure is provided) or Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) (such as the Lower Thames Crossing for example).

## 5 POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LOCAL PLAN – STRATEGIC SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

As set out in the Introduction section to this document, we have consulted widely on defining the preferred development strategy for the Local Plan mainly:

- Focusing growth in existing settlements, including at higher densities;
- Redevelopment of previously developed land in sustainable locations; and
- Development of greenfield Green Belt land only in “exceptional circumstances” where social and community infrastructure is being proposed in addition to housing, which could help address evidenced infrastructure deficiencies in the area.

We have been clear throughout the plan-making process that, should development be allocated in the Local Plan on green field Green Belt land, we expect that infrastructure improvements should provide a wider community benefit to meet a defined existing need and not just be confined to the proposed development.

During the Local Plan process, a number of green field Green Belt sites have been submitted to the Council. Overall, twelve strategic sites were consulted on as part of our Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation during Summer 2018 given the constrained nature of the District (93% Green Belt and 60% Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

For the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan, the following strategic sites in the Green Belt have been proposed for allocation:

- Sevenoaks Quarry, Sevenoaks;
- Land at Skinners Land, Edenbridge (formally identified as Land South and East of Four Elms Road, Edenbridge);
- Pedham Place, Swanley (as a Broad Location for Growth)

Despite Pedham Place being located in strongly performing Green Belt, it has been considered that the scheme could have the potential to deliver a comprehensive infrastructure offer, which could assist in the regeneration of Swanley. Whilst the proposed development site have the potential to perform against sustainability objectives, further information is required. Therefore it has been recommended to identify the location as a “broad location for growth”, rather than formally designating it as a development site allocation in this current Local Plan. The site will be reviewed as part of any future Local Plan review.

A summary of the infrastructure offer for the three strategic sites in the Green Belt for potential allocation has been provided. The table also includes the site at Fort Halstead, Halstead as it is a significant mixed-use allocation within the Local Plan. It should be noted that the infrastructure proposed is likely to be secured through S106 agreements, as the on-site delivery is a key part of the rationale for the development of these sites:

Site Name	No. of Units Proposed	Site Area (Ha)	Social & Community Infrastructure Proposed by the promoter
Sevenoaks Quarry	600	94.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Leisure Lake/centre for water sports</li> <li>• Mixed use lake-side facilities</li> <li>• Lake-side park and associated open green space for leisure, drainage and nature</li> <li>• New pedestrian and cycle connections within and beyond the site</li> <li>• Improved linkages to improved community infrastructure around Bat and Ball station and employment opportunities on the Vestry estate (as part of the Sevenoaks Northern Masterplan)</li> <li>• Contributions towards education and health facilities</li> </ul>
Pedham Place, Swanley	2,500	117.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New homes including affordable homes and accessible homes for the vulnerable and elderly</li> <li>• A new leisure centre</li> <li>• Revitalised golf course, all-weather sports pitches and other indoor and outdoor leisure facilities</li> <li>• Employment space including village shops and amenities, purpose built office space and a hotel</li> <li>• Village Green and local centre with greenspace, healthcare provision and community use buildings</li> <li>• Junior school, nursery and all-ages special needs (PSCN) school</li> <li>• Green infrastructure/public access open space</li> <li>• Positive enhancement of the wider natural landscape</li> </ul>
Land South and East of Four Elms Road, Edenbridge	515	27.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land for medical services (a new combined GP surgery and hospital)</li> <li>• Land for education use (a new secondary school)</li> <li>• Public open space (including allotments and provision of a linear greenway)</li> </ul>



## Agenda Item 6

Sevenoaks Infrastructure Delivery Plan (March 2019)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land and funding for new roundabout junction and internal spine road to the school and medical services sites</li> </ul>
Fort Halstead, Halstead	300 (plus 450 with planning permission)	62.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New primary school</li> <li>• On-site community facilities including village shop, café and space for a satellite GP surgery</li> <li>• Formal and informal open space</li> <li>• Provision and enhancement of pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure</li> </ul>

## 6 SUMMARY OF INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

The following summary is provided on the evidence received by the Council, with a full schedule of infrastructure required over the Plan period in Appendix A. Either this information was provided during the IDP Call for Evidence exercise or representations submitted to previous Local Plan consultations:

- Regulation 18 Local Plan Issues & Options consultation (June 2017)
- Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation (July 2018)
- Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan consultation (December 2018)

Representations made to the Local Plan consultations can be found on the Council's Planning Policy consultation portal (<http://planningconsult.sevenoaks.gov.uk/consult.ti/>)

We will continue to work with infrastructure providers and delivery partners throughout the plan-making process. We also commit to continuous engagement with partners to identify and deliver further infrastructure improvements as development comes forward during the lifespan of the plan and during any part of a future Local Plan review.

Infrastructure planning is an inherently uncertain process as infrastructure partners and providers plan to different timeframes to the plan period to be covered by the new Local Plan. Therefore, it has been difficult to ascertain beyond the next five years or to gain information the amount of infrastructure required to deliver the Local Plan. Information on the cost of infrastructure provision has been particularly difficult to gain.

This is the latest version of the IDP accounting for the potential growth in the new Local Plan, since the Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (February 2011). It is anticipated that this IDP will be updated on a regular basis, where further information is made available. This would reflect the changing nature and demands of infrastructure to support the delivery of development within the District. This may include:

- Updating projects where feasibility assessments and studies becomes available to deliver the infrastructure;
- Where bids have been successful for securing funding at a national, regional or local level; and
- Where the infrastructure project has been completed/delivered.

### Transport

- **KCC Highways (Jan 2019)** - the local highways authority for Sevenoaks District. KCC Highways recognises the significant growth that is planned across the District, especially concerning the larger potential development sites. It has been commented on that a number of development sites proposed in the Local Plan will create accessibility, capacity issues on the local highway network and at key local junctions.

KCC Highways have identified that further work will be required before development sites are bought forward in the Local Plan. This includes further information from site promoters (i.e. Transport Assessments and modelling) before recommendations for highways improvements can be provided.

- **Transport for London (Jan 2019)** – responsible for cross-boundary bus services and manage the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). While there are no specific infrastructure improvements, TfL support future devolution of rail services, while looking for financial contributions for bus and rail services from developments located close to the Greater London boundary.
- **Highways England (Jan 2019)** – responsible of managing and operating the Strategic Road Network (i.e. the Trunk Road and Motorway Network in England). It was noted in the response that improvements to M23 Junctions 3-5, M20 Junctions 1-3 and the A21 (from M25 to A225 junction) would need to be considered if development were to go ahead.
- **Network Rail (Sept 2018)** – the statutory organisation that maintains and upgrades the physical railway infrastructure. Network Rail recognise the scale of development proposed in the Local Plan and the impact that it might have on current railway infrastructure (i.e. requirements for new infrastructure, station improvements and increasing capacity through better rolling stock). Network Rail also noted that the Department for Transport will be announcing the winner of the new South Eastern rail franchise in late 2018. Further rail capacity improvements are also likely to come through the new franchisee.

### Flooding and water quality

- **Environment Agency (Jan 2019)** – statutory body that has responsibility over managing the environment and flooding from main rivers, reservoirs and estuaries. A number of projects have been identified over the new Plan period including increasing floodplain storage, remedial works to flood relief channels and scoping for the construction of floodwalls in key locations to protect residents and businesses.

### Education

- **KCC Education (Jan 2019)** – the local education authority for Sevenoaks District. KCC Education recognises the significant growth that is planned across the District, especially with regards to the larger potential development sites. A number of new schools (both primary and secondary education) would be required, as well as a number of expansions to existing schools over the new Plan period.
- **KCC Community Learning & Skills Services (Jan 2019)** - while there are no specific projects identified to meet the potential demand from proposed development in the Local Plan, it would expect funding to meet the demands.

### Health and social care

- **West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (Sept 2018)** – the body which has delegated co-commissioning responsibilities with general practices and takes a strategic role in planning for medical services across the south of the District. WKCCG recognise the pressures that increased development will bring to their 7 GP practices in the District. Further work is being carried out to assess the impacts of the proposed development sites in the Draft Local Plan.
- **Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group (Jan 2019)** - the body which has delegated co-commissioning responsibilities for general practices and takes a strategic role in planning for medical services across the north of the District. DGS CCG is looking to expand medical/health services to address the pressure that increased development will create for their 7 GP practices in the North District. Particularly they are wanting to create of a “health and wellbeing centre” in Swanley and further expand existing GP facilities where required. Further details to be provided once available.
- **Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group (Sept 2018)** – while the Bromley CCG area does not fall within the boundaries of Sevenoaks District, the organisation recognises that a number of potential development sites proposed in the Draft Local Plan would influence a number of Bromley GP practices. Further information might become available as the Local Plan advances.
- **KCC Social Care Services (Jan 2019)** – while there are no specific projects identified to meet the potential demand from proposed development in the Local Plan, it would expect funding to meet the demands.

### Police and emergency services

No infrastructure proposals or comments have been provided to date from the appropriate infrastructure providers

### Community infrastructure

- **KCC Libraries (Jan 2019)** - while there are no specific projects identified to meet the potential demand from proposed development in the Draft Local Plan, it would expect funding to meet the demands.
- **KCC Youth Services (Jan 2019)** - while there are no specific projects identified to meet the potential demand from proposed development in the Draft Local Plan, it would expect funding to to meet the demands.

## Communications (including broadband)

No infrastructure proposals or comments have been provided to date from the appropriate infrastructure providers

## Blue green infrastructure

No infrastructure proposals or comments have been provided to date from the appropriate infrastructure providers

## Other (including utilities)

- **National Grid (Sept 2018)** – operates the high voltage electricity transmission system in England and Wales, as well as the gas transmission system. No infrastructure improvements were indicated.
- **UK Power Networks (Sept 2018)** – a distribution network operator for electricity covering South East England, the East of England and London. The organisation states that there are no infrastructure improvements required for the District.
- **Historic England (Jan 2019)** – statutory body for the historic environment in England. It was noted that no infrastructure requirements are necessary but support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Where infrastructure improvements are necessary in historic environments, appropriate assessments are required before works are carried out.
- **Southern Water (Jan 2019)** – statutory wastewater undertaker for the south of the District. Indicated that some additional investment into the wastewater network in Edenbridge would be required following the inclusion of a strategic site in Edenbridge being included in the Local Plan.
- **South East Water (Sept 2018)** – submitted comments through the Local Plan consultations. Published their Draft Water Resources Management Plan in May 2018, which looks at water resources up to 2080. It is noted that little infrastructure will be required as projected housing growth in the District falls broadly within their projected growth forecasts.
- **Thames Water (Jan 2019)** - a water provider to the north of the District. Thames Waters recognise the development ambitions that the Local Plan is seeking to address but has suggested that little infrastructure would be required as the projected housing growth in the District falls broadly within their projected growth forecasts.

It has been demonstrated that a number of infrastructure improvement will be required over the course of the plan period to facilitate development. Furthermore, it is clear there are no large-scale infrastructure requirements which would inhibit development coming forward or be required to unlock development in the Local Plan.

Due to the limited scale of development proposed in the Local Plan, there are no requirements for large scale infrastructure developments or Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects for this Local Plan. However, large scale infrastructure developments may be required if the infrastructure needs of the District change. The IDP will be under continual review to reflect the needs and infrastructure requirements over the plan period.

## 7 INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS AND NEXT STEPS

Throughout the process, it was expected that infrastructure providers would be able to provide indicative costs for schemes where known. Appendix A sets out the information that we have received to determine the levels of funding required, as well as how the scheme would be funded.

As a CIL charging authority, SDC does not receive many developer contributions to bring forward necessary infrastructure improvements to meet the demands of development across the District. To reiterate, the Council’s strategy for funding and delivery infrastructure is as follows:

- 1) Using contributions collected through CIL to provide funding to deliver the necessary infrastructure (where funding gaps are identified);
- 2) To secure site-specific improvements (including strategic sites infrastructure) through a Section 106 agreement where justified;
- 3) Look to secure funding to deliver infrastructure through partnership working via third party sources (e.g. central Government programmes, Local Enterprise Partnerships, agencies and other public bodies)

This exercise has demonstrated that there are requirements to upgrade, improve or provide new infrastructure over the Plan period to meet the development needs of Sevenoaks District. The exercise also shows that the delivery of development proposed in the Local Plan would not be undermined, as there are no “showstoppers” with infrastructure delivery.

There are clear links between the strategic sites and the infrastructure suggested to meet a localised need, as demonstrated by the three strategic sites that are proposed to be allocated in the Local Plan:

Site Name	No. of Units Proposed	Key Social & Community Infrastructure Proposed by the promoter
Sevenoaks Quarry	600	Leisure lake, recreation uses and leisure
Pedham Place, Swanley	2500	Leisure centre, local centre, primary and secondary schools and a special needs (PSCN) school
Land South and East of Four Elms Road, Edenbridge	515	Integrated hospital and GP facility, secondary school and improved access to Edenbridge Town station
Fort Halstead, Halstead	300 (plus 450 with planning permission)	New primary school, on-site community facilities including village shop, café and space for a satellite GP surgery, open space, provision and enhancement of pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure

The IDP will play a significant role in how infrastructure will be delivered and the funding mechanisms to support its delivery. Overall, this IDP will help in determining the developer contributions required, as well as providing a rolling evidence base to establish the underlying infrastructure needs of the District.

However, this means that the delivery of an infrastructure scheme could benefit from a variety of funding sources in the future should one source not be sufficient. This could include the pooling of funding from a number of schemes or sources to fund strategic infrastructure improvements, as appropriate. We will continue to engage with infrastructure providers to ensure that costs are considered and reviewed when determining funding through developer contributions.

The Sevenoaks IDP forms one part of the overall evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan. As the delivery of infrastructure is dependent on the delivery of housing, it is essential to ensure that the IDP is kept up to date and reviewed regularly when new information becomes available.



## Appendix A – Schedule of Infrastructure Requirements

The following schedule is a result of information that is currently available. The schedule will be updated accordingly where new information is provided or there is an update to the existing scheme. The criteria used to determine the priority, timescale, risk to delivery and funding position can be found in Section 3 “Infrastructure Planning Context”.

Infrastructure Type	Project Title	Project Justification	Priority	Timescale	Delivery Body	Risk to Delivery	Estimated Associated Costs (if known)	Funding Mechanism
<b>Community Facilities (CF)</b>								
CF	New Library Provision at Pedham Place	The development at Pedham Place would justify new on-site provision through the delivery of health and community facilities. This could be achieved by direct provision by the developer or through a contribution of around £1.1m (total) for KCC to provide the requisite facilities. This includes Community Learning and Skills, Youth Services and Families & Social Care.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.
CF	Enhancement of Swanley Library	The additional demand could be accommodated through the enhancement of facilities at Swanley Library and the provision of additional Book stock.	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	£214,800	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	New Library Provision in the Halstead/ Knockholt area	The nearest existing library is Riverhead, but this would be incapable of meeting the expected demand from this development. Funding could be used to enhance facilities and book stock at Sevenoaks Library, but this is some distance from the proposed development. Alternatively, it may be possible that additional provision could be made	Low	11-15 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	£106,900	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

		through the delivery of community facilities on-site.						
CF	Enhancements of Libraries in Sevenoaks area	The nearest libraries are Riverhead and Seal. On their own, these libraries may not be capable of meeting the expected demand from development. Whilst some enhancement of facilities and book stock might be possible at Riverhead and Seal libraries, the alternative would be to enhance the facilities and book stock at Sevenoaks Library.	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	£264,000	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Enhancement of Edenbridge Library	Facilities and book stock at Edenbridge Library could be delivered to meet the demand generated by development.	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	£85,500	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Enhancements of libraries in the New Ash Green/Hartley area	Facilities and book stock at New Ash Green and Hartley libraries could be delivered to meet the demand generated by development.	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Libraries	Medium	£33,000	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Provision of New Youth Service Facilities - Pedham Place	The development at Pedham Place would justify new on-site provision through the delivery of health and community facilities. This could be achieved by direct provision by the developer or through a contribution of around £1.1m (total) for KCC to provide the requisite facilities. This includes Library Services, Community Learning & Skills and Families & Social Care.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Youth Services - Swanley/Hextable area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	£51,600	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

CF	Youth Services - Hartley/New Ash Green area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	£7,500	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Youth Service Provision - Halstead/ Knockholt area	Provision of new facilities on site through any community facilities that are delivered, or as stand-alone building located centrally to the development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	£18,500	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Youth Service Facilities - Sevenoaks area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	£72,000	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
CF	Youth Service Facilities - Edenbridge area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Youth Services	Medium	£17,700	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
<b>Education (E)</b>								
E	Primary Education - Edenbridge	Number of dwellings proposed in Edenbridge planning area is 442, resulting in a generated demand of up to 118 pupils. The Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent 2018-22 currently shows that the requirement for up to 0.6 FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by this planned development could be accommodated within the Sevenoaks Rural South West planning group for primary schools.	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

E	Primary Education - New Ash Green/Hartley	Up to 164 new dwellings in the Hartley/Fawkham/New Ash Green, area would generate up to 46 primary pupils. The Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent 2018-22 currently shows that the requirement for up to 0.2 FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by this planned development could be accommodated within the West Kingsdown, Hartley & New Ash Green planning group for primary schools.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
	Primary Education - Sevenoaks Urban Area	Up to 1,287 new dwellings would generate up to 360 primary pupils. Requirement for up to 1.7FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development. Suggestion that a new primary school could be provided within any future development of the Sevenoaks Quarry site (ST2-13)	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Primary Education - Swanley/Hextable	Up to 1,021 new dwellings would generate up to 286 primary pupils. Requirement for up to 1.4FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development.  Development in the Swanley & Hextable area has the potential to impact on both primary and secondary schools within the Dartford area. There are 3 primary and 3 secondary schools within the Wilmington and Joydens Wood areas closest to Swanley and Hextable whilst slightly further afield there are an additional 6 primary and 3 secondary schools.	Medium	11-15 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

E	Primary Education - Pedham Place (Broad location for growth)	Number of dwellings proposed at Pedham Place is 2500 units, resulting in a generated demand of up to 700 pupils. The development would require the provision of up to 3.3FE. It is also of a sufficient scale and size to be capable of on-site provision of 2 new 2FE schools which could some of the demand generated by allocated development within the Swanley & Hextable Area.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.
E	Primary Education - Halstead / Knockholt area	Up to 563 new dwellings would generate 158 primary pupils. The Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent 2018-22 currently shows that there is some spare capacity within the Halstead & Knockholt planning group for primary schools. However, the requirement for up to 0.75 FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by this planned development would, in conjunction with the consented development for DRA Fort Halstead, would exceed this capacity requiring up 1.5FE new provision within the area.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Secondary Education - Sevenoaks Urban Area	Up to 563 new dwellings would generate up to 257 secondary pupils. Requirement for up to 1.7FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development. Existing secondary schools would reach over capacity during the Plan Period requiring new provision to accommodate demand from planned development.	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.

E	Secondary Education - Pedham Place (Broad location for growth)	Number of dwellings proposed at Pedham Place is 2500 units, resulting in a generated demand of up to 500 pupils. The development would require the provision of up to 3.3FE and justify the provision of a new 4FE school. However, It is of a sufficient scale and size to be capable of delivering a 6FE school on-site provision that would provide additional capacity to accommodate demand from allocated development across the wider North Sevenoaks area.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.
E	Secondary Education - Edenbridge	Number of dwellings proposed in Edenbridge planning area is 442, resulting in a generated demand of up to 84 pupils. Requirement for up to 0.6FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development. Existing secondary schools would reach over capacity during the Plan Period requiring new provision to accommodate demand from planned development.	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.
E	Secondary Education - Swanley/Hextable	Up to 1,021 new dwellings would generate up to 204 secondary pupils. Requirement for up to 1.4FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development. Existing secondary schools would reach over capacity during the Plan Period requiring new provision to accommodate demand from planned development.  Development in the Swanley & Hextable area has the potential to impact on both primary and secondary schools within the Dartford area. There are 3 primary and 3 secondary schools within the Wilmington and Joydens	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

		Wood areas closest to Swanley and Hextable whilst slightly further afield there are an additional 6 primary and 3 secondary schools.						
E	Secondary Education - New Ash Green/Hartley	Up to 164 new dwellings would generate up to 33 secondary pupils. Requirement for up to 0.2FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development. Existing secondary schools would reach over capacity during the Plan Period requiring new provision to accommodate demand from planned development.	Medium	16-20 years	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Secondary Education - Knockholt/Halstead	Up to 563 new dwellings would generate up to 113 secondary pupils. Requirement for up to 0.75FE additional provision to meet the demand generated by planned development along with a further 0.55FE to meet the demand generated by the consented development for DRA Fort Halstead. Existing secondary schools would reach over capacity during the Plan Period requiring new provision to accommodate demand from planned development.	Medium	16-20 years	16-20 years	KCC Education	Medium	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	New Community Learning Facility at Pedham Place	The development at Pedham Place would justify new on-site provision through the delivery of health and community facilities. This could be achieved by direct provision by the developer or through a contribution of around £1.1m (total) for KCC to provide the requisite facilities. This includes Library Services, Youth Services and Families & Social Care.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.

E	Community Learning Facilities - Hartley/New Ash Green area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	£5,100	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Community Learning Facilities - Swanley/Hextable area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	£32,500	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Community Learning Facility - Halstead/Knockholt area	Provision of new facilities on site through any community facilities that are delivered or as stand-alone building located centrally to the development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	£17,100	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Community Learning Facilities - Sevenoaks Urban Area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	£38,400	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
E	Community Learning Facilities - Edenbridge	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Medium	16-20 years	KCC Community Learning & Skills	Medium	£13,100	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
<b>Flooding (F)</b>								
F	Upper Darent Flood Alleviation Scheme	The communities of Westerham, Brasted and Sundridge are all at risk of flooding from the River Darent. A suite of local, low cost interventions are the most cost effective way of reducing flood risk to these communities. Some works have already successfully been implemented in partnership with Kent County Council and local communities but further works are required to reduce the risk further.	High	6-10 years	Environment Agency	Low	£330,000	Granted CIL funding from the CIL spending Board to complete the scheme.



		Works proposed as part of the scheme include the following improvements: New channels and watercourses; Improved drainage; Enhanced flood embankments; and natural flood management measures at a number of locations						
F	Brasted Floodplain Storage	Investigation and modelling into increasing floodplain storage using low level floodplain embankments	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
F	Chipstead flood remedial works	Investigation into remedial works to the flood relief channel in Chipstead to revert to the original 'dry channel' design if this is shown to have a significant flood risk benefit.	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
F	Dunton Green/Riverhead Flood Protection Measures	Investigation of a flood wall in Dunton Green/River Head to protect businesses and the care home as well or property level protection of business units and care home.	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
F	Otford/Greatness Flood Protection Measures	Investigation of the feasibility of de-culverting the Watercress Stream. Additional work in investigating flood storage on the Watercress and Honeypot Streams.	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
F	Sevenoaks Flood Capacity Upgrade	Investigation of working with Kent Wildlife Trust to add storage to the West Lake in the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
F	Eynsford Flood Defence Scheme	Investigation of a bypass channel at Old Mill Close in Eynsford	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

Health & Social Care (HSC)								
HSC	Family & Social Care - Pedham Place	The development at Pedham Place would justify new on-site provision through the delivery of health and community facilities. This could be achieved by direct provision by the developer or through a contribution of around £1.1m (total) for KCC to provide the requisite facilities. This includes Library Services, Youth Services and Community Learning & Skills	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	Unknown	Site-specific Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy.
HSC	Family & Social Care – Swanley /Hextable area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	£81,800	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HSC	Family & Social Care - Hartley/ New Ash Green area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development.	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	£14,200	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HSC	Family & Social Care – Halstead /Knockholt area	Provision of new facilities on site in conjunction with any GP practice or Health Clinic delivered and utilising any multi-agency space provided as part of any new Primary Schools	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	£48,700	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HSC	Family & Social Care – Sevenoaks Urban Area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	£93,300	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HSC	Family & Social Care - Edenbridge area	Enhancement of existing facilities to accommodate demand generated by development	Low	16-20 years	KCC Social Care	Medium	£32,400	Community Infrastructure Levy and other

									funding sources.
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<p>HSC</p>	<p>Northern Sevenoaks Health Services – Swanley, Hextable, Farningham, New Ash Green, Hartley, Fawkham, South Darenth</p>	<p>Overall there is a slight reduction in the total number of homes for our area in this plan (from <b>4,220 to 4,017 homes</b>), however over the life time of the plan there will be <b>9,641 new population</b> (based on 2.4 persons per dwelling). It is also noted that in <b>years one to five, 979 Homes</b> will be built equating to a population increase of <b>2,350</b>. This will require an additional GP workforce of 5.4WTE (based on a GP to patient ratio of 1,800 patients) and in the next 5 years the 2,350 new population will require an additional 1.3WTE GP workforce. In terms of impact on General Practice, the significant difference in this plan is an <b>increase of 471 homes</b> in the Swanley area. This area will see an increase of <b>3,516 homes</b> and therefore <b>8,438 new population</b> over the life of the local plan. It is noted that only <b>722 homes (equating to 1,733 new population)</b> will be built in the first five years. I have attached an updated table that identifies the proposed settlement sites linked to GP practices.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that the current GP medical facilities within the Swanley area and across the other main areas of Hextable, Farningham, New Ash Green, Hartley, Fawkham and South Darenth, do not have capacity to support the growth in the population expected. Therefore, if the public consultation and Council determine support for these proposed housing developments, the CCG would only be able to support delivery of associated increases to healthcare services if sufficient CIL funding is provided to deliver the additional capacity required in these areas.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>6-10 years</p>	<p>Dartford, Gravesham &amp; Swanley CCG</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.</p>
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<p>HSC</p>	<p>Expansion of GP Practices in Sevenoaks Urban Area</p>	<p>The proposed development at the Sevenoaks Quarry site is in years 10-15 of the plan period. Whilst additional capacity will need to be created it is not possible at this stage to detail a specific project as specific impacts and needs will have to be assessed and planned for at the appropriate time in the plan period. The expected need will be for c 1400 patients arising from the 600 dwellings (based on average occupancy of 2.34).</p> <p>Please note that general practice premises plans will be kept under review and may be subject to change as the CCG must ensure appropriate general medical service capacity is available as part of our commissioning responsibilities.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>11-15 years</p>	<p>West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.</p>
<p>HSC</p>	<p>Otford Health Services</p>	<p>Using average occupancy of 2.34 per dwelling, Otford Medical Practice would also take a large proportion of the growth To put this into context this would be an additional c.3260 new patient registrations during the plan period; an increase of 30.7% increase on the current registered patient list.</p> <p>There is an existing pressure on services and Otford Medical Practice have plans to reconfigure the main surgery at Otford (\$106 funding will be contributing to this work) and have developed plans to extend the branch surgery at Kemsing for which capital is currently being explored. A bid may be put forward through the next CIL bidding round to support this development. This will allow the workforce to be expanded and will go some</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>6-10 years</p>	<p>West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.</p>

		way to supporting some of the future growth but will not support all of the growth outlined above; it is expected that at a point in the future a further extension to the Kensing surgery would be required. The critical aspect for Otford and any other premises development is that the infrastructure and workforce is in place prior to or in parallel to the new population registering for general practice services.						
HSC	Edenbridge Health Services	<p>There is an existing need in Edenbridge and the combined hospital/ GP surgery project is progressing and is recognised as a requirement in the draft Local Plan. Using the average occupancy figure of 2.34 per dwelling the growth in Edenbridge is expected to be c. 3000 new patient registrations; the project would allow for the proposed growth arising from the local plan to be accommodated. To put this into context this is a 25% increase on the current registered patient list. The CCG, KCHFT and Edenbridge Medical Practice have indicated that developer contributions will be sought through CIL as a contribution towards the new infrastructure (plan to submit in next CIL round).</p> <p>Please note that general practice premises</p>	Critical	1-5 years	West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group / Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT)	Medium	£13.2 million	Partial application for CIL funding has been secured from the District Council's CIL Spending Board in December 2018 (£600k). Further funding streams identified but currently unconfirmed.

		plans will be kept under review and may be subject to change as the CCG must ensure appropriate general medical service capacity is available as part of our commissioning responsibilities.						
HSC	Westerham Health Services	Whilst the patient pressure indicator from the premises survey is 'high' there is not an existing need leading the general practice exploring options for new premises at this time. More detailed discussions would be required to develop detailed plans for a new practice. . Any new premises developments regardless of funding source, are required to be submitted for consideration through CCG governance due to the revenue implications.	Low	11-15 years	West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
<b>Highways &amp; Transport (HT)</b>								
HT	Swanley Transport Improvement Measures	Measures as identified in the Swanley Transport Study. To include localised widening, ghosted right turn lanes on London Road, where appropriate - to improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility and access congestion issues.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Low	Unknown	Section S278/CIL
HT	Junction 3 M25 Swanley	Improvements required to address increased capacity and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.	High	Unknown	Highways England/KCC/D eveloper	Medium	Unknown	Section 106/S278/CIL
HT	Crockenhill Lane / Wested Lane	Provision of bus route and emergency access between Pedham Place and Swanley	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Medium	Unknown	Section 278

HT	Improvements to bus services in and around Swanley	Increased sustainable transport and associated reduction in congestion.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer /Bus Operator/CIL	Medium	Unknown	CIL/Section 106
HT	Swanley Station improvements	Bus terminal and parking improvements to improve access to train stations.	Medium	Unknown	Network Rail/KCC/Developer	High	Unknown	CIL/Section 106
HT	Improvements to junction of London Road B2173 with Hockenden Lane and Birchwood Road	Existing safety crash cluster site. Accommodation of additional movements.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Low	Unknown	Section 106/CIL/S278
HT	Localised widening of roads south of New Ash Green and junction improvements of A20/South Ash Road	Existing roads are constrained in terms of width and forward visibility. Additional capacity and safety features are required.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	High	Unknown	Section 278
HT	Bus improvements between New Ash Green and Longfield railway station	Improved sustainable transport.	High	Unknown	KCC/Bus operator/Developer	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HT	Kemsing - localised highway widening / passing places /visibility improvements	Accommodate additional traffic by increasing capacity and safety.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Medium	Unknown	Section 278/38



	and junction improvements along the rural road network							
HT	Kemsing - Sustainable transport improvements	Improvements to bus services, pedestrians, and accessibility at train station	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer /Bus Operator/Network Rail	High	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
HT	Junction improvements to Bat & Ball	Bat & Ball junction is already over capacity, and any additional development will add to congestion, queues and delays.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	High	Unknown	Section 278
HT	Cycle route - Otford to Sevenoaks	Included in Sevenoaks Cycle Strategy and provides a useful link between the two communities.	Medium	Unknown	KCC/Developer	High	Unknown	Section 106/CIL
HT	Access roads between A25 and Sevenoaks Quarry site	Junction improvements and traffic/parking management to Greatness Lane and Mill Lane.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	High	Unknown	Section 106/CIL
HT	Sustainable transport accessibility improvements	Footbridge at Watercress Drive requires improved safety and accessibility. Access to the station to be improved. Bus services required between Sevenoaks Quarry and Sevenoaks town centre. Cycle improvements between Seal School, Knole Academy and Trinity School.	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer /Bus Operator	High	Unknown	Section 106/CIL
HT	Capacity improvements to mini roundabouts at Riverhead	Existing congestion and additional traffic flows will add to congestion, queues and delays.	Medium	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

HT	Edenbridge - junction improvements	Increased capacity required due to additional traffic movements	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer	Medium	Unknown	Section 278/CIL
HT	Edenbridge - sustainable transport improvements	Improvements to sustainable transport accessibility - walking, cycling, buses and trains	High	Unknown	KCC/Developer /Bus Operator/Network Rail	High	Unknown	Section 106/Section 278/ CIL
HT	Northern District Transport Improvements - North West of District / boundary to Greater London Authority & TfL area	Enhancement to rail and bus services	Low	Unknown	Transport for London	Low	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
Utilities (U)								
U	Sewerage network reinforcements in Edenbridge	To increase capacity in the sewerage network in order to accommodate additional foul flows from the above developments. Provision of the infrastructure should be phased with development occupation in order to limit the risk of foul flooding. Projects will commence once Southern Water receive a firm commitment to commence construction from the relevant developers, provided planning approval has been granted.	Medium	6-10 years	Southern Water	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
U	Badgers Mount - Water Supply Upgrades	Local upgrades to the existing water network infrastructure may be required to ensure sufficient capacity is brought forward ahead of development.	High	Unknown	Thames Water	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

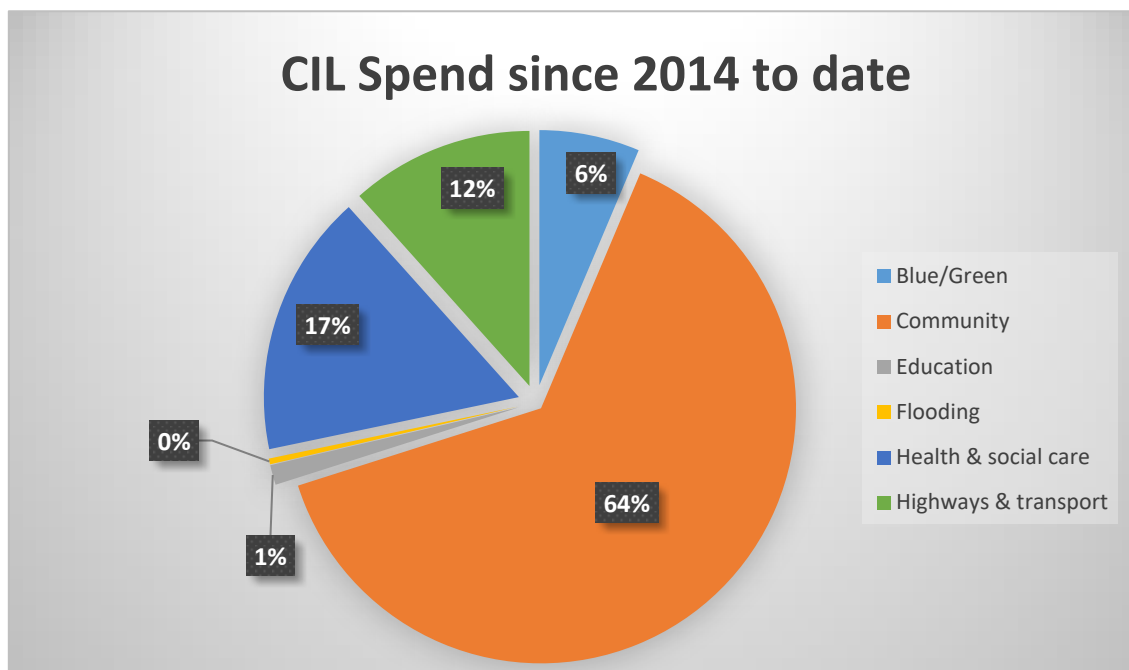
U	Swanley - Water Supply Upgrades	The supply required for the proposed scale of development is a significant additional demand in the Water Resource area. Currently the mains that feed the Water Resource area are running close to capacity. Consequently it is likely that the developer will be required to provide an impact study of the existing infrastructure for the brownfield sites and smaller infill development in order to determine the magnitude of spare capacity and a suitable connection point. The developer will be required to fund this.	High	Unknown	Thames Water	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.
U	Pedham Place - Water and Wastewater Network Upgrade	The water network capacity in this area is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development. Strategic water supply infrastructure upgrades are likely to be required to ensure sufficient capacity is brought forward ahead of the development. The developer is encouraged to work Thames Water early on in the planning process to understand what water infrastructure is required, where, when and how it will be delivered. The scale of development/s in this catchment is likely to require upgrades of the water supply network. It is recommended that the Developer and the Local Planning Authority liaise with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to agree a housing phasing plan. Failure to liaise with Thames Water will increase the risk of planning conditions being sought at the application stage to control the phasing of development in order to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of development. The housing phasing plan should determine what phasing may be required to	Low	Unknown	Thames Water	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.  Possible consideration of S106 agreement but will need to be justified.

		ensure development does not outpace delivery of essential network upgrades to accommodate future development/s in this catchment. The developer can request information on network infrastructure by visiting the Thames Water website <a href="https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development">https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development</a> .						
<b>Water Quality (WQ)</b>								
<b>WQ</b>	River Eden Catchment Improvements	Opportunities exist to improve the River Eden catchment that runs through the Borough, in particular with regards to water quality, geomorphology and ecology. The Environment Agency are supporting plans to improve/restore Bay Pond in Godstone Surrey, which is connected to the Eden catchment and lies adjacent to it.	Medium	Unknown	Environment Agency	Medium	Unknown	Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

**Appendix C**

**Projects awarded CIL since 2014 to date**

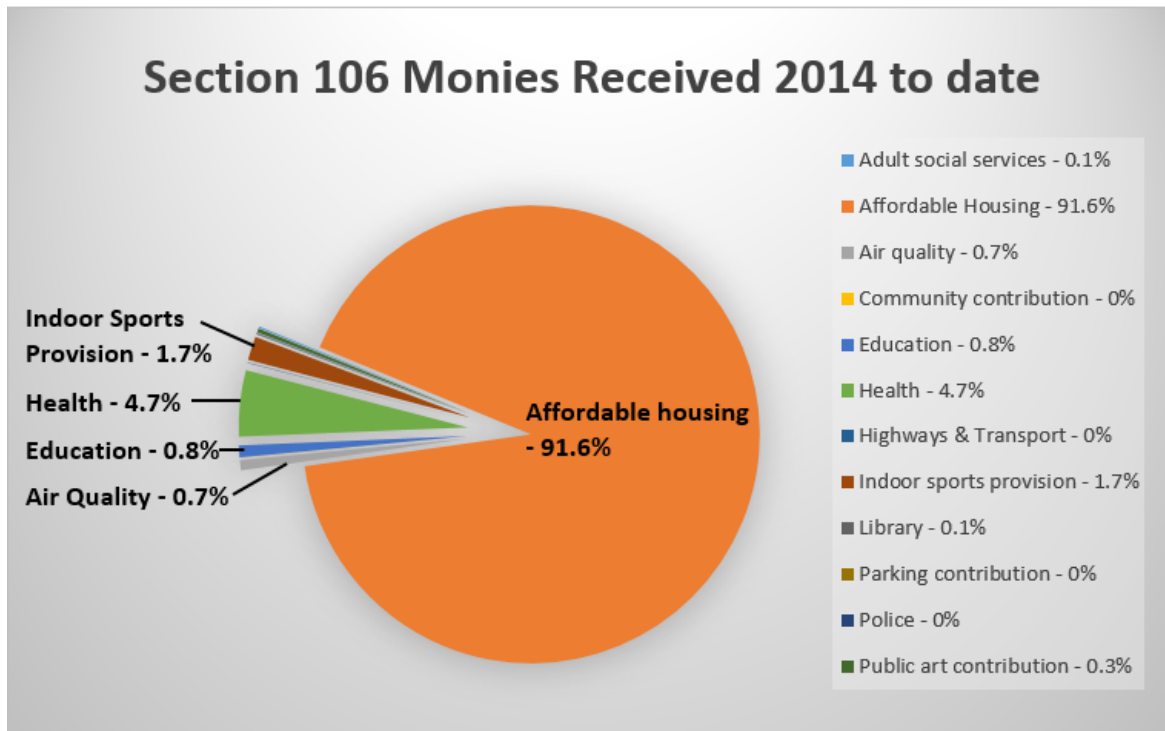
Type of Infrastructure	CIL Funds Awarded	Percentage of overall amount
Community Facilities	£5,051,924.00	64%
Highways and Transport	£921,444.48	12%
Health and Social Care	£1,319,880.00	17%
Blue/Green Infrastructure	£504,300.00	6%
Education	£100,000	1%
Flooding	£29,000	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,926,548.48</b>	



## Agenda Item 6

### Section 106 funds received between 2014 to date

Type of Infrastructure/facilities	Section 106 funds Received	Percentage of overall amount
Affordable Housing	£8,223,403.62	91.6%
Community Facilities	£975.88	0%
Education (Secondary and Adult)	£75,737.80	0.8%
Adult Social Services	£9589.58	0.1%
Air Quality	£64,837.10	0.7%
Health	£419,455.87	4.7%
Highways and Transport	£3000	0%
Indoor sports	£150,000	2%
Library	£6124.35	0%
Police	£3328.36	0%
Public Art	£25, 055.80	0%
Parking	£280	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,981,788.36</b>	



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**Item 07 - Making Best Use of The Social Housing Stock - Under Occupation Initiative**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 22 November 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**MAKING BEST USE OF THE SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK - UNDER OCCUPATION INITIATIVE**

**Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 22 November 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People and Places

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Cabinet - 8 December 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 highlights the importance of making the best use of existing social housing. Approval is being sought to introduce an under occupation initiative which, is open to all Registered Provider partners with family sized housing stock located in the District. The proposed initiative can be funded from available S106 affordable housing monies for an initial 2 year period, from April 2023 to March 2025, subject to Portfolio Holder approval for the use of these funds

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Housing Strategy 2022-2027

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer:** Sharon Donald, Housing Strategy Manager, Ext.7131

**Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:**

To consider the proposed under occupation initiative and make a recommendation to Cabinet; and

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That

- a) subject to comments from Housing and Health Advisory Committee, Members, approve the introduction of a new under occupation initiative
- b) The Housing Strategy Manager, be delegated authority, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health, to finalise details of the initiative in collaboration with Registered Provider partners and to make any minor amendments.

**Reason for recommendation:** The implementation of an under occupation initiative with Registered Provider partners will ensure the best possible use is made of existing family sized social housing. This will help address the needs of the Housing Register and assist the Council in carrying out its statutory housing function.

## Agenda Item 7

### Introduction and Background

- 1 In 2012, the Council adopted an Under Occupation Strategy. To deliver this Strategy, the post of an under occupation officer was created and additional funding was provided to the West Kent Housing Association under occupation cash incentive scheme, “Small is Beautiful.” These measures were joint funded with West Kent Housing Association, and open to West Kent Housing Association tenants only. The District Council used Section 106 affordable housing monies to fund its contribution.
- 2 Over the ensuing 5 year period, 119 under occupying tenants were helped to downsize. The freed up family sized homes were allocated to applicants from the Council’s Housing Register.
- 3 The post of under occupation officer came to an end in March 2019. However the Council has continued to contribute to the Small is Beautiful cash incentive scheme, which remains in operation until 31 March 2023. Within the Council’s group of Registered Provider partners, only West Kent Housing Association offers an under occupation incentive scheme to its tenants.
- 4 The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 and the Older Persons’ Housing Study 2022 confirm the importance of making the best use of existing social housing. The Sevenoaks District Council Housing Register Allocations Policy 2022-2027 gives highest priority (Band A) to under occupying social housing tenants seeking to downsize. In addition, under occupying tenants who are of state retirement age, are eligible to bid for homes with 1 additional bedroom to their housing need. All freed up under occupied homes are offered to the Council for allocation via the Housing Register. This helps alleviate Housing Register pressures and assist the Council in moving homeless applicants out of costly nightly paid temporary accommodation.
- 5 An analysis (see table below) was carried in March 2022 to assess under occupation initiatives offered in other local authority areas. It can be seen the level of cash incentive currently offered under Small is Beautiful is in line with neighbouring authorities.

Organisation	£ per bedroom given up	£ other payment (removal costs, carpets, decorating, etc)
Sevenoaks District Council/ West Kent Housing Association - Small is Beautiful	500	1,000
Medway Council	500	500
Gravesham Borough Council	500	Removal costs paid if going to sheltered housing
Dartford Borough Council	500	>500
Tandridge District Council	Fixed grant of 2,000	500
Oxford City Council	1,000	1,500
London Borough of Lambeth	500	500

Westminster City Council	3,000 for over 65's	2,000
London Borough of Greenwich	350	All removals and disturbance costs covered
London Borough of Southwark	1,000	Unspecified allowance to help with utilities

- 6 The potential for releasing family sized social housing is excellent. As at April 2022, the main stock holding Registered Provider partners had the following 2 plus bedroom stock in the District:
- West Kent Housing Association = 3,764
  - Moat = 394
  - Orbit = 80
  - Places for People = 97
- 7 Following positive conversations with Registered Provider partners, we are seeking approval to implement an under occupation initiative which, will include all Registered Providers who are interested in participating. It is proposed the initiative would be in operation for an initial 2 year period.
- 8 Under occupation cash incentives work most effectively when they are offered with a “hand holding” service. A new post of Tenant Support Officer (under occupation) is therefore proposed under the initiative.
- 9 To comply with funding rules, the Tenant Support Officer would have to be employed by a Registered Provider partner (as was the case with the under occupation officer with West Kent Housing Association), but the Tenant Support Officer would be part of the Housing Accommodation Team and managed by the Team Leader.
- 10 The proposed initiative can be funded by Section 106 affordable housing monies. It represents an eligible project under the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2011.
- 11 If supported, we will work with the Registered Providers to finalise who will participate, how the initiative will operate, what the initiative should be called and the level of funding each Registered Provider is willing to contribute. It may be that a Registered Provider is willing to participate but is unwilling/unable to contribute funds. Our view is that Registered Providers should contribute funding, but that this should not be made a condition to participation. It is considered the benefit to the Council (and Housing Register applicants) of securing family sized social housing outweighs the cost to the Council funding the initiative, whether wholly or in part. The proposed initiative offers excellent value for money compared with the cost of delivering new build family sized social housing.
- 12 Subject to agreement with participating Registered Providers, it proposed the cash incentive should be maintained at the levels applying to the Small is Beautiful scheme, with the exception of an additional £500 payment to any tenant downsizing to 1 bedroom designated older persons’ housing.

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- 13 The Service Level Agreement applying to the Small is Beautiful scheme set a target of 20 under occupation moves each year. It is therefore not unreasonable to anticipate up to 40 under occupation moves could be achieved under the proposed initial 2 year programme.
- 14 Subject to approval, an under occupation initiative Service Level Agreement will be put in place with the participating Registered Providers for an initial 2 year period, from April 2023 to March 2025.

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

None.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Estimates show the proposed initiative can be funded from available Section 106 affordable housing monies for an initial 2 year period. Subject to Cabinet approval, Portfolio Holder approval will be sought to secure Section 106 monies. Subject to positive outcomes from the initial 2 year period and further Section 106 affordable housing monies being available, the initiative could be extended beyond 31 March 2025.

#### Resource (non financial)

The Tenant Support Officer would undertake the additional work required.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

None.

#### 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.

#### Net Zero Implications

The decision recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

### **Conclusions**

Implementing an under occupation initiative, which is open to all Registered Provider partners, will ensure the best possible use is made of family sized social housing. However, it should be noted that the delivery and success of the initiative is subject to being able to recruit a Tenant Support Officer (under occupation) via a Registered Provider for the two year delivery period.

**Appendices**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People and Places**

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**Item 08 - Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 22 November 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY**

**Cabinet - 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer People and Places

**Status:** For information

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 22 November 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2017 sets out how the Council will provide assistance to homeowners and private tenants to enable them to keep their homes in good repair and free of hazards and enable them to live as independently as possible. The Policy sets out the assistance available to disabled people to help them adapt, improve or repair their homes.

The levels of discretionary grant assistance contained within the Policy are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The last review was undertaken, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, in June 2022.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Housing Strategy 2022-2027

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer:** Sharon Donald, Housing Strategy Manager, Extension 7131

**Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:**

To note the updated levels of discretionary grant assistance available under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. That comments on recommendation (a) below are passed to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- a) To note the updated levels of discretionary grant assistance available under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

**Reason for recommendation:**

The report is for information only.

### Introduction and Background

1. Poor quality housing has an impact on the health of the occupants and on the quality of life in an area. Improving the condition of private sector properties contributes to the regeneration of the District and towards the target for increasing the number of decent homes occupied by vulnerable households in the private sector.
2. Raising standards in these properties contributes to safer, stronger and more sustainable communities, improving health and wellbeing and improving the environment, and by allowing people to remain living in their own homes reduces the financial pressure on the Council by reducing costs of long term care.
3. The current Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy was adopted at Full Council in November 2017. The Policy sets out the way in which grant assistance provided by the Better Care Fund, both mandatory and discretionary, is administered by the Private Sector Housing Team. The levels of discretionary grant assistance contained within the Policy are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The last review was undertaken, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, in June 2022.
4. From its introduction in 2013, the Better Care Fund has sought to create a local, single pooled budget to help the NHS and local government to work more closely together to place wellbeing as the focus of health, housing and care services for residents. The fundamental principles of the Better Care Fund are to:
  - Instigate and formulate links with health and third sector organisations to provide opportunities to improve the lives of vulnerable people, to give them control and place them at the centre of their own care and support, and in doing so, provide a better service and quality of life
  - Ensure households reside in properties that are free from Category 1 hazards
  - To provide not only financial assistance but help through a combination of education and encouragement and direct/indirect financial assistance
5. **Grant Assistance**

Grant assistance can be provided in the following ways:

- Mandatory Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)

In addition, the Council can offer discretionary grants as detailed below provided budgets allow, although mandatory DFG applications will take precedence over any discretionary applications:

- Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant (DDFG)
- Top Up Grants
- Relocation Funding
- Specific Situation Funding
- Accelerated Facility Grant (AFG)
- Hospital Discharge Grant (HDG)
- Safe and Secure Grant (SSG)
- Housing Assistance Grant (HAG)

### 6. Interim Review of Discretionary Grants

The non-means tested discretionary Accelerated Facilities Grant was introduced in November 2017 with a limit of £6,500 per grant. This grant has helped many customers to obtain much needed adaptations. However, since the introduction of this grant facility we have seen substantial increases in overall costs associated with adaptations, particularly during the last 2 years. The increase in overall costs is linked to the increase in material costs due to a short supply of materials along with rising fuel costs and labour shortages. We are seeing a number of our customers with more complex needs, meaning that adaptations can be more costly.

Similarly, since the introduction of the Safe and Secure Grant, we have seen an increase in the number of referrals for hoarding and filthy and verminous cases requiring clearance and minor repairs. We found that the maximum limit of £1,000 was not always sufficient to carry out all the remedial work required to ensure our customers can remain safe and live independently in their own home.

A review of the levels of Accelerated Facilities Grants and Safe and Secure Grants was undertaken in January 2021 with the following increases agreed and approved by the Portfolio Holder, Housing and Health:

- Accelerated Facilities Grant - increased from £6,500 to £8,000
- Safe and Secure Grant - increased from £1,000 to £3,000

A further review of discretionary grants was undertaken in June 2022 and a further increase in the Accelerated Facilities Grant level from £8,000 to £10,000 was agreed and approved by the Portfolio Holder, Housing and Health.

7. As set out in the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Action Plan, the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy will be subject to full review, including public consultation, in 2025. A new 5 year Policy will be developed and subject to approval at Full Council, adopted.

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### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

None.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

The Better Care Fund is allocated from central government on an annual basis. The fund supports delivery of both mandatory and discretionary grants to eligible households. The budget is managed and monitored by the Private Sector Housing Team Leader.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Not applicable.

#### 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.

#### Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

### **Conclusions**

Sevenoaks District Council has had a Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for many years detailing the types of assistance available. By increasing the grant levels in line with price rises in materials and labour, we can ensure that we are able to continue providing Sevenoaks District's residents access to assistance to repair, improve and adapt their properties to enable them to live safely and independently in their own homes. By investing in maintaining properties enables our residents in the private sector to remain living independently, and therefore negates the high cost of temporary accommodation and the pressure on social care budgets. This report has been submitted to refresh Members regarding the forms of assistance available.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

**Background Papers**

None

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People and Places**

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# Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2022/25

Review date of July 2025

### **Context**

There have been significant changes in the way housing assistance is funded and the priorities of both national government and Sevenoaks District Council, this new housing assistance policy reflects the current priorities and will also give sufficient flexibility to meet the challenges in the years to come.

### **Background since 2008**

Since 2008 there have been two significant developments which directly influence this housing assistance policy.

Firstly, since 1969 there has been considerable funding directed to Councils for improvement grants enabling unfit or substandard domestic property's to be brought up to a reasonable standard. Unfortunately, since 2010 all such money from Central Government ceased, reducing the Councils ability to promote and fund such improvement works.

Secondly, in June 2013 Central Government introduced the Better Care Fund (BCF) to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care as it was recognised that "The effects of poor housing cost the NHS over £2 billion every year (around 2% of the annual budget in England). Improving homes delivers a return on investment quickly".

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is one of the most ambitious programmes across the NHS and local government to date. It creates a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services. BCF also shifts resources into social care and community services for the benefit of the people, communities and health and care systems. Integral to the BCF is the inclusion within the overall budget of the annual Disabled Facility Grant allocation and the political decision to increase the DFG over several years.

Given the change in political and financial emphasis this policy must reflect this by maximising the partnership role the Council can play in particular with neighbouring local authorities but also with the NHS. Although Private Sector Housings core role, that of housing advice and financial assistance (depending on financial resources available), will not be overlooked.

## Introduction

This document details the Councils Housing Assistance Policy and Conditions attached to such funding. This policy has been adopted under Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The Order enables local authorities to develop a means of providing assistance to any resident so they can address local needs and priorities.

The Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 states the processes by which grants are processed, so if any unusual scenarios are presented then this Act will be the primary source of information.

This Policy explains the only mandatory grant, the Disabled Facilities Grants, the funding for which is received from KCC via the BCF and administered in line with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. In addition discretionary assistance aligned to the requirements of the BCF will also be set out.

The policy will also explain the discretionary financial assistance available to residents which is principally aimed at enabling residents to reside safely in their own home.

This Policy recognises the limitation on the Councils own capital funds and the fact it is unlikely that substantial additional support from either the Council or Central Government will be forthcoming, so ensuring whenever possible financial assistance is recovered and recycled to assist further residents is essential.

Any queries relating to this policy or grant conditions should be referred to the Private Sector Housing Team Leader, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1HG.

### Fundamental principles

This Policy reflects local housing conditions and its core objectives are:

- The requirement to instigate and formulate links with Health and third sector organisations to provide opportunities to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people, giving them control, placing them at the centre of their own care and support, and, in doing so, providing them with a better service and better quality of life
- The need to ensure households reside in property's that are free from category one hazards
- The need to provide not only financial assistance but assistance through a combination of education, encouragement and direct/indirect financial assistance.

It is neither possible nor desirable for the Council to offer financial assistance to directly fund all private sector housing repairs or maintenance. It can only directly assist a small proportion of these through targeting the limited available resources at priority areas. When it does provide assistance this funding must be repayable thus allowing the recycling of such funding to other applicants.

Although the responsibility to maintain private property rests firmly with the owner, it is recognised that the private housing stock is a major public asset and can have an important effect on the occupier's health. Most assistance is offered as an investment in this local and national asset, for long-term public benefit and economic regeneration. An important reason for providing assistance is the improvement of our resident's health along with supporting the wider National Health Services by aiding rapid transfers from hospital and reducing delayed transfers of care commonly described as bed blocking.

The use of repayable grants is the way the Council provides assistance. Grants that are repaid will be recycled into further private sector housing renewal. The Council and Central Government considers this is an appropriate way forward given the pressure on resources and because, over time, it will allow more homeowners to be assisted with a limited amount of resource.

Money repaid to the Council will be reinvested in the private sector housing assistance capital programme.

No financial assistance will be paid towards the cost of repairing tenanted dwellings, or for works to provide means of escape in case of fire or basic amenities or in HMOs (houses in multiple occupation); these needs will be remedied firstly by education and funding from the landlord and if need be recourse to the appropriate enforcement action.

## **Grant assistance**

### **Mandatory Assistance and Disabled Facility Grant**

Such grants are available to owners or tenants over the age of 18 for providing essential adaptations enabling disabled people better freedom of movement into and round their homes and giving access to essential facilities. This is a statutory grant and administrative process is contained in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and associated guidance. The maximum amount of grant is £30,000 (The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008).

To be eligible for assistance an assessment must be undertaken by a suitably qualified Occupational Therapist who recommends adaptations because of person's disability and not for any other reason such as overcrowding. An assessment by the Council must also be satisfied that the works required are "necessary and appropriate" and "reasonable and practicable" bearing in mind the layout and condition of the property. The Council are also obliged to consult with the welfare authority which in our case is Kent County Council before formal approval is given.

Examples of common adaptations include:

- Providing ramps to allow a person to get in and out of their house
- Stair lifts and through floor lifts including a five year warranty
- Level access showers for people who cannot use a conventional bath

### **Test of resources for owner occupiers and tenants**

For each application a test of resources will be undertaken following the requirements of the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 and in the Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008.

Calculations are based upon the regulations governing entitlement to housing benefit and council tax support. The income and capital of each relevant person (the disabled occupant and their spouse or partner) is taken into account in the assessment of financial resources.

In the case of families with a disabled child or young person there is no means test and 100% grant is awarded up to the maximum limit.

Where all relevant persons are in receipt of a pass ported benefit then a 100% grant is awarded.

### **Waiting List**

At present and nor is it envisaged there will be a need to prioritise DFG enquires, but should demand for these grants significantly increase or there be a legislative change there may be times when an applicant will unfortunately be placed on a waiting list

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and be assisted in chronological order, although as part of any such waiting list a set of priorities including clinical need will be used to determine if priority should be given.

### **General Consent repayment conditions**

Repayment conditions are applicable to every DFG over £5,000 under The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008. Certain exemptions are applicable regarding repayment but the maximum amount of repayment the Council can require is £10,000. Appendix A provides specific details.

## **Better Care Fund (BCF) sourced discretionary funding**

### **Discretionary funding supported through the Better Care Fund (DFG allocation)**

Historically, the way in which DFG funding could be used was rather prescriptive. However, since the introduction of the BCF a wider more integrated view is being promoted. In a recent letter from the Department of Health they stating that the DFG funding will continue to be included within the BCF to “encourage areas to think strategically about the use of home aids/adaptations, use of technologies to support people in their own homes, and to take a joined-up approach to improving outcomes across health, social care and housing.”

Mandatory DFG applications will of course take precedence over discretionary funding, however if budgets allow discretionary funding will be used for grants and other initiatives and innovations. All such expenditure must be based on the requirement of the BCF and will achieve at least one or more of the core principles:

- a) Reducing or eliminating hospital admissions.
- b) Allowing a speedier discharge from hospital.
- c) Considering the long term needs of individuals and reductions in associated treatment and social care costs.
- d) Undertaken works, adaptations or provision of equipment that is not provided by any other service.

### **Collaborative working**

Funds will be used from the BCF to fund initiatives linked to the four core principles. Examples of such innovative work would include the Health and Housing Co-ordinator at Tunbridge Wells and Darenth Valley Hospital and a similar role assisting GPs. Funding will be made available to undertake minor works to facilitate hospital discharge or prevent admissions.

### **Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant (DDFG)**

This funding will be made available only as funds via the BCF allow. Mandatory DFG's will take precedent over discretionary funding.

Discretionary funding will be for these specific areas

- Funding adaptations over the £30,000 maximum
- Relocation funding
- Specific situation funding
- Accelerated Facilities Grant (AFG)
- Hospital Discharge Grant (HDG)
- Safe and Secure Grant (SSG)

DDFG is principally available to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria for mandatory DFG and who require additional funding in order to pay for the

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adaptations or to move to another property more suited to adaptation (or already adapted). A principle aim of this DDFG is to replace the 'top up' grants administered by KCC.

A more suitable property does not necessarily need to be within the Sevenoaks District.

Assistance may be refused in cases where an applicant is found to have an outstanding debt to the council of any kind. This does not have to be in relation to the same property that the current application for assistance is for. In particular, an applicant with council tax arrears may only apply for assistance once the outstanding debt has been repaid or an appropriate payment method has been arranged and adhered to.

Appendix B and D details the repayment conditions associated with all Discretionary Disabled Facility Grant

### **Funding adaptations over grant maximum (such grants are commonly referred to as 'Top Up Grants')**

For adaptations, over the £30,000 maximum, repayable top up assistance is solely for the necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practical adaptations, if applicants wish to have adaptations over and above this level or a higher specification of fixtures and fittings this will not be covered by this assistance. If schemes become excessive in nature and it is the belief of the Council this is unnecessary then no discretionary funding in such a situation would be made available, an example of this would be if a ground floor extension was reasonable by a two storey extension was being proposed in such a situation discretionary funding would not be made available. DDFG discretionary funding will not be able to be used for the purposes of an 'offset grant'. An offset grant is one where SDC agree a scheme but instead the applicant wishes to undertake a different more extensive/expensive solution.

Owner occupiers are eligible for top up assistance, although tenants will be considered on an individual basis as factors such as impact upon rentability, length of tenancy and agreement of landlord are important.

Maximum amount of top up assistance for all owner and tenant applications will be £30,000 or 50% of the equity existing at the time of application, whichever is the lesser.

Currently registered social landlord tenants are able to apply for a mandatory DFG and can receive up to £30,000, given it would be considered good practice for a responsible social landlord to respond to the needs of its disabled tenants, discretionary assistance above the mandatory maximum will be limited to £15,000. Discretionary funding will only be available if a RSL match funds the discretionary assistance given by the Council. If adaptations exceed £60,000 (mandatory £30,000 plus discretionary from SDC match funded by RSL) then no further funding will be made available from the Council.



All applicants for top up assistance will be subject to the means test used for mandatory DFGs, those on a pass ported benefit and where the adaptations are for a child and one of the parents is in receipt of such a benefit will not go through the means testing process.

Any funding provided via this route for owner occupiers or tenants application is repayable on disposal or transfer of the property to which it relates. A charge will be placed with Land Registry and local land charges. No charge can be placed upon a property owned by a RSL.

The applicant will not normally be eligible for top up assistance where a relocation grant has previously been provided by the Council as any new property would be more appropriate for the disabled person's needs.

### **Relocation funding**

Maximum amount of assistance associated with all relocation assistance applications, will be £10,000 and no repayment requirement.

Relocation funding is available when a proposed adaptation via the mandatory route has been assessed and determined by the Council and Occupational Therapist as not being reasonable and practicable because of either cost and/or extent of works involved. Funding will assist customers in providing financial assistance to cover the costs of moving to another property which can be outside of the District.

To assist moving to another property grant assistance can be obtained for:

- estate agents fees (limited to 1.5% of the property value)
- solicitors fees
- valuation fees
- Stamp Duty (limited to the amount for a property valued at 15% higher than the property being sold)
- mortgage arrangement fees
- removal costs

The applicant is responsible for obtaining from an OT a report advising that the new property is suitable to fully meet or have the potential to meet the needs of the disabled person are family and agreement from Sevenoaks District Council as to the condition of the proposed property (property is fit for human habitation)

### **Specific situation funding**

Maximum grant of £50,000 with a repayment requirement once the property is sold or transferred.

Discretionary assistance will be considered in specific and unusual situations which prevent a disabled person from receiving a much needed adaption.

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For those owner occupiers and private sector tenants who for very specific reasons are ineligible for a mandatory DFG. As a result of not being able to fund essential adaptations additional social care costs, hospital admissions and poor family environment will result. Circumstances that are applicable may include long term prognosis, limited or no income and living off diminishing amount of savings or for applicants who need additional facilities at a second property which is not their sole or main residence.

To be eligible to make a discretionary application one must have to been assessed by an Occupational Therapist as requiring the adaptations; adaptations are necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practical, unable to make a mandatory application, have sufficient equity in the property and accept, including landlord a charge being placed upon the property.

In order to determine upon eligibility and if such assistance is reasonable for private sector tenants of an application, a summary of the case shall be produced by the Team Leader – Private Sector Housing and submitted to the Property Services Manager and Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing and only if both parties agree will discretionary assistance be considered.

A maximum amount of £50,000 will be available or 50% of the equity existing at the time of application, whichever is the lesser. However, any application must demonstrate value for money, no other option is available (i.e. relocation) and once completed there is no expectation of a successive mandatory DFG application being made.

This grant will have regard to the means testing criteria undertaken via the mandatory DFG process and have the same eligible criteria as a mandatory DFG.

Specific operational guidance is included within Appendix D

### **Accelerated Facility Grant (AFG)**

Maximum grant of £10,000 (increased from £8,000 as per Portfolio Agreement on 14 June 2022) with repayment being considered between £5,000 and £10,000.

AFG assistance will provide a quicker more streamlined service.

AFGs will be considered for those adaptations costing under £10,000 and recommended by an Occupational Therapist. Applicants must be owner-occupiers, private sector tenant or RSL tenants, be registered or registerable disabled. No means test will be applicable for this grant.

Such a grant is appropriate in situations for low cost or urgently needed disabled aids and adaptations (for instance, a straight stair lift or level access shower) that, if not carried out, could directly affect the occupant's health, safety and welfare, or the health, safety and welfare of the disabled person's carer. AFG is not for property repair or its maintenance, it is solely for adaptations.

The grant will only require one estimate and be limited to a maximum of £10,000. Any grant liable to exceed this amount will be required to apply for a mandatory DFG. A charge shall be applied to such grants between £5,000 and £10,000 and will be those stated by The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008. See Appendix B for conditions appropriate for an AFG.

### **Hospital Discharge Grant (HDG)**

The HSG has a maximum of £3,000. No requirement for repayment shall be applied to such grants.

This grant is solely to provide support to any customer being discharged from hospital. Due to the many housing related issues which prevent a timely hospital discharge a specific list of works cannot be given, however all works associated with the grant must be essential to enable the customer to once again reside in their own home. Examples of works that would be expected to be supported by a HDG include deep cleaning, decluttering, minor adaptations, boiler repairs/replacement, minor repairs, moving furniture.

Purchasing of furniture such as single beds will be able to be funded by a HDG, if this is preventing hospital discharge. Provision of furniture and other similar household goods will be available including for residents of registered social landlords.

Applicants for a HDG must be in hospital at the time of referral and awaiting discharge. Owner occupiers and private sector tenants are available to make an application for this grant and applicants are not required to go through the means testing process. An application form will need to be completed along with confirmation of ownership/tenancy and work is required to allow hospital discharge to occur.

### **Safe and Secure Grant (SSG)**

The maximum grant will be £3,000 (increased from £1,000 as per Portfolio Agreement on 11 January 2021), available to owners and private sector tenants with no repayment criteria being applicable.

The Safe and Secure Grant is designed to reduce admissions to hospital and promote independence. Repairs to the house and its environs will be minor in nature and could include:

- repairs or modifications to stairs, floors and steps
- safety and security repairs
- providing additional property modifications to promote independence for customers with a specific disability, diagnosed condition (or written evidence supporting a condition) with a Dementia to ensure they reside in their own home as long as possible.

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With the new links being forged it is envisaged that many organisations can refer applicants in the Council for assessment, these organisations would include Community care agencies, charities and family carers.

This type of non-means tested grant will be available to those who are over 60 or with a specific ill health diagnosis (or written confirmation of systems by a medical professional or disability. This grant is primarily aimed at those individuals and carers living with Alzheimer's and Dementia.

## Discretionary assistance

### Housing Assistance Grant (HAG)

Maximum £10,000 is available to an owner occupier and repayable upon sale or transfer. Appendix C details the repayment conditions associated with a HAG.

In principle, the Council takes the view responsibility for all repair and maintenance of a property rests with the owner. Discretionary financial assistance will normally only be available where it can be demonstrated that other funding options have been explored and eliminated, or where the use of discretionary funding assists the Council in meeting its strategic objectives.

Subject to funds being available financial assistance to qualifying residential premises will be provided as a discretionary Housing Assistance grant. Once the budget has been committed no further offers will be made. In such circumstances, the Council may draw up a waiting list of people wanting assistance, which will be administered using a points system.

The Council will consider applications for a means tested, repayable HAG where it can be demonstrated that reasonable steps have been taken to fund the works through alternative means, for example through conventional loans, equity release or similar schemes. The Council accepts that commercial products may not always be appropriate and will seek to target limited funds to those in the greatest need.

For each application a test of resources will be undertaken following the requirements of the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 and in the Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008.

Assistance may be refused in cases where an applicant is found to have an outstanding debt to the council of any kind. This does not have to be in relation to the same property that the current application for assistance is for. In particular, an applicant with council tax arrears may only apply for assistance once the outstanding debt has been repaid or an appropriate payment method has been arranged and adhered to.

For these reasons, it cannot be assumed any HAG funding will be available.

Enquiries will be prioritised to take into account the applicant's circumstances, financial need, the nature and urgency of the work. Applicants must understand the grant system in not an emergency service so anything requiring urgent action will need to be undertaken by the resident.

Applications for discretionary assistance will only be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where essential works are required to remedy Category 1 hazards (as assessed using the Housing Health and safety Rating System (HHSRS) or

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- Multiple Category 2 hazards (Band D) that pose a risk to health of the vulnerable group.

Applications for discretionary assistance will not be considered in the following circumstances:

- for non-essential repairs or for works which are considered desirable rather than essential (including kitchen and bathroom refurbishments to replace dated but otherwise serviceable fittings)
- for repairs to porches, conservatories, sheds, outbuildings, garden fences, boundary walls etc.
- for cosmetic repairs, redecoration and cleaning works
- for the replacement of windows and doors on grounds of energy efficiency unless considered by the Council to be in serious disrepair and beyond economical repair
- for completing DIY projects
- the funding of works which would normally be covered by a household insurance policy. Discretionary funding is not intended to be an alternative to insurance cover
- Instances where a disabled persons home is unsuitable for adaption to meet their specific needs.

### **Pre-qualifying criteria**

The Council will specify a period of time during which the applicant must have lived in the dwelling as his/her only or main residence prior to the date of the HAG application for assistance and reserves the right to specify different periods for different purposes. A period of three years will apply to all HAG discretionary applications. In exceptional circumstances (i.e. when a life changing event has occurred requiring significant adaptations), the Council may consider exercising its discretion in relation to this requirement if there are particular strategic reasons to do so.

It is not the Council's intention to make discretionary financial assistance available to those who have recently purchased a property and have decided not to commission a full structural survey or Homebuyer's Report since this would have provided the opportunity to re-negotiate the purchase price to reflect any defects identified by the surveyor.

## General guidance on the operation of the Housing Assistance policy

### Buildings Not Attracting Grant Assistance

The following dwellings will not qualify for grant assistance:

- Properties, which are not of a permanent nature or where the conditions are such it is not cost effective to undertake significant repairs
- Dwellings, sheds, outhouses and extensions such as conservatories that do not have planning permission or building regulations approval
- Non-residential buildings
- Improving conditions within the private rented sector as this is the responsibility of the landlord

### Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants are freeholders and long leaseholders with at least 10 years interest left in the property. A tenant (with the landlords' permission) can apply for most grants although a HAG is unavailable. The property must be the main or only residence of the applicant or a member of their family who the works are for and have the intention of residing there. A property must be within geographical area of Sevenoaks District Council.

A person who lives in the dwelling under a right of exclusive occupation for a period of more than 5 years or for life will be able to apply assistance.

Qualifying House Boat:

Means a boat or similar structure designed or adapted for use as a place of permanent habitation which:

- a. has its only or main mooring within the area of a single local housing authority.
- b. is moored in pursuance of a right to that mooring.
- c. is a dwelling for the purposes of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (council tax).

And includes any yard, garden, outhouse and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.

Qualifying Park Home:

Means a caravan within the meaning of Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and control of development Act 1960 (disregarding the amendment made by section 13(2) of the caravan sites act 1968) which-

- a. is stationed on land forming part of a protected site within the meaning of the Mobile Homes Act 1983.

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- b. is occupied under an agreement to which the Act applies or under a gratuitous licence.
- c. is a dwelling for the purposes of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (council tax).
- d. and includes any yard, garden, outhouse and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.

All funding is provided subject to funding being available. The Council reserves the right to refuse an application and when necessary have a waiting list.

### Form of Application

Application for assistance must be on the forms prescribed and provided by the Council and must include:

### All Grants

- Applications must be in writing and include full particulars of the proposed works including, where relevant, plans and specifications of the works for which assistance is being sought
- For grants over £8,000 at least two itemised estimates from independent building contractors unless otherwise directed by the Council
- For grants under £8,000 at least one itemised estimate from an independent building contractor unless otherwise directed by the Council
- If works undertaken by Maintenance operatives employed by Sevenoaks District Council costs will be calculated on an hourly rate basis plus the cost of any materials
- Particulars of any professional fees or other charges which relate to the preparation of the scheme, the supervision of the works or the administration of the contract
- Proof concerning the ownership or tenancy of the dwelling
- written consent from all owners of the dwelling to the carrying out of the proposed works
- Written confirmation from applicants agreeing to the relevant conditions
- Where required by the Council, the consent of the mortgagees;
- Certificate required in the case of an owners/occupiers application or certificate for a tenants application accompanied by an owners certificate from the landlord
- Signed agreement to repay the grant under certain circumstances as stated by the Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008 (England) or
- Undertaking that it is an applicant's intention that the dwelling will be occupied by the applicant as their only or main residence for a period of 5 years from completion of the works and to repay any financial assistance in circumstances
- Financial information regarding any outstanding debts or charges placed against the property



### **Certificate of Future Occupation**

Owner's application:

The owner must sign an owner-occupation certificate which certifies that they have, or propose to acquire, a qualifying owner's interest in the property and that they intend that they or a member of their family (in the case of Disabled Facilities Grants this must be the disabled person) will live in the property as their, or that family member's only or main residence for 5 years.

Tenant's application:

- a. The tenant must sign a tenant's certificate which certifies that their intention is that they or a member of their family will live in the property as their, or the member's, only or main residence for 5 years.
- b. This certificate must be accompanied by a certificate of intended letting from the landlord.

Occupier's application

An occupier must sign an occupier's certificate indicating they have acquired and occupy a qualifying houseboat or park home.

### **Amount of Assistance**

The council will specify the maximum amount for assistance. These amounts are inclusive of all costs including Value Added Tax and fees.

### **Eligible Works**

Eligible works will be only those identified as such by an officer of the Council's Private sector housing Team with reference to the Council's Policy. Any relevant fees will also be included. Any works, which would be eligible for assistance but can be paid for via an insurance claim or third party claim, will not attract grant assistance. In exceptional cases assistance may be given on condition it is repaid out of the proceeds of any future claim.

Works outside the curtilage of the property will not normally be eligible for assistance unless they relate to the provision of essential services such as water, gas or electricity.

### **Restriction on grants for works already begun (Section 29 HG, C&R Act 1996)**

An application for assistance will not be approved where the relevant works have been completed before the assistance is approved.

Where an application has been received and works have started before the

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assistance has been approved, only those items yet to be carried out will be considered as part of the application. The only exception to this restriction will be where the Council are satisfied there were good reasons for doing so and prior agreement of the Council was obtained.

### **Fees & Other Ancillary Costs**

Other charges that can be included within a grant application, where applicable, will include:

- Confirmation of the owner's interest, when required by the Council
- Specialist surveys, design/preparation of drawings, plans & schedules
- Assistance in completing forms
- Applications for planning permission and building regulation approval;
- Obtaining estimates
- Supervision of the relevant works
- Disconnection and re-connection of electricity, gas, water or drainage
- Utilities where this is necessary for the grant-aided works
- The services and charges of an occupational therapist

### **Notification of Approval of Assistance (Section 34 HG, C&R Act 1996)**

The Council will notify an applicant in writing whether the application for assistance is approved or refused. The notification will be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of a completed application but no longer than 6 months from the date of the receipt of the completed application.

A grant approval will only be approved if the applicant has agreed to the applicable conditions i.e. repayment.

The approval will specify the amount of assistance, the amount that is ineligible, the applicant's contribution if any towards the eligible costs, expiry date of the assistance and applicable conditions. Assistance is not transferable to another person on the sale of the property. Expiry date will be 12 months for DFGs, top up assistance and specific situation funding, for others 6 months expiry date shall be stated.

In the case of refusal, the Council will give a written reason for refusal.

The applicant will be able to appeal against the decision made on their grant application and the process for doing this is set out under appeal procedure.

### **Re-determining an Approval and Unforeseen Works (Section 34 HG, C&R Act 1996)**

If after an application has been approved the Council are satisfied that owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant.

- a. The eligible works cannot be, or could not have been carried out for approval amount.

- b. The amount of the costs which have been or are to be incurred has decreased/increased.
- c. The eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out additional works which could not have been reasonably foreseen at the time the application was made.

The Council may re-determine the estimated expense and the amount of grant. At no time will any re-determination exceed the grant maximum.

Additional works identified once works have been commenced must be seen and agreed prior to them being carried out. An instruction will be given authorising any unforeseen works.

### **Extension of time (Section 37 HG, C&R Act 1996)**

An offer of assistance will expire after 6 or 12 months depending upon the type of grant, by which time all works must have been completed. If an extension of time is required an application must be made to the Council, an extension will only be given if delays have occurred outside of the control of the applicant and in which case an extension of no more than 3 months will be given. A second extension will not be considered. If there is no evidence of the applicant arranging for the works to be completed during the 6 months at the end of this time the grant will be closed and any costs incurred in the application process will not be reimbursed by the Council.

### **Supervision of Works**

Applicants are advised to use a suitably qualified person to supervise and arrange the works. This can be, the Home Improvement Agency or any other approved surveyor to assist with their applications.

Relevant fees to the Improvement Agency or other approved managing agent will be included as eligible works, currently 12.5% of eligible costs.

If no specific contract in place, the building contract will be between the applicant and the chosen contractor and will not include the Council. An officer from the Council's Private sector housing Team will check the works to ensure they are carried out according to the specification of work and in accordance with good building practice. However, the Council and its officers are **not** liable for any poor workmanship and do not provide any guarantee. Any faults with the works will be a matter between the applicant and their contractor.

Where eligible works are not of an acceptable standard, the Council will withhold monies.

### **Conditions of Payment (Section 37 HG, C&R Act 1996)**

Assistance will only be paid if:

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- a. The work is completed within the time stated in the approval or such further period the council may allow. This must be confirmed in writing. This period is normally 12 months from approval, although this can be shorter especially when works need to be completed in a short period of time.
- b. The work is carried out in accordance with the conditions of approval.
- c. The work is carried out by one of the contractors whose estimate accompanied the application. The Council will normally assess the assistance on the lowest estimate.
- d. The applicant completes a request for payment form or verbally confirms acceptance and satisfaction of the completed works and that the builders are not members of the applicant's family.
- e. The Council is provided with an acceptable invoice or receipt for payment for the works or fees. The invoice must include full details of the builder/surveyor employed including VAT registration details. The applicant or a member of his family cannot submit an invoice.
- f. The Council has been notified in advance that the works have begun.
- g. That the works have been completed to a satisfactory standard and in accordance with the grant offer and estimates.
- h. Any copies of specified guarantees and test certificates are submitted. Trades having a competent person regime must either use a competent person or make a building regulations application.
- i. Payments are either made to the applicant or preferably direct to the contractor or agents. In the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant, payment of the grant can be delayed by up to six months where existing budgets have already been committed.

### **Interim Payments (Section 35, HG, C&R Act 1996)**

Interim payments will normally be paid, but these are at the discretion of the Council. The applicant's contribution (if any) will be taken into account in any payment. Normally the applicant will have to pay any contribution they may have towards the cost of the work first, before any grant payments are made.

Payments will only be paid for work satisfactory completed and not for materials not yet used or installed. Eligible works must be carried out to the satisfaction of the council and an acceptable invoice supplied.

### **Grant and repayment Conditions**

Introduction:

Are explained in more detail in grant specific appendices as conditions vary between mandatory and discretionary assistance, however it is the Councils belief that a charge either with land registry or with local land charge are appropriate in most situations.

Before imposing any such repayment or other conditions or taking steps to enforce it, the Council shall have regard to the ability of the applicant to make that repayment or

contribution. It would therefore be possible that assistance be provided without the repayment condition i.e restrictions on additional charges or no equity within the property.

Repayment upon Breach of Conditions (Sections 40-43 HG, C&R Act 1996):

In the case of a breach of grant conditions applicable to a specific grant the monies becomes repayable to the Council.

In the case where an applicant ceases to be the owner, or it appears to the Council that the applicant was not at the time of the application being approved entitled to the grant, no payment shall be made and the grant cancelled. In the case where interim payments have been paid, no further payments will be made and the Council will decide whether recovery of any or all previous payments is necessary.

### **Successive Assistance**

There is no restriction upon applicants receiving a second for mandatory disabled facility grants or AFG.

It is not envisaged that successive Specific Situation Grants, relocation funding nor top up funding would be available.

For the HDG and SSG a maximum of 2 grants in a three-year period will be allowed and only for different works (i.e. because of a worsening of a medical condition).

For the HDG successive grants are appropriate, however if we return to a property and once again undertaking similar works (i.e. cleaning property) then a charge for repayment will be considered.

Given it is the view of the Council that it is for the homeowner to maintain a property the council will not generally consider giving assistance on more than one occasion in relation to a specific property.

For HAG discretionary assistance a condition will be placed upon the customer to keep the property free from Category 1 hazards, in a good state of repair for 5 years and the level of maintenance carried out will be taken into account when considering any new application.

### **Appeal Procedure**

Representations can be made in the following cases:

- In the event of disagreement with a decision
- In the case that one of the conditions of one of the aforementioned grants should be waived or changed
- That there is an exceptional case for providing assistance which is not within the Councils existing policy
- There has been some error or excessive delay in the processing of a grant

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In such cases, the person should write in the first instance to:

Private Sector Housing - Team Leader  
Sevenoaks District Council  
Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG  
[psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### Repayment Conditions – Disabled Facility Grant

Disposal of the dwelling: The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant)  
General Consent 2008:

Where a grant is for a sum exceeding £5,000, the Council may demand repayment of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if:

- The recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
  - The Council, having considered:
    - i. the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he required to repay all or any of the grant.
    - ii. whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment.
    - iii. whether the disposal is made for reason connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises.
    - iv. whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity.
- is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

#### Notes:

1. Repayment will not be required immediately where a joint owner(s) dies and the dwelling is reregistered solely in the name(s) of the surviving proprietor(s) but the condition will continue to apply.
2. If an applicant gives some other person the right to require the dwelling to be disposed of, he will be held to have made a relevant disposal to that person.
3. A voluntary repayment of the amount of grant may be made at any time in full by the owner for the time being or by a mortgagee entitled to exercise a power of sale whereupon all grant conditions shall cease to be in force.
4. On repayment of the sum demanded following a relevant disposal the conditions shall cease to be in force.

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### Definitions:

1. 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Local Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
2. 'Date of Approval' means the date on which the application for grant is formally approved.
3. Disposal, whether of the whole or part of the premises is a 'relevant disposal' if it is:
  - i. sale of the freehold or an assignment of the lease or
  - ii. the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent or
  - iii. any other form of sale, assignment, transfer or disposal.

Other situations that arise during the post approval construction phase will be decided upon with reference to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and they are explained in detail in Section 7: General Guidance on the operation of the housing assistance policy.

### **Insurance and compensation claims**

#### **The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG, C&R Act 1996**

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to the eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.



## Appendix B

### REPAYMENT CONDITIONS – DISABLED FACILITY GRANT

Funding adaptations over £30,000 (top up assistance):

All approvals shall have the condition for repayment upon the sale or transfer of the property. Upon completion a charge will be registered with local land charges or Land registry.

Other situations that arise during the post approval construction phase will be decided upon with reference to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and they are explained in detail in Section 7: General Guidance on the operation of the Housing assistance policy.

Insurance and compensation claims:

The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG, C&R Act 1996

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to the eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

Notes:

1. Repayment will not be required immediately where a joint owner(s) dies and the dwelling is reregistered solely in the name(s) of the surviving proprietor(s) but the condition will continue to apply.
2. If an applicant gives some other person the right to require the dwelling to be disposed of, he will be held to have made a relevant disposal to that person.
3. A voluntary repayment of the amount of grant may be made at any time in full by the owner for the time being or by a mortgagee entitled to exercise a power of sale whereupon all grant conditions shall cease to be in force.
4. On repayment of the sum demanded following a relevant disposal the conditions shall cease to be in force.

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### Definitions:

1. 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Local Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
2. 'Date of Approval' means the date on which the application for grant is formally approved.
3. Disposal, whether of the whole or part of the premises is a 'relevant disposal' if it is:
  - a. sale of the freehold or an assignment of the lease or
  - b. the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent or
  - c. any other form of sale, assignment, transfer or disposal.

### Relocation Funding

No repayment conditions are applicable.

### Insurance and compensation claims:

The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG, C&R Act 1996

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to the eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

### Specific situation funding

#### Repayment:

All approvals shall have the condition for repayment upon the sale or transfer of the property. Upon completion a charge will be registered with local land charges or Land registry.

Other situations that arise during the post approval construction phase will be decided upon with reference to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and they are explained in detail in Section 7 General Guidance on the operation of the Housing assistance policy.

Insurance and compensation claims:

The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG, C&R Act 1996

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to the eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

Notes:

1. Repayment will not be required immediately where a joint owner(s) dies and the dwelling is reregistered solely in the name(s) of the surviving proprietor(s) but the condition will continue to apply.
2. If an applicant gives some other person the right to require the dwelling to be disposed of, he will be held to have made a relevant disposal to that person.
3. A voluntary repayment of the amount of grant may be made at any time in full by the owner for the time being or by a mortgagee entitled to exercise a power of sale whereupon all grant conditions shall cease to be in force
4. On repayment of the sum demanded following a relevant disposal the conditions shall cease to be in force.

Definitions:

1. 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Local Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
2. 'Date of Approval' means the date on which the application for grant is formally approved.
3. Disposal, whether of the whole or part of the premises is a 'relevant disposal' if it is:
  - i. sale of the freehold or an assignment of the lease or
  - ii. the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent or
  - iii. any other form of sale, assignment, transfer or disposal.

### **Accelerated Facility Grant**

Where a grant is for a sum exceeding £5,000, the council may demand repayment of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if:

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- The recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
- the Council, having considered:
  - (i) the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he required to repay all or any of the grant;
  - (ii) whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;
  - (iii) whether the disposal is made for reason connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
  - (iv) whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity,is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

### Notes:

1. Repayment will not be required immediately where a joint owner(s) dies and the dwelling is reregistered solely in the name(s) of the surviving proprietor(s) but the condition will continue to apply.
2. If an applicant gives some other person the right to require the dwelling to be disposed of, he will be held to have made a relevant disposal to that person.
3. A voluntary repayment of the amount of grant may be made at any time in full by the owner for the time being or by a mortgagee entitled to exercise a power of sale whereupon all grant conditions shall cease to be in force,
4. On repayment of the sum demanded following a relevant disposal the conditions shall cease to be in force.

### Definitions:

1. 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Local Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
2. 'Date of Approval' means the date on which the application for grant is formally approved.
3. Disposal, whether of the whole or part of the premises is a 'relevant disposal' if it is:
  - i. sale of the freehold or an assignment of the lease or
  - ii. the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent or
  - iii. any other form of sale, assignment, transfer or disposal.

Other situations that arise during the post approval construction phase will be decided upon with reference to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and they are explained in detail in Section 7 General Guidance on the operation of the Housing assistance policy.

Insurance and compensation claims:

The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG, C&R Act 1996

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to the eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

### Appendix C

#### Housing Assistance Grant Repayment

All approvals shall have the condition for repayment upon the sale or transfer of the property. Upon completion a charge will be registered with local land charges or Land registry.

Other situations that arise during the post approval construction phase will be decided upon with reference to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and they are explained in detail in Section 7 General Guidance on the operation of the housing assistance policy.

Insurance and compensation claims:

The Housing Renewal Main Grants (recovery of compensation) General Consent 1996 and Section 51 HG,C&R Act 1996.

Where the proposed works are subject to an insurance claim or a claim against a third party we may consider an application for grant assistance. The applicant shall take reasonable steps to pursue insurance claims or legal claims relating to then eligible works and shall repay the grant, if the claim is successful.

In the event of failure to make repayment when a claim is successful the Council will demand repayment of the appropriate amount together with interest.

As claims can be protracted there is no time limit attached to this provision. In determining the amount to recover, the terms of settlement received by the applicant will be fully considered.

The Council may determine not to make such a demand or to demand a lesser amount.

Notes:

1. Repayment will not be required immediately where a joint owner(s) dies and the dwelling is reregistered solely in the name(s) of the surviving proprietor(s) but the condition will continue to apply.
2. If an applicant gives some other person the right to require the dwelling to be disposed of, he will be held to have made a relevant disposal to that person.
3. A voluntary repayment of the amount of grant may be made at any time in full by the owner for the time being or by a mortgagee entitled to exercise a power of sale whereupon all grant conditions shall cease to be in force
4. On repayment of the sum demanded following a relevant disposal the conditions shall cease to be in force.

Definitions:

1. 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Local Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
2. 'Date of Approval' means the date on which the application for grant is formally approved.
3. Disposal, whether of the whole or part of the premises is a 'relevant disposal' if it is:
  - i. sale of the freehold or an assignment of the lease or
  - ii. the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent or
  - iii. any other form of sale, assignment, transfer or disposal.

## **Appendix D DFG Specific Operation Guidance**

### **Change of circumstances affecting disabled occupant:**

If a grant has been approved but, before the certified date of completion:

- a. the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, or
- b. the disabled occupant ceases to occupy the property or it ceases to be the intention that they should occupy it, or
- c. the disabled occupant dies,

the Council may decide:

- a. not to pay the grant or not to pay any further instalments, or
- b. that part or all of the works should be completed and paid, or
- c. the application should be re-determined.

The Council may demand repayment of any instalment plus interest from the date it was paid until repayment.

### **Carrying out and completion of works:**

In approving an application for a grant the Council will require as a condition of payment of the grant that the eligible works are carried out in accordance with such specifications as they determine.

The eligible works must be carried out within 12 months from the date of approval of the application. The Council in extenuating circumstances may extend this period.

The eligible works must be completed to the satisfaction of the council and acceptable invoices, demands or receipts for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or charges must be provided. An invoice, demand or receipt is not acceptable if given by the applicant or a member of his family.

Unless the Council directs otherwise, the eligible works must be carried out by the contractor whose estimate accompanied the application.

### **Repayment where applicant not entitled to grant Section 43 HG, C&R Act 1996**

Where an application for a grant is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant was not entitled to that grant the Council will not pay the grant or any further instalments.

The Council will demand repayment of the grant plus interest from the date it was paid until repayment.



**Applicant ceases to be entitled before payment of the grant 40 HG, C&R Act 1996**

This section applies where an application for a grant is approved but before the certified date the applicant ceases to be a person entitled to a grant. In the case of a joint application this section does not apply unless all the applicants cease to be so entitled.

Where this section applies:

- a. no grant shall be paid or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid, and
- b. the authority may demand that any instalment of the grant which has been paid be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which it was paid until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the authority may determine.

For the purposes of this section an applicant ceases to be a person entitled to a grant:

- a. in the case of an owner's application
  - i. if he ceases to have a qualifying owner's interest, or
  - ii. if he ceases to have the intention specified in the owner's certificate which accompanied the application
- b. in the case of a tenant's application
  - i. if he ceases to be a qualifying tenant of the dwelling, or
  - ii. if the application was accompanied by an owner's certificate and the landlord ceases to have the intention specified in the certificate.

If the case falls within section 41 (change of circumstances affecting disabled occupant), the authority shall act under that section.

**Change of circumstances affecting disabled occupant Section 41 HG, C&R Act 1996**

This applies where an application for a grant has been approved and before the certified date:

- a. the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, or
- b. the disabled occupant ceases to occupy the dwelling qualifying houseboat, qualifying park home or flat concerned or it ceases to be the intention that he should occupy it, or
- c. the disabled occupant dies.

Where the application related to more than one disabled occupant, this section applies if any of paragraphs (a) to (c) applies in relation to any of them.

- 1 This section applies whether or not the disabled occupant (or any of them) is the applicant (or one of them).
- 2 Where this section applies the local housing authority may take such action as appears to them appropriate and may decide:
  - a. that no grant shall be paid or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid,

## Agenda Item 8

- b. that the relevant works or some of them should be completed and the grant or an appropriate proportion of it paid, or
  - c. that the application should be re determined in the light of the new circumstances.
- 3 In making their decision the authority shall have regard to all the circumstances of the case.
- 4 If the authority decide that no grant shall be paid or that no further instalments shall be paid, they may demand that any instalment of the grant which has been paid be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which it was paid until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the authority may determine.

**Item 09 - Empty Homes Strategy & Action Plan**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 22 November 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2023-2028**

**Cabinet - 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer People & Places

**Status:** For Approval

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 22 November 2022
- Full Council - 21 February 2023

**Key Decision:** No

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** the Housing Strategy 2022-2027

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer:** Sharon Donald, Housing Strategy Manager, Ext. 7131

**Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:**

That comments on recommendation (a) are passed to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That recommendation (a) is recommended to Council.

**Recommendation to Council:**

- a) That, subject to any amendments by Cabinet, the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2028 be adopted.

**Reason for recommendation:** To put in place an Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2023 - 2028, to enable the District Council to direct activity to bring long-term empty homes back into use.

## Agenda Item 9

### Introduction and Background

- 1 The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 contains 4 key themes of focus for the District Council's housing service over the next 5 years. These include, Theme 2: Promoting quality and optimising range and suitability of new and existing homes, which has an objective of, fewer empty homes.
- 2 A proposed year 1 action within the Housing Strategy is the delivery of a five year Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan, to direct activity to bring empty homes back into use.
- 3 The table below details the current numbers of Long Term Empty properties in the District:-

Long Term Empty (6 months to 2 years)	Long Term Empty (2 years +)	Long Term Empty (Exemption Class F - Unoccupied, person deceased)
205	75	287

- 4 A key benefit of the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan will be to help regenerate empty homes and provide much needed homes for rent in the district, which will be let to applicant's on the Council's Housing Register as a private rented sector offer or those currently placed in temporary accommodation.
- 5 Officers have obtained Portfolio Holder approval to use s106 affordable housing funds to support a fixed term (2 years, 0.5 FTE) Empty Homes Officer post. The officer will be expected to liaise with Kent County Council's No Use Empty funding scheme, to support bringing long-term empty homes back into use, which can play a key part in regeneration, not only providing homes, but also new sources of income and a sense of community.
- 6 The District Council is unable to use S106 affordable housing funds to employ staff direct. We are exploring with a range of partners, the possibility of hosting the post. Notwithstanding this, the Empty Homes Officer would work full-time within the Private Sector Housing Team and be directly managed by the Team Leader.
- 7 Returning empty homes to occupation ensures the best use is made of the existing housing stock. Co-incidentally, it can provide homes that tend to be more affordable to those on low to median incomes. Using S106 affordable housing funds in the way described in this report, falls within the permitted uses set out in the Affordable Housing SPD 2011, i.e. initiatives to make better use of the existing stock.

### Other options Considered

Option 1 - continue with no adopted strategy and action plan.

Option 2 - formally adopt the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan. This is the preferred option as it is considered to be the most proactive and pragmatic approach to bringing empty homes back into use and to provide a clear framework for officers and clarity for the residents and homeowners of Sevenoaks District.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### Resource (non financial)

Staff resource will be required to assist in the delivery of the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan over a 2 year period, which is detailed under point 4 of this report. Beyond this period, replacement funds will be sought. Without additional resources, our empty homes function will continue to be, by necessity, extremely limited and will not therefore deliver the aspirations set out in the Housing Strategy 2022-2027.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Whilst there is no requirement to hold an Empty Homes Strategy, the Council does retain strategic housing responsibilities and this document helps towards continued delivery of its statutory duties. The Council's powers and duties in relation to enforcement are contained within various statutes including the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 2004, the Law of Property Act 1925 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. In cases where enforcement action is required, advice and input from Legal Services is always sought. Risk to decreased income from the Council Tax premium charge. If this results from a home being brought back into use, this will reduce the amount of long-term empty homes used to calculate the reduction in the New Homes Bonus paid.

### 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.

### Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

### **Conclusions**

As the strategic housing authority for the district, Sevenoaks District Council has confirmed its commitment to addressing long-term empty homes in the district as part of its recently refreshed Housing Strategy. The adoption of an Empty Homes Strategy will provide clarity to residents and ensure Sevenoaks District Council has a clear framework of the aims, options, and enforcement powers to deal with the issue of empty homes within the District and bring empty homes back into use.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - draft Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - People & Places**



**Item 10 - Summary of the Emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy**

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 22 November 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**SUMMARY OF THE EMERGING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY**

**Cabinet – 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** Chief Officer People and Places

**Status:** For Decision

**Also considered by:**

- Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 22 November 2022

**Key Decision:** yes

**Executive Summary:** This report presents the Homelessness Review and a draft Sevenoaks District Council's emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2028 to go out for consultation

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** the Housing Strategy 2022-2027

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Kevin Maskell

**Contact Officer(s):** Alison Simmons, Head of Housing, Extension 7272

**Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:**

To consider the outcome of the Homeless Review, the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the proposed timetable for consultation and implementation and endorse recommendation (b) to Cabinet.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

- (a) To consider the outcome of the Homeless Review, the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the proposed timetable for consultation and implementation
- (b) To approve the first draft of the emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for public consultation, subject to any required amendment

**Reason for recommendation:** The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

# Agenda Item 10

## Introduction and Background

- 1 The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 contains 4 key themes of focus for the District Council's housing service over the next 5 years. These include Theme 3: Reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation.

Recognising that homelessness is a growing problem in the Sevenoaks District, this section sets out a 'whole journey' approach to addressing the issue. It starts with the housing market challenges that lie behind the rising homeless figures and moves quickly into how the Council will strengthen its approach to 'prevention.' There are sections on 'relief' of homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is a very important section on improving routes into permanent accommodation that includes several actions to create better pathways for people to access appropriate accommodation in a timely way, so that no one spends longer than a defined period in Temporary Accommodation. There is an appeal to partners to work constructively with the Council to improve outcomes for people who do find themselves without a home.

- 2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

The Strategy must set out the Council's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

## Homelessness Review and draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

- 3 The Homelessness Service Review (Appendix A attached) provides information on the needs of people who have approached the Council's housing service for help since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. It considers what we have achieved, what has changed and how this relates to the changing environment and Government Policy. This will inform our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy from 2023.
- 4 Following the completion of the review a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy has been produced for consultation (Appendix B attached).

The objectives of the Strategy will cover:

<b>PREVENTION</b>	Quality housing needs and standards - services dedicated to effective advice, holistic and informed assessment.
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	<p>Preventative casework - working alongside partners, to stop those seeking help from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Targeted preventions for the most vulnerable groups through the provision of agreed pathways into support.</p> <p>Strategic activities that seek to identify issues that drive homelessness across the District and apply remedies to reduce it.</p>
<b>INTERVENTION</b>	<p>Tackling rough sleeping - continue supporting the County wide approach to reducing harm and addressing associated multiple, complex needs.</p> <p>Partnership working - maximise the effectiveness of joint working and pathways for at risk groups.</p> <p>Temporary housing - provide a good quality, safe, secure, value for money accommodation portfolio and reduce the use of emergency placements.</p>
<b>SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS</b>	<p>Re-housing establish a range of sustainable housing and move-on options for rough sleepers, vulnerable and homeless households.</p> <p>Support - deliver effective support services to help households maintain accommodation once housed.</p>

**Next Steps**

- 5 The draft timetable for reporting, public consultation and final approval for the implementation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is as follows:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Housing and Health Advisory Committee	22 November 2022	Comments to Cabinet prior to public consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan
Cabinet	8 December 2022	Request for approval of the draft Homelessness

## Agenda Item 10

		and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for public consultation
PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD – 9 December 2022 to the 5 January 2023		
Housing and Health Advisory Committee	7 February 2023	Feedback from consultation and presentation of final draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation
Cabinet	9 February 2023	Recommendation for approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation
Full Council	21 February 2023	Approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation

### **Other options Considered and/or rejected**

There are no other options that could be considered as the Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

### **Key Implications**

#### Resource (non financial)

There are no additional resource requirements arising from the approval of the Strategy.

#### Financial

All immediate activity summarised in the Strategy is accounted for within existing budgets. Any additional activity identified as part of the Strategy action plan will be considered for feasibility within the normal yearly budgeting activity.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This Strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

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.

However, a full equality impact assessment will accompany the final Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan to consider any implications.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the District or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

**Conclusions**

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This Strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Homelessness Review

Appendix B - Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan

**Sarah Robson**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People and Places**

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**Sevenoaks District Council**  
**Homelessness Review**  
August 2022

### **Introduction**

This Homelessness Service Review provides information on the needs of people who have approached the Council's housing service for help since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. It considers what we have achieved, what has changed and how this relates to the changing environment and Government Policy. It will inform our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy from 2023.

### **Achievements 2016-2022**

During the life of the current Strategy the Council have:

- Successfully prevented 1,988 households becoming homeless since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017.
- Adopted and embedded working practices to comply with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Embedded dedicated homelessness prevention support through our HERO team.
- 2 additional officers were appointed to the Council's HERO team to support at risk tenants to remain in their home.
- Between 2016-2017 and 2021-2022, we awarded a total of £6.53 million (before Kent County Council's top slice) in grants to adapt homes to make them more suitable for people with physical disabilities and enable them to remain at home.
- Updated the Housing Allocation Policy in 2022 to ensure it best meets the housing needs within the District and complies with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Since 2018, Quercus Housing has delivered a total of 24 affordable housing units in the District.
- Between 2016-2017 and 2021-2022, a total of 434 affordable housing units have been completed in the District in partnership with Registered Providers, of which 219 were genuinely affordable social housing (affordable and social rented tenures) and 192 shared ownership tenure.
- Relaunched our landlord incentive scheme, appointing Help2Rent to extend our offer to landlords.
- Launched a Financial Hardship Working Group and use this to share information with partners and community groups about the help and support available for residents experiencing financial difficulty.
- Worked with Compaid to commission a digital inclusion and literacy support package, including devices, mobile data and training to support households placed in temporary accommodation access support and information.

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- Provided grant funding to support voluntary sector agencies working within the District to deliver advice and support services for people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Officers in the Housing Service have developed specialisms in work areas such as domestic abuse, single homelessness, ex-offenders and vulnerable adults to develop and improve links with partners and ensure that key priorities in the Strategy Action Plan were addressed.
- Appointed an Armed Forces Officer Champion as part of our HERO offer.
- Established working relationships with other partners such as the Probation service through the Accommodation for Ex-offenders (AFE0) programme and established best practice in coworking and service referral systems.
- To address the needs of rough sleepers, in 2021-2022 secured almost £300,000 under the Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 and a further £677,230 under Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 for 2022-2023. This funding will provide coordination, outreach and complex needs support to rough sleepers and those in risk of rough sleeping.
- Appointed a Housing Pathway Coordinator to deliver the Rough Sleeper Initiative.
- To address the needs of customers experiencing domestic abuse, appointed a dedicated Domestic Abuse Coordinator to support customers and signpost to partner agencies.
- Published and updated the Housing Advice and Housing Options Guide. This guide includes details of the help available within the District for people who are homeless or rough sleeping, or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Worked in partnership with West Kent Housing Association to enable a total of 4 Housing First units of accommodation at Orchards Close.
- Worked in partnership with West Kent Housing Association and Kent County Council to submit a successful Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme funding bid to deliver 7 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers, with Kent County Council providing support through their Kent Homeless Connect Service. The Council contributed £269,000 Section 106 monies to help bring forward the redevelopment of the scheme.
- Vine Court Road, supported accommodation completed in September 2022 and 2 residents have moved in. Support for residents is being provided by Look Ahead.
- The increase in our Accommodation Officer capacity has enabled the provision of additional support to households placed in temporary accommodation, assisting them to identify items needed to set up home in their temporary or move on accommodation, and resolving issues whilst living in temporary accommodation.
- Provided in collaboration with West Kent Housing Association and Moat Housing 46 self-contained temporary accommodation housing units, which are cost neutral to the Council and enables households to stay within the District rather than be housed out of area.
- The Council worked with HFT (a charity providing housing and support for adults with learning difficulties) to change the use of an empty property in Edenbridge and provided funding from the Homelessness Prevention Grant to develop safe and secure move on accommodation for up to 6 mothers and

babies. The scheme completed in September 2002 and will welcome the first residents November 2022.

- The Housing Service structure was revised in 2020-2021 and a new manager post was created to oversee both the Homelessness Prevention, Advice and Register/Allocations teams.

### Homelessness

#### National Context

#### Homelessness Legislation and Policy

The homelessness legislation is set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and provides the statutory framework and duties for local housing authorities to provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The legislation was amended via the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002. These amendments required housing authorities in England to formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the results of a review of homelessness in their District.

The legislation extended the groups of people who housing authorities had a homeless duty towards, now including homeless 16 and 17 year olds, Care Leavers aged 18 to 20, people who were vulnerable as a result of being in care, the armed forces, prison or custody and people who were vulnerable because they had fled their home due to violence.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect on 3 April 2018 and significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. Housing authorities are required to provide homelessness services to every household who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, and not just those who are considered to be in priority need. These duties include:

- An extension to the period that a household is considered to be threatened with homelessness, from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage.
- A new duty to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for every household that is threatened with homelessness. This duty can generally take effect for a period of up to 56 days.
- A new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will take steps to support households to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation. This duty can generally take effect for a period of up to 56 days.
- A new duty to refer, where public bodies in England will have a duty to refer an individual's case (with consent) to an identified housing authority.

The Homelessness Reduction Act has reformed homelessness prevention services.

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The Government formed a Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 and an Advisory Panel to support delivery of the Strategy which aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

There are a number of activities that the Council must undertake in order to meet the requirements of the Act. To provide some context, the following is intended as a brief summary of the customer journey through our services since the Act was introduced and sets out the key activities and duties imposed on local authorities to prevent or relieve homelessness.

**A customer approaches the Council directly or is referred by another statutory body under the Duty to Refer, then:**

- The Council investigates the housing application to see if the customer is already homeless or may be homeless within 56 days.

**If the customer is already homeless then under the Relief Duty the following actions are taken by the Council:**

- Reasonable steps to help the customer find accommodation.
- If the customer has no local connection to Sevenoaks District, the Council can refer the customer to another authority under the Power to Refer.
- Works with the customer to form a Personal Housing Plan.
- If homelessness is not relieved, continues to assess the customer's circumstances and apply the remaining tests of homelessness.
- Make a main housing duty decision.

**If the customer could become homeless within 56 days, then under the Prevention Duty the following actions are taken by the Council:**

- Takes reasonable steps to prevent homelessness.
- Works with the customer to form a Personal Housing Plan.
- If homelessness is not prevented, then a Relief Duty is owed.

**If the customer is not homeless now or threatened with homelessness within 56 days:**

- Has a duty to provide advice and information.

### **Changes in Legislation**

Since the adoption of the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021, there have been other substantial, ongoing legislative changes impacting accommodation and provision of services to people in housing need. These are discussed below:

#### **The Tenant Fees Act 2019**

This Act prohibits landlords and letting agents from requiring a tenant, licensee, or

other relevant person to pay fees, other than permitted payments, in connection with specified private rented sector tenancies/licences. This would normally come in the guise of renewal fees or credit check fees. It caps all deposits to 6 weeks' equivalent rent. This is a positive change as it makes access into the private rented sector more affordable as upfront fees and rent deposits are minimised.

### **The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018**

This requires a landlord to ensure his property meets minimum safety standards. Violations can range from mould, small, cramped living spaces, lack of adequate sanitation facilities, insecure doors, and windows, excess cold and potential for trips and falls. This Act empowers tenants to obtain redress in the courts for sub-standard accommodation. Poor standard accommodation in the private sector can increase the need for tenants to move to more suitable and affordable social housing.

### **Renters Reform Bill 2022**

This proposed to amend the Housing Act 1988 to abolish Assured Shorthold Tenancies. Thereby disabling a landlord's ability to commit to a fast track eviction under Section 21 of the Housing Act, as this section will be repealed. Although more grounds for eviction will be introduced in the Bill, it will oblige landlords to prove the grounds of the eviction to a Court. Removing the fast track to evictions approach, substantially increases the security of tenure for private renters. The Bill is currently going through the legislative process.

### **Planning for the Future – Planning White Paper, 2020**

The White Paper was launched on 6 August 2020, alongside a Government consultation on changes to the planning system. The proposed changes covered a number of key areas including delivering First Homes.

First Homes are homes for sale to first time buyers, at a discount on market value, with such discount held in perpetuity. The Council does not have an up to date Local Plan, therefore First Homes are required to be included as an affordable tenure. In December 2021, the Council introduced a local First Homes Policy to ensure new homes are available and affordable to as many local people as possible. The local Policy gives priority to those with a local connection to the District, it stipulates a 50% discount compared with the national cap of 30%, and it sets a reduced income cap compared with the national cap. The concern remains that the inclusion of First Homes in the calculation of a developer's contribution to affordable housing under a Section 106 agreement may reduce the number of social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership (part rent/part buy) homes being provided. The local First Homes Policy and wider Affordable Housing Policy are being viability tested as part of the emerging Local Plan process.

The consultation considered the threshold for developer contributions. Planning Practice Guidance Planning states that contributions (including affordable housing) should be sought only for major developments, which for residential development means 10 or more homes or a site with an area of 0.5 hectares or more. The

## Agenda Item 10

consultation document proposed to extend the support given to economic recovery by raising the threshold to developments comprising 40 or 50 homes. In Sevenoaks District, any increase to the threshold would have a significant detrimental effect on our ability to provide new affordable housing. Following sustained public concern, the proposal was dropped.

On 2 February 2022, a Levelling Up White Paper was launched. Many of the white paper's provisions such as those for encouraging the use of brownfield land and promoting beauty and good design were foreshadowed in the White Paper Planning for the Future. The potential impact, should the Government's proposals be implemented, would be an acceleration of the delivery of infrastructure and housing development but not necessarily affordable housing.

### **Homelessness in a County wide context**

#### **Kent Homeless Connect**

Kent County Council is the lead partner for Kent Homeless Connect, where support is delivered by Porchlight, Look Ahead and a network of specialist providers on behalf of Kent County Council, helps vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The service is available to vulnerable adults living in Kent, aged 18 and over, with complex support needs (such as mental health, substance misuse problems, or learning difficulties) who are:

- Rough sleeping
- Homeless
- At risk of becoming homeless
- Impacted by homelessness

In addition Kent County Council help those move away from homelessness for good, by bringing together elements of outreach, supported accommodation and floating support to offer tailored support to:

- Vulnerable people
- Enable them to be healthy
- Find a stable home
- Manage their tenancy or their finances

#### **Kent Housing Options Subgroup**

The Council are members of the Kent Housing Options Subgroup. All the Kent Local Authorities and Medway Council are represented on this group, which works together to improve on excellent Housing Option services provided across the County, to monitor performance, share best practice and liaise with partner organisations and agencies.

The aim of this subgroup is to continue to share best practice in terms of homelessness, housing options, allocations, lettings and service delivery. To respond and ensure that services are monitored and developed to meet changes in legislation, to explore solutions and working practice to assist in the delivery of new affordable urban and rural housing.

### **Homelessness in a Local context**

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a priority for the Council and there is a corporate commitment to make real improvements to the lives of local people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, this is reflected in the Council's strategies and plans.

COVID has had a significant impact on the UK as a whole. In Sevenoaks District, there were 16 known rough sleepers at the start of lockdown, however 29 individuals were helped into accommodation in response to the Everyone In initiative, of which 24 individuals were helped to move on once the lockdown ceased. This is a significant success in a period of unprecedented circumstances. However, it highlights the hidden homelessness in the District.

It remains important for the Council's Housing and Health service areas to work collaboratively to find suitable local solutions for providing access and referrals to health and social care services, as well as access to education, employment, training and advice that will help to build housing and health resilience across the District.

There has been a rise in the percentage of pensionable age and elderly people living within the District. This is the fastest rising population demographic in the country and is reflected locally, which will require careful thought about longer term housing and wellbeing solutions that are suitable for an ageing population.

### **Rough Sleeping**

Rough sleeping in the District is traditionally low in comparison to national statistics. All English Local Authorities are required to carry out either an annual estimate or count and report the figures back to central Government about the number of people known to be rough sleeping on a given night. We have seen the numbers of people reported as sleeping rough gradually reduce since 2017 and in November 2021, we counted only 1 rough sleeper in the District during the official count with DLUHC.

We know that many people sleeping rough require more support than just somewhere to live and need help from other services to help manage issues such as mental health and substance abuse. It is therefore critical that we ensure vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can access the appropriate help and support.

The COVID Everyone In initiative whereby all Councils were required to accommodate all rough sleepers regardless of duties owed to them, demonstrated in many cases that rough sleepers would take up offers of accommodation if it meant the risk to them was reduced and the offer was more desirable to their aspirations.

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Therefore, providing a range of accommodation in the District that will improve the housing offer and meet a wider range of needs, will continue to be our priority and longer term solution for customers in housing crisis.

The Council have commissioned Porchlight to deliver an outreach and complex needs service to identify and support people who are found to be rough sleeping or identified as single homeless in the District. This is funded through the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

Since 2017 we have focussed on increasing the options available to rough sleepers and ensuring accurate verification of rough sleepers based on the agreed definition.

From our data we can confirm that over the course of the year 2021-2022 a total of 40 individuals were reported as rough sleeping. Of the 40:

- 16 were verified as sleeping rough
- 24 reports gave insufficient information to attempt or rough sleepers were not found for verification

Of those 16 who were verified rough sleepers:

- 13 were assisted to secure other accommodation or refused/or did not engage with the Council

Verification of any reports received about people sleeping rough requires additional staff time but is vital to ensure that those sleeping rough are engaged with at the earliest opportunity.

### **Severe Weather Emergency Protocol**

The Council operate Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) during periods where the weather is forecast to be 0 degrees or lower for 3 consecutive days. This protocol is very similar to the Everyone In initiative but has traditionally only been activated at the coldest times of year.

We provide financial support to anyone wishing to access SWEP beds and provide an opportunity for rough sleepers to engage with other local health and support services, with the aim to reduce the risk of them returning to the streets when the weather improved.

Our data so far indicates that to fully meet the needs of rough sleepers and achieve the Government's goal to end rough sleeping by 2027, we need to:

- Monitor the current levels of rough sleeping, and resource services to tackle this.
- Monitor future likely levels of rough sleeping and put support in place to mitigate this.



- Work with partners to secure appropriate accommodation for those who are rough sleeping or are threatened with homelessness and to help them build housing resilience.
- Review effectiveness and quality of accommodation offers to rough sleepers and develop an improved housing offer.

### **The Overall picture**

#### **Who seeks help with housing?**

Whilst the small number of households who are rough sleeping place an urgent demand for housing services, there are a greater number of people who are assessed by the Council as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days or at immediate risk of homelessness. Of the 376 households in 2021-2022 who were owed a statutory homeless duty, 205 were owed a prevention duty compared to 145 the previous year, and 171 were homeless and owed a relief duty compared to 128 the previous year. In 2021-2022 a further 622 were not threatened with homelessness within 56 days and therefore no duty owed however these households would have received advice and information to assist them in finding a housing solution. This demonstrates that most work undertaken by the Housing Service relates to homelessness prevention.

Housing and homelessness enquiries are predominately received through applications made online to join the Housing Register, contact by telephone and email and some direct face to face contact with the duty housing officer. The team provide a triage role for initial face to face and telephone enquiries and assist residents with form filling when necessary. All calls received by the Council for housing related enquiries go through the Customer Solutions Team initially and are passed to the Housing Service when more complex advice is required, or the customer advises that they are at risk of homelessness.

There is a dedicated email address to receive referrals under the Homelessness Reduction Act Duty to Refer, and specified officer in the Housing Service is the single point of contact for such referrals. Households with an open Housing Register application can use their individual registration log in details to email updates on their circumstances direct to the Council's housing case management system. The number of general housing advice enquiries taken is not recorded by the service, but data is available on the number of advice and prevention cases opened (prior to 2018) or registered as a working case through the HCLIC system, post 2018 when Act was implemented. It will be important to improve the monitoring of general housing advice enquiries, to better understand the demand for services and the quality of advice offered at each point of contact.

In the last 3 years, it is estimated that 2,526 people each year approach the Council to request advice and information about their housing circumstances. Some of those approaching only require general one off advice and are then able to independently resolve their housing issue. Other households require intervention and additional support, and prior to the introduction of the Act this was dealt with through advice and prevention work, to help the customer resolve their housing difficulties.

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Since the introduction of the Act in April 2018, we have had to change the way cases are processed or recorded and actions closed. Due to this, it is difficult to compare data and trends from previous years. This review has highlighted the potential for variations in how housing data is recorded and the opportunity to record the number of contacts with the service to demonstrate the true demand. The people needing to access our service come from all demographics in Sevenoaks District.

### Household composition

The table below shows the household makeup of housing applicants to whom the Council owed a prevention duty as the household circumstances demonstrated that they were at risk of homelessness within 56 days.

Year	Total owed prevention duty	Family with Dependent Children	Single Male Adult	Single Female Adult
2018-2019	342	180	80	82
2019-2020	203	114	46	43
2020-2021	145	72	34	39
2021-2022	205	105	54	46

The highest demand for homelessness prevention services comes from families with dependent children, followed by single male and female adults.

The table below shows the household makeup of housing applicants to whom the Council owed a relief duty as their circumstances demonstrated that they were homeless or at risk of immediate homelessness.

Year	Total owed relief duty	Family with Dependent Children	Single Male Adult	Single Female Adult
2018-2019	81	40	32	9
2019-2020	76	21	37	18
2020-2021	128	43	58	27
2021-2022	171	70	68	33

The highest need and demand for housing and homelessness services is from single male and female adults, both of which require very different accommodation and support solutions. It will be important to ensure the housing offer in the District can accommodate both and that proactive communications are targeted to provide advice and support at the earliest opportunity before crisis happens in order to raise awareness and prevent homelessness.

### Support needs

It is recognised that the many customers needing assistance to prevent homelessness or to relieve their homelessness have other support needs. DLUHC data shows that

households did not disclose a support need. The highest support need is that of mental health support. This is explored further below.

### **Mental Health issues**

A household's support needs are considered as part of the assessment of their overall housing need and the duties owed by the Council to relieve or prevent homelessness. Mental health can impact on a household's ability to sustain their accommodation and therefore we work in partnership with mental health services to ensure that customers are informed about the help and support available to them. As a general provider of service in mental health, Kent NHS Foundation Trust delivers NHS mental health services outside of hospital, at home and within the community. The Trust helps those living with mental health needs to manage their current health and live independently.

### **Physical or Health disabilities**

In assessing whether the duty is to prevent homelessness or relieve it, we will consider the individual circumstances and establish if the household's existing home is suitable to meet their needs. Where the property cannot be modified and is unsuitable, there may be a duty to accommodate them (relief duty). If the household's circumstances warrant a prevention duty, this will be established following completion of inquiries and the housing need assessment. Modifications to accommodation to make it suitable to meet the longer term needs of households with disabilities, can be achieved by a disabled facilities grant, small works grant or an adaptation. It may be the case that a referral to Adult Social Services under a Safeguarding Protocol is necessary. To assess the needs of those stating they have physical needs, our assessments are guided by an inhouse Occupational Therapist that works jointly across the Council and Kent County Council.

### **Drug or Alcohol dependency**

If, at the time of approach for housing assistance, an individual is misusing substances and not engaging in specialist support, they are encouraged to engage through a Personal Housing Plan to access and engage with relevant support services (Homelessness Reduction Act duty). This is because stability needs to be established in order to maintain a long term tenancy. A tenant will need to control, manage, or resolve their substance misuse habits in order sustain their tenancy and money management.

As part of Personal Housing Plans, individual households can be referred to support services or can access support themselves via the Council grant funded or commissioned services such as debt and money advice and drop in services provided by Citizens Advice.

### **Age of applicant**

The Council owed a homelessness duty to 387 households in 2021-2022 approximately 200 were aged between 18 and 34 years; 157 were aged between 35

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and 64 years and the remainder aged 65 or higher. A snapshot of our Housing Register in October 2021 indicates that the majority of housing applicants across the whole register in the Sevenoaks District are aged between 18 and 64 years with approximately 13% aged 65 or higher, of which there are an increasing number of households in the 80 plus age group. The homelessness duty and Housing Register data largely reflect each other and the local population statistics. It will be important to ensure a continued supply of affordable accommodation to meet all age ranges and needs but due to the impact that Welfare Reform changes have on affordability of accommodation, this will increase demand, particularly for those affected by benefit caps and inability to claim benefit for accommodation that has bedrooms surplus to requirements.

Young people face significant difficulty in accessing accommodation. This is due to life inexperience, parental or home exclusion and poor financial power. Therefore, special attention needs to be given to this age group.

### **16 and 17 year olds**

If a young person aged 16 or 17 presents as homeless, every attempt is made to assist them to return home, where it is considered safe to do so. We consider the home, if safe, to be the most appropriate and effective place for them to be for financial security and support.

All young people in this age category are initially referred to Kent County Council's Social Services who have a Resettlement Team, to try and facilitate a move home wherever possible. If this cannot be achieved, a joint assessment will be carried out to establish whether the young person is to be supported under Section 17 or Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989. Kent County Council identifies that all 16 and 17 year olds at risk of homelessness within the County are assessed under the Children's Act 1989 and ensures there is a pathway for Care Leavers, with housing options available to them. This arrangement has been positive in ensuring that only 1 out of 13, 16 or 17 year olds have needed to be placed into temporary accommodation over the period of the review.

### **18 to 34 years old Single Person Households**

Sevenoaks District is covered by 2 Broad Rental Market Areas (these are areas in which Local Housing Allowance rates are set). These rates have been frozen for all property types since 2012, whilst rental prices have continued to increase annually.

As Welfare Reform changes have meant that single young people under the age of 35 are not eligible to claim the full amount of benefit to cover the cost of rent on a 1 bedroom flat, there is a significant shortfall between the contractual rent and the single room allowance. This has an impact on affordability and increasing demand for more affordable social housing.

### **Family Households**

Whilst families are not impacted by the same benefit restrictions as single person

households, they still face significant issues when it comes to being able to secure accommodation where they are in receipt of low income or are impacted by the benefit cap introduced by Welfare Reform changes. This can make the private rented sector unaffordable for some families and increases the demand on social housing. The number of households applying as homeless as a result of parental eviction or unable to stay with family/friends has consistently been the most common reason for homelessness, falling in front of domestic abuse and loss of an assured shorthold tenancy.

### Ethnicity of lead applicant

A snapshot of the Council's Housing Register in October 2022 shows the ethnicity of the lead housing applicant. The majority fall within the White Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ethnicity group or White any other background group. The second largest group includes White Other origin.

<b>Ethnicity of lead applicant</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
Asian or Asian British - any other	6
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	8
Asian or Asian British - Indian	5
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5
Black or Black British - African	13
Black or Black British - any other	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	9
Chinese	0
Irish	4
Mixed - any other background	2
Mixed - White and Asian	1
Mixed - White and Black African	3
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	13
Arabic	3
Not stated	205
Other	0
Other ethnic origin	4
White Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	680
White - Any other background	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>999</b>

It will be important to ensure our data collection and analysis identifies any gaps in provision of housing services and how we can better target the information and advice to support improved access and understanding. The learning from responses to COVID and input from people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping will help us to better understand how we can reduce any barriers to housing across different ethnicities and cultures.

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### Prevention and Relief work at Sevenoaks District Council

#### Enquires, Advice and Closure

The table below shows how data is recorded since the introduction of the Act and the information submitted to DLUHC.

Year	Total number homeless applications assessed	Of which: number of households assessed as owed a duty	Number of households owed a Prevention Duty	Number of households owed a with Relief Duty
2017-2018	1,162	1,162	1,077	85
2018-2019	1,326	573	374	199
2019-2020	1,097	398	204	194
2020-2021	1,180	395	144	251
2021-2022	999	376	205	171

This does not record the total number of households who contacted the service and who were assisted with advice and information, therefore does not provide the full picture of service demand.

#### Duty Acceptances

As explained earlier the Homelessness Reduction Act places extra duties on Councils towards the public by extending definitions of *threatened with homelessness* and introducing a *Relief duty*, therefore it is important to separate the assistance given under each of the duties and the other cases where advice may have been given and the case closed. Cases where duties are accepted take up the majority of officer time and therefore are an indicator of substantial housing need and homelessness in general.

#### Number and reason for homelessness approaches for the month of July for years 2019 to 2022:

Reason for Homelessness	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	Total
Domestic Abuse	5	3	8	13	29
End of Private Tenancy	5	9	13	14	41
End of Social Housing Tenancy	3	2	5	4	14
Family/friends no longer will to accommodate	7	39	28	18	92
Left Prison	0	5	3	2	10
Left Hospital	0	0	0	2	2
Disrepair	1	0	2	3	6

Relationship Breakdown	0	2	6	1	9
Other	6	15	9	2	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>235</b>

The chart clearly demonstrates the increase in ‘family and friends no longer willing to accommodate’ in July 2020 (39) at the start of COVID.

A further spike in approaches due to applicants fleeing domestic abuse is shown in July 2022 (13). This increase follows the Domestic Abuse Bill being signed into law on 29 April 2021 which placed the following duties on local authorities:

- A duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have priority need for homelessness assistance.
- Ensure that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have priority need for homelessness assistance.

There is evidence of an increase in private tenancies coming to an end in the July 2022 (14) snapshot. This may in part be due to a number of reforms put forward in a new White Paper, including the abolition of Section 21 (non-fault evictions).

### Prevention outcomes

The main difference in the actions taken to prevent and resolve homelessness before the introduction of the Act and after, is that the need to assess *priority* and vulnerability at prevention stage has been removed and the level of all service is universal.

Most advice and prevention work is demonstrated in the arena of closed advice given, and interventions followed by case closure. It demonstrates well, the escalation of prevention work and it highlights the need to continue our commitment to provide outreach support and upstream prevention work. For many households, this will reduce the need for them to approach the Council at crisis point.

### Methods of prevention

Using internally recorded data, the table below shows the method in which Homelessness Preventions were attained:

Prevention Measure	2020-2021	2021-2022
Mediation and/or counselling	86	24
Other assistance to remain in Social or Private (buying customers food)	1,097	2,037

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Conciliation with friends/relatives	29	48
Resolving rent issues in Social or Private (clearing rent arrears)	78	23
Crisis intervention by Mental Health teams	123	234
Secured debt advice (IVA, DRO Bankruptcy)	63	73
Mortgage Holidays	17	1
Information and advice only	1,236	1,464
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,643</b>	<b>3,904</b>

### **Secured Social Housing**

The most effective tool to assist households to move to alternative accommodation is through an offer of accommodation via the Housing Register. As we are working within the Act duties, a formal Part 6 offer to discharge a full homeless duty is now rare. This rise shows that there is a dependence on affordable accommodation being available to help prevent homelessness within the District.

The Housing Register is for people in housing need and who have a local connection to the District. People are assessed against an approved Allocation Policy which provides criteria to assess a household's housing need and their eligibility for social housing in the District based upon their current circumstances. Households are nominated to properties owned by Registered Providers and allocated through the HomeChoice scheme. HomeChoice allows eligible applicants to apply for suitable properties each week that meet a household's housing need, anywhere within the Sevenoaks District. We currently allocate certain properties under specific circumstances to households in reasonable preference groups such as vulnerable homeless households and those fleeing domestic abuse. These households, when owed a homeless duty, are made 1 offer of accommodation. The new Housing Allocations Policy extends the 1 offer only Policy to all applicants, except those seeking 55+ housing or those downsizing. Our recent experiences with Everyone In to deal with the COVID crisis demonstrates we should consider households who are rough sleepers as a reasonable preference group.

### **Assisted to Private Rented Sector accommodation**

Our second highest prevention tool to assist households to move to alternative accommodation is a move to the private rented sector, including support with rent deposit and rent in advance, subject to eligibility. Since adoption of the Core Strategy and the accompanying Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2011, over £275,000 Section 106 affordable housing commuted sum monies have been allocated to this area.



### **Information and Advice only**

It is positive that many cases were resolved by issuing advice. Reconciliation with friends/relatives and advocacy were strong avenues of resolution and going forward all Housing Advice Team members will be trained further in such techniques. When mediating between disputing families and giving advice, the team aims to set out realistic expectations of what the Council can offer via a homeless application or the Housing Register.

### **Homeless Decisions and Acceptances**

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the need to make *main homeless duty* decisions have dramatically reduced as this action is now regarded as a last resort should other duties not be successful. The upstream prevention model traditionally adopted by the Housing Advice Team is now legislated and this has resulted in most cases ending with a prevention action.

### **Accommodation outcome following acceptance of Relief and main homeless duty**

The only Homelessness Reduction Act duties that require an accommodation solution are relief duties and main duties. If a household has not obtained long term secure accommodation within 56 days, the Council is then obliged to make a full homeless decision where a full assessment of events leading to homelessness are considered. In these cases, on some occasions it can be assessed that the household does not qualify for further assistance.

The Council discharged our duty to most of the households we accepted as homeless, following an accepted nomination into social housing provided by Registered Providers. Homeless households, to whom we accept a homelessness duty, are placed on auto-bidding on the HomeChoice scheme and will receive 1 suitable offer of accommodation as per our revised Allocations Policy.

### **Prevention versus Homeless Relief Duties**

Threatened with Homelessness (Prevention Duty owed) Homeless (Relief Duty owed)  
Under the Allocation Policy we can add a preference for homeless or transfer applicants, to manage temporary accommodation and meet the specific needs of certain households. However, this is used very sparingly to ensure that other groups are not disadvantaged.

The Council can discharge our duties by way of a Private Rented Sector Offer, where suitable private rented sector property is available.

### **Use of a Part 6 offer to end homelessness (Reliance on Social Housing)**

When a household is housed by being offered accommodation through the Housing

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Register, it is known as a Part 6 offer of accommodation (under the Housing Act 1996). This is applied where prevention actions have been exhausted.

This table shows out of all Sevenoaks District housing allocations 21% in 2020-2021 and 27% in 2021-2022 were provided to homeless applicants.

Allocation Type	2020-2021	2021-2022
General	115	95
Homeless	49	58
Transfer	73	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>215</b>

The percentage of lets to homeless households has risen by 6% in the last financial year.

### Availability of new Affordable Housing Delivery

During the period of the review we have seen the number of allocations to Registered Providers accommodation fall slightly. This is partly due to a reduction in delivery of proposed new builds and a reduction of allocations to homelessness cases demonstrated later.

Year	Number of allocations to Council nominees
2018-2019	357
2019-2020	355
2020-2021	317
2021-2022	209
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,238</b>

The Sevenoaks District is bound by strict planning constraints. It is 93% Green Belt and over 60% Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These constraints mean the delivery of new homes has never been easy. However, delivery was further severely impacted by COVID, as was the case across the nation. The rising cost of raw materials and labour/materials shortages are continuing to have an impact. If the Government takes forward proposals to raise the site threshold triggering affordable housing contributions, this will further inhibit our ability to secure new homes.

The table below shows that the number of affordable properties delivered over the period of the review:

Type of property	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
All dwellings (net)	378	254	426	213
Affordable Housing (gross)	49	71	206	22
% of affordable to market	13%	28%	48%	10%

The provision of new, onsite affordable housing is only triggered on development sites comprising of 10 or more homes. Provision is subject to viability testing. Owing to the nature of Sevenoaks District, a sizeable proportion of development sites comprise less than 10 homes (small sites). Where small sites are located in Designated Rural Areas (Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985) and comprise 6 to 9 homes, National Planning Policy Framework gives scope for local policy to be adopted. The District Council has adopted local policy, meaning commuted sum payments are triggered in lieu of onsite provision.

There continues to be a gap in the provision of genuinely affordable housing (Social Rented and Affordable Rented housing) in the District and there are actions set out in the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 to address this.

The table below shows affordable housing completions broken down by tenure

Year	Social Rented	Affordable Rented	Shared Ownership	Other tenures	Total
2017-2018	0	23	26	0	49
2018-2019	0	53	18	0	71
2019-2020	0	95	107	4	206
2020-2021	2	0	20	0	22

### Other Accommodation Options

With the data showing a drop in allocations to Registered Providers and a fall in new affordable housing completions in future, other ways to fulfil housing obligations are needed. It will be important to make best use of and improve housing conditions in the private rented sector so that this remains an attractive option to households who can afford to rent privately.

### Access to Private Rented Accommodation

The private rented sector can be a realistic housing option for households in housing need. Although it is generally more expensive and offers shorter tenancies than the social housing sector, it can respond quicker to demand and provide more flexibility. However, for those on lower incomes, including those in paid employment, the choice of suitable private rented sector accommodation that is affordable can be limited.

With the Government legislating the abolition of non-fault evictions, the economic downturn post COVID and tightening of tenant rights, there is a concern that the number of private rented sector landlords letting properties in the area may reduce. We need to proactively promote the opportunity with private rented sector landlords (through the Landlords Forum or publicity) to let their properties through our Landlord Incentive package. Working with households on our Housing Register via Personal Housing Plans, to explore private rented sector property as a housing option will be important but the cost may, for some households, make this prohibitive.

The high private market rental values in the area is fuelled in part by Sevenoaks being

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well placed with good transport links to London. Sevenoaks District is recognised to be one of the most expensive places to live when comparing median earnings to property prices.

For households in receipt of full or part Local Housing Allowance, there is likely to be a shortfall between Local Housing Allowance rates and local rents, as shown in the tables below:

### Shortfall between LHA rates and local rents

Property Size	LHA Rate - North West Kent BRMA (£pw)	Average Rent for Swanley (£pw)	Shortfall per week (£)
1 Bed	£155.34	£221.00	£65.66
2 Bed	£195.62	£288.46	£92.84
3 Bed	£241.64	£406.15	£164.51
4 Bed	£299.18	£496.15	£196.97
Property Size	LHA Rate - High Weald BRMA (£pw)	Average Rent for Sevenoaks Town (£pw)	Shortfall per week (£)
1 Bed	£159.95	£248.31	£88.36
2 Bed	£207.12	£412.15	£205.03
3 Bed	£260.05	£573.46	£313.41
4 Bed	£345.21	£690.46	£345.25

Data sourced September 2022 – [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk)

Property Size	LHA Rate - North West Kent BRMA (£pw)	LHA Rate - High Weald BRMA (£pw)	Average Rent across District 2021/22	Shortfall per week (£)
1 Bed	<b>£155.34</b>	£159.95	£224.31	£68.97/£64.36
2 Bed	<b>£195.62</b>	£207.12	£300.46	£104.84/£93.34
3 Bed	<b>£241.64</b>	£260.05	£379.85	£138.21/£119.80
4 Bed	<b>£299.18</b>	£345.21	£752.54	£453.36/£407.33

Data sourced September 2022 – [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk)

Whilst the average rent charged within the private rented sector varies based upon demand at any given time, the tables above provide a snapshot of the difference between the market/average rent being charged within the District and the shortfall for residents requiring support from Local Housing Allowance towards their monthly rent. This highlights the difficulty that many people on low incomes have with being able to identify accommodation they can afford and demonstrates why many landlords are reluctant to accept tenants claiming benefits. We are aware anecdotally, of landlords stating that they are unable, as a condition of their insurance, to let to tenants in receipt of benefits and our landlord offer includes cover for this via Help2Rent.

We are aware that affordability issues impact on those claiming out of work benefits and households where one or two members are in paid employment, still find it difficult to afford local rent levels.

### **Property Standards**

Between 2017-2021, the Council issued 45 Enforcement Notices and improved 26 homes through enforcement action.

Houses in Multiple Occupation licensing was introduced in 2006 but extended to more premises from 1 October 2018 when the original requirement that premises only had to have a licence if there were 5 or more tenants forming 2 or more households, and had 3 or more storeys, was changed so that it applied regardless of the number of storeys. The legislative change resulted in an increase of 31% (5) of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation. The number does fluctuate because of new Houses in Multiple Occupation being created and others ceasing to operate. Licenses typically last for 5 years. Houses in Multiple Occupation with fewer than 5 tenants are not subject to mandatory licensing but are subject to broadly similar standards and are checked periodically.

Between 2017-2021, the Council granted 371 Disabled Facilities Grants. The works carried out with grant funding ensure residents can remain safely in their own homes and continue to enjoy independent living. This prevents residents needing to be rehoused.

Between 2017-2021, the Council granted 173 Safe and Secure Grants which are designed to reduce admissions to hospital and promote independence that could include repairs or modifications to stairs, floors and steps, safety and security repairs or providing additional property modifications to promote independence for customers with a specific disability, diagnosed condition (or written evidence supporting a condition) with a Dementia to ensure they reside in their own home as long as possible.

Between 2017-2021 the Council granted 62 Hospital Discharge Grants which is to provide support to any customer being discharged from hospital. A Better Care Coordinator has been appointed funded through the Better Care Fund. This appointment has ensured that strong links between the Council and Health and third sector organisations have been built which in turn has provided opportunities to improve the lives of vulnerable people and in doing so provide a better service and quality of life.

### **Landlord Incentive Scheme**

The aim of Help to Let scheme is to encourage landlords to work with the Council to help to assist local families in housing need whilst reducing the risk and hassle of private sector renting.

Help to Let will provide a tenant matching service for local landlords from our customer base, this will primarily be households that the Council have a duty to

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prevent or relieve their homelessness by securing alternative accommodation within the private rented sector.

In addition to the tenant matching service the scheme will offer the following services free of charge:

- No letting agency fees for tenant finding/matching services
- Right to rent checks carried out
- A full electronic inventory prepared
- Check in and check out
- A single point of contact within our Accommodation Team
- Post – tenancy visit within the first 6 to 8 weeks
- One property inspection per 12 month tenancy
- £500 towards repairs during each 12 month tenancy period

The financial incentives available under Help to Let are flexible and be tailored to our individual households depending on the households needs. The basic financial incentives are as follows:

- Bond or cash incentive (equivalent of 6 weeks rent)
- Free landlord insurance provided in partnership with Help2Rent

These financial incentives support the landlord with the provision of Local Housing Allowance weekly/monthly rates for rental throughout the agreed period. All incentives with our Help to Let scheme are funded through our Homeless Prevention Grant.

28 households have been rehoused under this scheme between April and October 2022. The majority of these households have been under a Prevention Duty.

### **Supported Housing Options**

Many homeless applicants need support to sustain independent accommodation in the long term. Access to supported accommodation, transitional, longer term and crisis support services can reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments and pressure on affordability**

Resolving rent issues in social or private rented sector involves the use of Discretionary Housing Payments which are administered by the Council's Revenues and Benefits Team. Discretionary Housing Payments are intended to support households to access or sustain their tenancies and are available to assist households for an interim period whilst they resolve their individual financial circumstances. They can be used to assist with clearing rent arrears, issues of affordability, benefit cap and in some cases for deposits or rent in advance to access new accommodation.

The Revenues and Benefits team work closely with the Housing Service to ensure customers are receiving advice and support where homelessness is identified as an

issue for requesting support with Discretionary Housing Payments. Issues of affordability within the District have consistently been one of the main reasons for people seeking assistance with a Discretionary Housing Payments and affordability affects households in both the social and private rented sectors. In the period of this review, over £736,785 was awarded to residents in Discretionary Housing Payments.

The table below shows the number of payments awarded and the central Government contribution:

Financial Year	Total Discretionary Housing Payments awarded	Central Government contribution
2017-2018	£177,847	£198,116
2018-2019	£185,668	£190,679
2019-2020	£164,004	£164,643
2020-2021	£236,266	£238,106
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£736,785</b>	<b>£791,544</b>

If the central Government contribution to the Council is not fully spent, then it must be returned. Therefore, although we may endeavour to spend as much of the allocation as possible, if Discretionary Housing Payments are not made during a financial year's payment run, they will come out of the next financial year's contribution. This explains some of the differences in amounts awarded against contribution total.

## Use and availability of Temporary Accommodation

### Use of Temporary Accommodation

The Council has a duty to offer Temporary Accommodation to:

- Households that present as homeless where there is reason to believe that they may be in priority need and they have nowhere to stay pending a homelessness decision.
- Households for whom following an assessment, a full homelessness duty has been accepted.
- Households deemed vulnerable and owed a Relief duty.
- Households who present themselves to the Council as homeless, are usually placed in temporary accommodation whilst enquiries are made into their circumstances, and a decision is made as to whether the Council owe a duty to continue to provide accommodation.

The Council works with applicants as far as possible to enable them to remain in existing accommodation until suitable temporary accommodation becomes available; however this is less likely to be possible for households who present at the point that homelessness has already occurred, and these households will be more likely to require emergency or Bed and Breakfast placements. The Council aim to place applicants into self-contained temporary accommodation if this is available. If there is

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a need for an emergency placement, or self-contained temporary accommodation is not available, Officers will make placements into Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the first instance. In some cases, households will then move on from Bed and Breakfast accommodation to self-contained temporary accommodation as soon as it is available.

### **COVID Everyone In impact**

Between 23 March 2020 and 4 July 2020 when the Prime Minister announced that lockdown restrictions would end, the Council accommodated around 80 households in temporary accommodation across 7 different locations at a total cost of £184,373. The costs continue to rise whilst some households remain in the temporary accommodation until suitable secure accommodation can be found for them.

### **Sources of Temporary Accommodation**

#### **Bed and Breakfast accommodation**

The Council have a small selection of options available to meet the needs of households requiring temporary accommodation. The option used will depend upon the urgency of the applicant's housing circumstances and availability of accommodation at the time of approach.

Where people approach needing accommodation in an emergency or with limited notice that they are to become homeless, the main option is likely to be Bed and Breakfast, which is paid on a nightly basis, or in a hotel.

Where out of area placements are used, we strive to meet the requirements of households with work or school commitments close to our administrative boundaries. Some out of area placements have been made at the request of the applicant, usually for personal safety reasons. These are only used as a last resort for a short period of time, until accommodation within the District can be identified.

Bed and Breakfast is not considered to be suitable accommodation for families and the law says it can only be used in an emergency and for no longer than a maximum of 6 weeks.

#### **Self-contained Accommodation**

If a homeless duty is accepted and the household has been placed in Bed and Breakfast or hotel accommodation as an initial placement, the Council will look to move the household into self-contained accommodation at the earliest opportunity.

The Council have an agreement with West Kent Housing Association and Moat to provide 46 self-contained temporary accommodation units in the District.

#### **Time spent in Temporary Accommodation**

We work to limit the amount of time households have to spend in temporary



accommodation. We provide support through our Accommodation Officers who visits families to ensure they are maintaining their temporary accommodation and applying for suitable properties available through our HomeChoice system. If households are not applying for all suitable properties available within an advertising cycle, officers will place bids on suitable properties on their behalf, to ensure they move out of temporary accommodation at the earliest opportunity.

During the review period, the number of households who remained in temporary accommodation for over 12 months, increased during COVID and has since decreased during 2021-2022 with 104 accommodated for over 12 months.

The table below shows the time spent in Temporary Accommodation for those owed an immediate emergency accommodation duty:

<b>Time in Temporary Accommodation</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>Total</b>
Under 6 months	78	89	105	92	364
6 -12 months	39	49	72	56	216
1-2 years	110	128	236	104	578

### **Expenditure on Temporary Accommodation**

Households placed into temporary accommodation are charged rent whilst they are staying in the accommodation and can claim Housing Benefit to assist with this if they are receiving a low income.

<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
£77,05.99	£332,773.33	£501,240.88	£860,170.44	£1,483,056.35

### **Funding towards Homelessness Responses**

#### **Homelessness Prevention Grant**

Central Government used to give local housing authorities funding for homelessness prevention work via a ringfenced grant. A few years ago, the ring fenced grant ceased, and the funding was incorporated into the Council's wider local government settlement but was visible as a discrete element of the total settlement. The Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation for Sevenoaks District Council is as follows:

<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
£178,842	£264,630	£364,043	£434,897

This funding has been used by the Housing Service to support a range of community and voluntary sector groups to provide services within the District that are focused on supporting the prevention of homelessness. Examples of where this funding has

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been used include to assist with rent and mortgage arrears, alongside financial difficulties paying their utility bills.

### **Rough Sleeper Initiative funding**

The Council successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding in 2021-2022 secured almost £300,000 under the Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 and a further £677,230 under Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 for 2022-2023. This funding will provide coordination, outreach and complex needs support to rough sleepers and those in risk of rough sleeping and our spend is programmed to deliver:

- Emergency Accommodation
- Housing Pathway Coordinator
- Assessment Resettlement Officer (Porchlight)
- Weekly Drop-in (Porchlight)
- Outreach Officer (Porchlight)
- Personalised Budget
- Private Sector Rented Funding

### **Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme**

The Council successfully bid for Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding in 2021 and secured £233,175. This funding has covered the costs of the refurbishment of properties to provide supported accommodation for 2 years with permanent move-on accommodation at social rents.

### **Accommodation for Ex-Offenders**

The service helps build partnership links and create housing pathways at point of prison release, risk of homelessness from family/host (who has offender history in the last 12 months), move on from specialist supported accommodation beds and hospital discharges.

This service is part of the established HERO service, providing support and advice to people at risk of rough sleeping, prison charges, responding to duty to refers and ensuring all customers are assessed for a full homelessness assessment. The Council's HERO service is a responsive prevention service, with mediation, conflict resolution interventions, access to grant assistance for rent deposit and rent in advance private rented sector accommodation.

This service links in with the Council's current outreach and inreach provision funded by the Rough Sleeper Initiative 5, and as the Council upscale the prevention interventions in the District to prevent homelessness.

The service will continue to work to undertake prevention and relief assessments with providing rapid responses to prison discharges ensuring no one sleeps rough and no second night out in the District.

The Council housed 6 ex-offenders and are working with another 12, some of whom are due to be released from prison during November and December 2022.

### **Using Section 106 Affordable Housing Commuted Sum monies**

The Council has used Section 106 Commuted Sum monies totalling £6.269m to deliver 31 new affordable homes in the District, including 27 genuinely affordable homes where rents are capped at local housing allowance levels. Of these, 20 homes have been delivered by Quercus Housing across 2 schemes and 7 by West Kent Housing Association. The homes have been allocated to those on the Housing Register, with 15 homes specifically targeted at homeless households moving on from temporary accommodation and 7 for rough sleepers.

Section 106 monies have been used to fund initiatives which impact, directly or indirectly, on our homeless customers. These include a private rented sector landlords' incentive scheme to secure more homes in the private rented sector (see Assisted to Private Rented Sector accommodation above) and a downsizing incentive scheme to free up family sized social housing for reletting to those in need.

Total Section 106 monies expended on these various initiatives represents approximately 70% of all Section 106 monies spend since 2011.

### **Working in partnership**

Strong and effective partnership working has been key to the successful prevention of homelessness in Sevenoaks. Our partners include:

- Porchlight
- Look Ahead
- CGI
- Priority House (NHS)
- Highlands House (NHS)
- Littlebrook mental health unit (NHS)
- DAVS (domestic abuse services)
- CAB
- Cross Light Debt Assistance
- KSAS (KCC scheme for emergency support needs)
- Abacus for all furniture needs
- Department of Working Pensions
- Royal British Legion
- SSAFA
- IPAG (Kent Police)
- Stalking Charities
- Social Services
- GP Practices
- Probation services for ex-offenders
- CROP (citizen's right for older people)
- Criminal justice system
- West Kent Housing Association

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### Moat

Strong relationships, referral routes and jointly delivered services will continue to lead to better outcomes for the homeless.

### **Future Challenges and Priorities**

Looking ahead into 2023–2028, the Council with our partners and stakeholders need to assess the content of this review and taking significant national events into consideration, understand the challenges that might lie ahead. We have assessed that the following factors will shape the way in which services are delivered, and any Strategy going forward, should endeavour to tackle and overcome them.

### **Challenges**

#### **Funding**

Partnership working can be destabilised by short term funding. Partners need confidence in long term funding to develop and mature services in our favour. Yearly and short term funding approaches can foster short term thinking.

#### **Affordability**

A lack of social housing and private rented affordable housing options within the District and accommodation for low income households. There is an overall affordable housing need for 423 homes per year, as set out in the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs. Between 2017-2021, the annual new delivery averaged at 87 homes. The private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable and the delivery in affordable housing has been impacted by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

To be genuinely affordable, a rent should cost no more than 35% of gross income. This equates to someone on an income of £45k (median income) paying a monthly rent of no more than £1,312. In 2020, rents in the lowest quartile (the lowest 25% of rents) across Sevenoaks District were £1,001, making it necessary for most people earning average incomes, to access some form of affordable housing. The lack of a local definition of what constitutes housing that is affordable to occupiers means that the current supply of new affordable housing may not be affordable to those in greatest need. This could create an increasing threat of homelessness as the supply of social housing is reduced and private rented sector accommodation becomes unsustainable or increasingly unaffordable

#### **Domestic Abuse services in Kent**

There is a pooled budget for County Council led commissioning of services to support people affected by domestic abuse.

### **Customers with support/complex needs/older residents**

A need for increased accommodation and support services in the District for people who sleep rough; support for customers to be tenancy supported to enable them to access and sustain their accommodation with social and private landlords. We need to ensure that a range of housing options are made available for younger people who have limited incomes, and older people and people with disabilities who require more support eg provision of additional Extra Care accommodation and accessible homes. The lack of an up to date Local Plan means the Council are currently unable to require homes that meet minimum standards, ie the Nationally Described Space Standards. As social housing tends to be let at maximum capacity, it is very important for homes to have reasonable space standards. Achieving higher building standards to enable us to help customers with accessibility and physical disabilities (Building Regulation Standards M4(2) and M4(3), is an even greater challenge.

### **Hidden Homelessness**

The sudden rise in street homelessness at the start of lockdown on 23 March 2020, indicated many people were in insecure arrangements. This sector is incredibly difficult to quantify as many do not regard themselves as homeless. However understanding that many single males do not approach homeless services until crisis point indicates a need to identify this customer group at an early stage and provide suitable accommodation options and enhance outreach support.

### **Priorities**

#### **Financial difficulty and Financial Illiteracy**

Households may experience financial difficulties in being able to access accommodation in the social or private rented sector or in trying to cover their housing costs and maintain an existing tenancy. The challenge of meeting housing costs versus limited household income applies across all tenures.

#### **Rising Cost of Living**

Rent arrears and utilities are rising hugely within our communities. Strong consumer demand for goods, rising energy prices and higher costs for businesses are reflected in higher prices within supermarkets, petrol stations and utility bills.

We saw the effects of food insecurity as we went in and came out of COVID, in certain areas of the District we saw malnutrition and hunger which is particularly alarming in the current context with high food demand and energy prices rising.

Requests for assistance with food parcels from our foodbanks within our District have risen to 2,037 since April 2022.

While using the Kent Household Support Fund of £120,000 to assist customers to pay utilities, rent arrears and mortgage arrears (within a limit), across the whole District of Sevenoaks.

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Greater demand is currently being seen in the Sevenoaks District for assistance with rent and mortgage payments, assistance to pay utility bills. During the month of August the Council have assisted a customer to gain a mortgage holiday, hence avoiding eviction.

### **The data shows an emerging trend of hidden homelessness**

We need to identify this demographic who cannot, or find it difficult to, access Council support when they most need it to prevent homelessness or rough sleeping. This may include people who find it physically difficult to attend the centre, those who do not know about our services or those who for other reasons feel they cannot access our services.

### **Improve the financial resilience of our customers**

By offering targeted financial support, this will help to address this affordability barrier and should be a key action within the Strategy. We will monitor the costs of affordable housing, encourage delivery of housing at social rents and consider the delivery of shared housing solutions, in partnership with Registered Providers. The Council will need to support solutions to facilitate access into social housing for those households who are not yet tenancy ready but need independent accommodation.

### **We must work in partnership**

With other institutions such as the DWP, Criminal Justice, Health, Kent County Council, and other Kent local authorities to improve homelessness prevention via early intervention and referrals to appropriate advice and support services, joint commissioning, or delivery of services where possible, and improved protocols.

### **Provide an alternative narrative to those already homeless**

Improve the communications to promote our services to those who need them and build trust within the communities of interest. Consult and engage people with lived experience to understand their needs, capitalise on their strengths and codesign solutions.

### **Ensuring Private Rented Sector is fit for purpose**

Most households do not want to secure alternative accommodation in the private rented sector due to affordability and quality concerns. We must ensure that the private rented sector is an attractive alternative housing solution.

### **Data capture**

We need to improve the way we record homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services. This will enable us to use this data effectively to inform service improvements. Nominations agreements and lettings should be monitored, and targets set to drive appropriate actions and behaviours. Staff training will help to

ensure consistency of approach to facilitating and recording the demands on the service but the solutions and positive outcomes.

### **Maximising delivery of Affordable Housing**

Adoption of a new Local Plan will help the Council to maximise delivery of new affordable housing. Policies within the Local Plan will ensure affordable housing is developed which is truly affordable for local residents, meets prescribed standards to meet specific needs and contributes to the Council meeting its net zero targets.

Continued collaboration with existing partner Registered Providers, encouragement of new partners who share our strategic direction and the growing role of Quercus Housing will ensure Local Plan Policy is delivered on the ground.

The use of different forms of housing will assist specific groups, eg micro homes to help the single homeless.

Refreshed and enhanced under occupation scheme to free up more family sized housing in order to create movement in existing housing stock in the District.

Re-invigorated empty homes service to bring homes back into use for local people.

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## Appendix B

**Sevenoaks District Council  
Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy  
2023-2028****Introduction**

The demand for homelessness services has increased steadily over the past 5 years. During the past 3 years, the Council's Housing Service received more than 2,526 requests for advice and assistance from family and single households seeking help. The impact of homelessness has a devastating impact on those directly affected, a social cost that extends into the wider community, and a financial cost that draws agency resources away from other key services.

Although Sevenoaks District within the national context has seen a rise in levels of homelessness, it remains in a position of not having a rough sleeping problem. However, the Council cannot be complacent, homelessness effects lives and life chances and 1 rough sleeper must be considered 1 too many.

This Strategy introduces a framework that sets out to reduce the impact that homelessness has on local individuals and households, and the priorities the Council will pursue to help do so.

**What is homelessness?**

This Strategy uses a definition of homelessness that includes both rough sleepers, single people and families that are threatened with, or present as homeless. In short, any household (individual, couple, or a family) that find themselves without a safe or secure place to call home.

Those who present as homeless do not have to be sleeping on the streets or lack a roof at the time they ask for help. Households can be considered homeless if they are:

- Having to stay with friends or family.
- Staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed and breakfast accommodation.
- At risk of violence or abuse in their current home.
- Living in poor or unsafe conditions.
- Leaving an institution such as a prison or hospital, or the care system, with nowhere to go.

Contributing factors that have led to this national picture of increasing homelessness include:

- High housing demand and a lack of supply leading to high house prices and private rents with greater shortfalls between rents and Local Housing Allowance
- Shortage of social housing or truly affordable housing to rent

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- Increasing household bills and cost of living
- Cuts and reforms to welfare benefits
- Cuts in funding to statutory and voluntary services which support vulnerable people
- Buy to Let tax rules impacted the private rented market
- Impact of COVID pandemic

### How has this Strategy been developed?

The relevant legislation has been adhered to in formulating and modifying this Strategy. It has been prepared in line with the statutory requirements set out in the Homelessness Act 2002, Section 1(4) of which requires housing authorities to publish a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, based on the results of a Homelessness Review, which we have undertaken as part of the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 refresh.

In addition we have had regard to the Council's Allocation Policy and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local housing authorities in England 2018, (updated 12th October 2021).

The homelessness review, undertaken earlier this year as part of the Housing Strategy refresh, provided an up to date picture of:

- Current and likely future levels of homelessness across Sevenoaks District
- Activities carried out and support available to prevent homelessness and those experiencing it.
- Level of resources made available locally to tackle homelessness.

The wider public, local voluntary and statutory partners were invited to comment on the findings of the review, and their responses have been used to inform the shape and direction of this Strategy, which sets out how the Council will work with others to; put in place plans to prevent homelessness occurring; intervene effectively when it occurs; and deliver sustainable plans to support re-housing options.

### National context

The operating environment in which local authorities must deliver services to reduce homelessness continues to provide a number of key challenges. Increasing house prices, rising private rented sector rents and the reduced income many local households have experienced as a result of the pandemic, continue to have an impact, sustaining the high number of households accessing services and needing to be placed in temporary accommodation.

Key issues to highlight include:

**COVID:** over the past 2 years the pandemic has, not unsurprisingly, had a significant impact on central Government Strategy. At a local level, this has resulted in teams refocusing services by; providing emergency accommodation to rough sleepers as

part of the Everyone In initiative; putting in place additional safeguards to help maintain social distancing in temporary accommodation; and delivering remote services as standard. A ban on private rented sector evictions, in place since the first national lockdown, expired at the end of May 2021. Along with the broader economic impacts of the pandemic, this has increased the level of demand on homelessness services and the potential impacts will need to be monitored in the months ahead.

**Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017:** the implementation of this Act, whilst putting in place welcome additional protections for those at risk of homelessness, has introduced extra demands on the work of local Housing Needs teams. The changes it introduced included:

- A new prevention duty, requiring local authorities to take reasonable steps to assist those likely to become homeless earlier, so within 56, rather than 28 days.
- A new relief duty, which applies to those already homeless when they ask the local authority for help. It requires local authorities to provide support for 56 days.
- A requirement to carry out a holistic assessment of the applicant's housing and support needs, then set out how these will be addressed in a Personal Housing Plan.

The combined impact of these changes has been to increase the overall number of applicants seeking help, alter the profile of those qualifying for assistance (in particular more single applicants and more households with complex needs are coming forward under the new duties) and increase the number of applicants placed in temporary accommodation.

**Domestic Abuse Act 2021:** Under this new Act, domestic abuse is recognised as a direct factor conferring priority need for the first time, so applicants no longer have to prove that the abuse is creating vulnerability, in order to qualify for help. This is a welcome change that will provide re-assurance and certainty for individuals and their families presenting as homeless because of domestic abuse and will simplify the decision making process for officers. The Act introduces a new definition of domestic abuse and requires that housing authorities, when rehousing victims, should provide a secure lifetime tenancy.

**National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018:** this Government Strategy sets out their current plans for tackling rough sleeping. It comprises of three parts:

- **Prevention:** understanding issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing support.
- **Intervention:** helping rough sleepers with swift support tailored to their individual needs.
- **Recovery:** supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives.

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The Strategy, along with the funding received via the Rough Sleeper Initiative, set out to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eradicate it completely by 2027.

### Local context

Property prices in Sevenoaks District are high, with the average median cost of a home in 2020 is £425,000 (source: [Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs 2022](#) (TRLHN)). The recent surge in market activity has only served to exacerbate this position. Such high prices set the context for a range of issues that restrict the access that many households have to local housing markets. These include (with all references relating to the TRLHN):

- **High house prices and rents:** house price ratios, which compare the relationship between average property prices and average earnings, showed that by 2020, median property prices were almost 12 times the local resident based full time salary. High house prices have a knock on effect on private rents, the high level of which continue to challenge the ability for local households to secure suitable housing. By 2020, the median rent (all bed sizes) stood at £1,296 per month, a rise of 40 percent over the past 10 years. A recent search on Rightmove (18 October 2022) illustrated the fact that the majority of private rents charged in Sevenoaks District are above the Local Housing Allowance, which caps levels of welfare benefit subsidy that can be claimed. Of the 39 advertised homes in Sevenoaks and Swanley, none were available at a rent below the respective Local Housing Allowance rate. With Local Housing Allowance rates remaining frozen, this picture is unlikely to change anytime soon.
- **Deprivation:** Indices of Multiple Deprivation, last published by the Office for National Statistics in 2019, provide a snapshot of relative deprivation in each locality in England, by looking at a range of factors including income, employment, education, health, and barriers to housing. These are combined into a single index. Overall, Sevenoaks District ranks as 295 out of 354 local authorities in England. Sevenoaks District has two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England, St Mary's and White Oak wards in Swanley.
- **Housing tenure and supply:** The total housing stock of Sevenoaks District was 50,947 in 2020, an increase of 2,886 homes, a rise of 6% over the past ten years (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – live tables). This was driven largely by new private sector provision (increase of 2,836 homes) and a smaller increase in Registered Providers (formerly known as Housing Associations) homes (62 homes). Overall, the growth in Registered Provider social housing stock has been small, once Right to Buy losses are taken into account. New affordable housing supply is an area that requires more focus if provision is to be expanded to help meet demand.
- **Housing demand and availability:** The demand for social housing is high and there are currently over 870 households waiting for homes on the Council's

housing register, each of whom meets one or more categories of preferential need. The availability of social housing, on the other hand, is restricted in terms of both new supply and the number of existing homes that become available to relet. During 2021-2022 a total of 194 West Kent Housing Association homes were let to new tenants, which represents a stock turnover of 3.5%. There remains a significant discrepancy between the levels of supply and demand.

The combined impact of high housing costs and restricted affordable housing in both the private and social rented housing sectors, presents a real housing challenge to residents of the District. These challenges restrict the housing choices of many households on middle incomes and severely restrict the choices of those on low and unstable incomes, many of whom have to compromise on the standard and suitability of the homes they can secure. These inequalities will continue to have a disproportionate impact on young people, single households, and those reliant on welfare benefits.

### **Strategic fit**

This Strategy contributes directly to the housing ambitions set out in Sevenoaks District Council's Council Plan and our refreshed Housing Strategy 2022-2027 priorities, which are:

- Priority 1: Developing Sevenoaks' housing offer: building new affordable homes.
- Priority 2: Promoting quality and optimising the suitability of homes.
- Priority 3: Reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation.
- Priority 4: Healthy people, homes and places.

In addressing homelessness the plan sets out goals to; focus on prevention; support households at risk of homelessness; and work in partnership to address the number of rough sleepers in the town.

### **Summary of findings from the Homelessness Review**

The review set out to provide an up to date picture of the:

- Current and likely future levels of homelessness across the District.
- Activities carried out and support available to prevent homelessness and those experiencing it.
- Level of resources made available locally to tackle homelessness.

The main causes of homelessness in the District remains static:

- Parents, other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate.
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured shorthold tenancy.

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- Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner.
- Other reason (eg homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel returned from abroad).
- Non-violent breakdown of relationship.
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation other than termination of assured shorthold tenancy.

A summary of key findings from the review is set out below.

- **Service demand and operational response:** the review showed that the demand for services remains high and is likely to remain so into the foreseeable future. During 2021-2022, 999 households raised enquiries with the housing needs team, a decrease from 1,180 enquiries received the year before. 376 of these enquiries progressed through to a formal homelessness application, and of these, 205 households were found to be owed a prevention duty (because they were at risk of homelessness when they approached the Council) or relief duty (because they were homeless at the time they approached the Council).
- **Prevention duty and the Council's response:** the number of households whose prevention duty ended during the year is used to measure the level of activity under this duty. During 2021-2022 this duty ended for 205 households, with the preventative activities undertaken by the Housing Service successfully securing accommodation for 130 of those seeking help. Around 36 went on to become homeless. Taking positive action to prevent homelessness in this way reduces both the social cost of homelessness on households and the financial costs borne by the Council.
- **Relief duty and the Council's response:** the number of households whose relief duty ended during the year is used to measure the level of activity under this duty. During 2021-2022 this duty ended for 171 households, with the activities undertaken by the Housing Service successfully securing accommodation and addressing homelessness for 38 of those seeking help. As is the case with preventative measures, relieving homelessness in this way reduces the social and financial costs of homelessness. Around 130 of households remained homeless as their relief duty ended (after 56 days) and progressed to be assessed under the main homelessness duty.
- **Main duty assessments:** the number of main duty assessments undertaken has risen by 48% over the past few years, from 62 cases in 2018-2019 to 130 in 2021-2022. The Council has assisted many households earlier in the process under the prevention and relief duties as introduced in the Homelessness Reduction Act. However the Council has seen an increase in the number of approaches from households impacted by COVID, an increase in domestic abuse presentations and single households and those aged 16 and 17 year old. Single households are less likely to qualify as a priority than families, as having children is the key driver of priority need set out in the legislation. In 2021-2022 most households re-housed under the main duty accepted an offer of a

socially rented home with the remainder accepting an offer in the private rented sector.

- **Rough Sleeping:** the number of rough sleepers in Sevenoaks District continues to be low when compared with areas of a similar size. The annual rough sleeper count, which takes place in all local authorities each autumn, recorded 1 case in 2021, a reduction from 8 in 2020. The Rough Sleeping Initiative continues to provide ongoing support, carrying out proactive outreach work that identifies those sleeping rough and helps connect them with local services, but there remains a significant shortage of suitable move on accommodation in the District. This has been exasperated by the Government's Everyone In COVID plans, which provided much needed shelter for those at risk of rough sleeping, but has left high numbers of single, often vulnerable persons, in emergency accommodation. Addressing their support and housing needs is a priority.
- **Partnerships:** working with statutory and voluntary partners has been integral to mounting an effective local response to homelessness, and a wide range of dedicated partners have joined efforts to help prevent homelessness and provide support to vulnerable households. The new Duty to Refer pathway, introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act is working well, with partner agencies referring 1,687 enquiries to the Council between 2018-2022. The probation service, hospitals and prisons were the leading sources of referral.
- **Local trends and COVID:** over the past year, analysis of how the Housing Service has been operating indicates that the pandemic has had a local impact that reflects national trends. As such, the associated policies that have sought to restrict evictions and support the most vulnerable, have increased the proportion of single households, and reduced the number of households with children being assisted by the housing services team.
- **Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act:** there is evidence that the shift towards assisting more single households was underway before the pandemic, as a result of the new prevention and relief duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act. In 2021-2022 single persons accounted for 201 of all those qualifying for assistance under the prevention or relief duties. Invariably, this means that the service is managing higher numbers of single and vulnerable people with mental health issues and other complex disadvantages.
- **Impact of the Domestic Abuse Act:** the new act was introduced in 2021 and placed a duty on local authorities to give support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and safe accommodation. Since its introduction, the Council has seen a rise in out of area placements, notably from London authorities. Domestic abuse now accounts for a significant number of our homelessness enquires and has seen 136 placements being made in temporary and emergency accommodation in 2021-2022.

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- Longer term trends:** Whilst in the short term there is likely to be some re-balancing of the profile of those accessing the service, as the impact of COVID cases, services are likely to continue to face a high level of demand from a more marginalised demand through preventative activity. In addressing these trends, the emphasis will need to be placed on putting in place high quality services that seek to reduce homelessness. Locally, we are seeing the rising cost of living impacting a rise in homelessness. The proposed removal of the Kent Homeless Connect support contract by Kent County Council will impact the provision of much needed supported accommodation and intensive support for rough sleepers with multi-complex needs and challenging customer base.

### Strategic Objectives

The objectives of the Strategy will cover the following themes:

<p><b>PREVENTION</b></p>	<p>Quality housing needs and standards - services dedicated to effective advice, holistic and informed assessment.</p> <p>Preventative casework - working alongside partners, to stop those seeking help from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Targeted preventions for the most vulnerable groups through the provision of agreed pathways into support.</p> <p>Strategic activities that seek to identify issues that drive homelessness across the District and apply remedies to reduce it.</p>
<p><b>INTERVENTION</b></p>	<p>Tackling rough sleeping - continue supporting the County wide approach to reducing harm and addressing associated multiple, complex needs.</p> <p>Partnership working - maximise the effectiveness of joint working and pathways for at risk groups.</p> <p>Temporary housing - provide a good quality, safe, secure, value for money accommodation portfolio and reduce the use of emergency placements.</p>
<p><b>SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS</b></p>	<p>Re-housing establish a range of sustainable housing and move-on</p>



	<p>options for rough sleepers, vulnerable and homeless households.</p> <p>Support - deliver effective support services to help households maintain accommodation once housed.</p>
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Each of these themes is underpinned by a series of objectives:

- Effective collaborations with statutory, agency and voluntary partners.
- High quality services that treat customers with respect and provide value for money.
- Skilled and well trained staff.

Pursuing an integrated approach that works with partners to assess and prevent the local causes of homelessness and rough sleeping, can help deliver best practice, reduce the barriers that restrict people from accessing services, and equip residents with the skills they need to sustain their tenancy in the longer term.

**Monitoring**

The Action Plan will be monitored on an annual basis to maintain progress against the set objectives.

DRAFT

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy: Action Plan 2023-2028

Theme 1: Prevention					
Objective	Action	Success Criteria and Outcomes	High, Medium or Low Priority	Lead Officer/Team Responsible	Progress
Quality housing advice, prevention and accommodation services - dedicated to effective advice, holistic and informed case assessment	Train and develop a team of confident and experienced housing advice, prevention and accommodation officers to deliver high quality needs assessments and excellent customer service, with dignity and respect	<p>Develop and update skills matrix for all teams/staff</p> <p>Organise delivery of homelessness law and case law update courses</p> <p>Named staff champions with joint responsibility for leading specialist training/liaison in areas, such as domestic abuse, ex-offenders and mental health awareness</p> <p>Enhanced monthly monitoring of complaints and ensure outcomes are discussed at 1-1s to</p>			

		reduce levels of complaints			
	Develop IT systems to maximise efficiency, case management and reporting capabilities and align key customer processes	<p>Effective case management of homelessness applications and decisions in place</p> <p>Updated website content, with better quality information providing residents with opportunities to receive answers via self-service options</p> <p>Automated management reports detailing caseload, approaches, throughput, and demographics, to support the more effective monitoring of service</p> <p>Data reports that can be extracted and shared with partners to support the development of new</p>			

		<p>initiatives and funding bids</p> <p>Key customer processes, including applications for homelessness, housing register and change of circumstance forms, fully operational and online</p> <p>Automated processes in place that reduce the time spent on administrative tasks and improve customer outcomes</p>			
	<p>Work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners, ensuring customers can access advice and practical support which meets their needs and delivers</p>	<p>Hold regular forum with voluntary homelessness service providers, advice, and statutory agencies</p> <p>At least one partner agency invited to each monthly team meeting to discuss their service/project</p>			

	realistic housing solutions	Monitor referral arrangements in place to deliver preventative outcomes via commissioned partners			
	Align enforcement activities of Private Sector Housing Team to focus on prevention and relief outcomes and use of landlord incentives	Higher numbers of prevention outcomes and reduced risks of homelessness			
Preventative casework - working, alongside partners, to stop those seeking help from becoming homeless	Work effectively with other colleagues in the Council such as housing benefit, private housing, community safety, licensing, and income teams, to help resolve issues that may lead to homelessness	Improved standards in private sector accommodation resulting in fewer approaches due to disrepair			

	<p>Work with neighbouring authorities and named public bodies to review and maintain effective Duty to Refer pathways, to help drive the early identification of homelessness</p>	<p>Increased volume of timely referrals from agencies and support services, improving prevention outcomes for applicants</p>			
<p>Page 196</p>	<p>Create a dedicated hub of local partners, integrating the prevention work of Council teams, voluntary and statutory agencies, to focus on upstreaming preventative activities and coordinate casework</p>	<p>Hub established as the focus of preventative work and the lead in deploying early interventions targeted to those at risk of losing their home</p> <p>Increased volumes of planned moves to alternative Private Rented Sector homes and other housing options through negotiation and the use of incentives</p>			

	<p>Target early financial support for tenants (Discretionary Housing Payments, rent deposits and rent in advance) in partnership between Benefits, HERO and West Kent Housing Association</p>	<p>Reduced proportion of relief versus prevention outcomes managed through the housing services team</p>			
	<p>Promote an effective, value for money, landlord incentive scheme that encourages more private rented sector landlords to let homes to housing needs referrals</p>	<p>Scheme published/advertised to private sector landlords</p> <p>Landlord event held to promote the scheme</p> <p>Key point of contract for private sector landlords established and better working relationships with local landlords, local agents and the National Landlords Association</p>			

		Increased number of private sector properties available and reduced number of applicants in emergency/temporary accommodation			
Offering targeted preventions for the most vulnerable - through the provision of agreed pathways into support	Support education and awareness initiatives for young people to highlight the reality of becoming homeless	Develop a Sevenoaks District schools Homelessness Prevention Project			
	Jointly manage and review key Duty to Refer pathways for those leaving hospital and Care Leavers teams, to improve interventions for the most vulnerable customers	Reduced numbers of 18 to 25 year old homeless applicants  Embedded pathways for Care Leavers reducing the numbers in emergency and temporary accommodation			



	<p>Develop pathways for prison leavers and those in the criminal justice system through the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFE0) funding</p>	<p>Jointly funded HERO Resettlement Officer in post (funded by AFE0 funding)</p> <p>Reduced number of prison leavers entering emergency and temporary accommodation</p>			
	<p>Agree joint working pathways with Children's Services for families who may be intentionally homeless, to minimise the impact of homelessness on these households</p>	<p>Reduced number of intentionally homeless families with children in emergency and temporary accommodation</p>			

Theme 2: Intervention					
Objective	Action	Success Criteria and Outcomes	High, Medium or Low Priority	Lead Officer/Team Responsible	Progress
Tackling rough sleeping - continue supporting the County wide approach to reducing harm and addressing associated multiple, complex needs	Work with key delivery partners to deliver a programme of support and initiatives, as part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 funding	Agreed funding framework for rough sleeping services to sustain initiative for next 3 years			
	Develop a District wide support and accommodation approach for customers with the most complex support needs	An established multi-disciplinary team/hub where multiple complex needs cases across the District are managed in one place  Reduced number of households with multiple complex need cases in emergency and temporary accommodation			
	Continue to use capital and revenue grants	Completed refurbishment of the West Kent Housing			

	<p>from DLUHC and Homes England, to provide dedicated move on accommodation for former rough sleepers and work collaboratively with relevant partners (for example, West Kent Housing Association and Look Ahead) to ensure the success of those placements</p>	<p>Association owned Vine Court Road and Orchard Close properties, funded by the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme capital grant round</p> <p>Support services within the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme revenue grant agreed and in place for Vine Court Road and Orchard Close</p> <p>Reduced numbers of rough sleepers</p>			
	<p>Engage with the voluntary sector and statutory agencies to target and deliver support where it is needed most and make best use of their well established</p>	<p>Established District wide homelessness forum for relevant for relevant partners</p> <p>Joint plan with voluntary groups for delivering Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) responses and winter</p>			

	working relationship with this group	<p>night shelters, in place</p> <p>Support rough sleepers and the wider street community by addressing their vulnerability and wider impact on community safety issues</p>			
Partnership working – maximise the effectiveness of joint working and pathways for at risk groups	Strategic commitment to partnership working across various multi-agency panels and forums to find solutions in the most complex of individual cases	<p>An established multi-disciplinary team/hub where multiple complex needs cases across the County are managed in one place</p> <p>Reduced number of multiple complex needs cases in emergency and temporary accommodation</p>			
	Strategic commitment to close working with Kent Districts and Boroughs to minimise duplication, pool resources and reduce costs	Regular attendance at the Kent Homelessness Officers Group			

	Continue with consortium applications for grant funding wherever possible, to help maximise funding successes	Successful joint bids with other Kent authorities for future funding opportunities			
	Contribute to County wide efforts to improve services and options for victims of domestic abuse	Enhanced housing options to support for victims of domestic abuse  Domestic Abuse Housing Coordinator in post and in attendance at MARAC  West Kent Domestic Abuse Forum continues to meet			
Temporary housing provide a good quality, safe, secure, value for money accommodation portfolio and reduce the use of emergency placements	Review existing emergency and temporary accommodation provision to ensure value for money across the portfolio	Reduced average cost of emergency per unit  Quality portfolio of temporary accommodation properties to better meet a wide range of applicants housing needs in place			

		Continue to optimise the use of West Kent Housing Association and Moat Housing stock as temporary accommodation, over and above emergency short term placements			
	Review the Allocation Policy and make the best use of existing social housing stock	Allocation Policy updated, consulted, and approved  Reduced void turnaround times by West Kent Housing Association			
Rehousing - establish a range of sustainable housing and move on options for homeless households	Ensure cohesive approach to private rented sector procurement and lettings of Assured Shorthold Tenancies and leased properties	Greater range of sustainable move on options for homeless households delivered			
	Work with partners in Kent County Council to ensure the commissioning and best use of supported	Reduce numbers of applicants in emergency accommodation awaiting move on to			

	accommodation across the County	supported accommodation			
	Accelerate the delivery of new affordable housing, as part of Quercus Housing and in partnership with the Council's strategic development team, developers and registered providers	Suitable affordable homes delivered in the District to address housing need			
	Ensure the Allocation Policy balances the needs of homeless and housing register applicants and review existing applications	Revision of Allocation Policy complete and Housing Register list up to date			
	Make best use of Disabled Facilities Grants to provide suitable adaptations across the public and private sector and a review	More residents continuing to live independently and Disabled Facility Grants statistics reflected in homelessness prevention outcomes			

	of needs undertaken as part of the new Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2025-2030				
	Undertake regular assessments of housing need to inform delivery plans for new homes	Comprehensive housing needs assessment completed in partnership with the Planning Policy Team as part of Housing Strategy 2022-2027			
Support - deliver effective services to help customers maintain accommodation once housed.	Provide the HERO and One You services to bridge the gap between health, homelessness and employment/skills	Increase in homelessness preventions			
	Develop a standalone Tenancy Readiness package to support homeless applicants in specific areas of independent living and tenancy sustainment	Tenancy readiness package developed and implemented			

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**Theme 3: Sustainable Solutions**

Objective	Action	Success Criteria and Outcomes	High, Medium or Low Priority	Lead Officer/Team Responsible	Progress
Ensure that the emerging Local Plan contains policies that optimise the delivery of a range of affordable homes through the planning system	Local Plan policies drafted	Included in Reg 18 consultation Local Plan adopted by Full Council (following examination)			
Explore the scope for a managed increase in Quercus Housing's delivery outputs	Develop a scoping paper for Purchase and Repair acquisitions to provide family sized affordable rent and/or temporary accommodation within the District	Revised Business Plan adopted by Quercus Housing Guarantor Board			
Continue to work with the Rural Housing Enabler (Rural Kent), Parish	5 year programme of local needs surveys undertaken	At least 30 new local needs homes delivered during the Housing Strategy			

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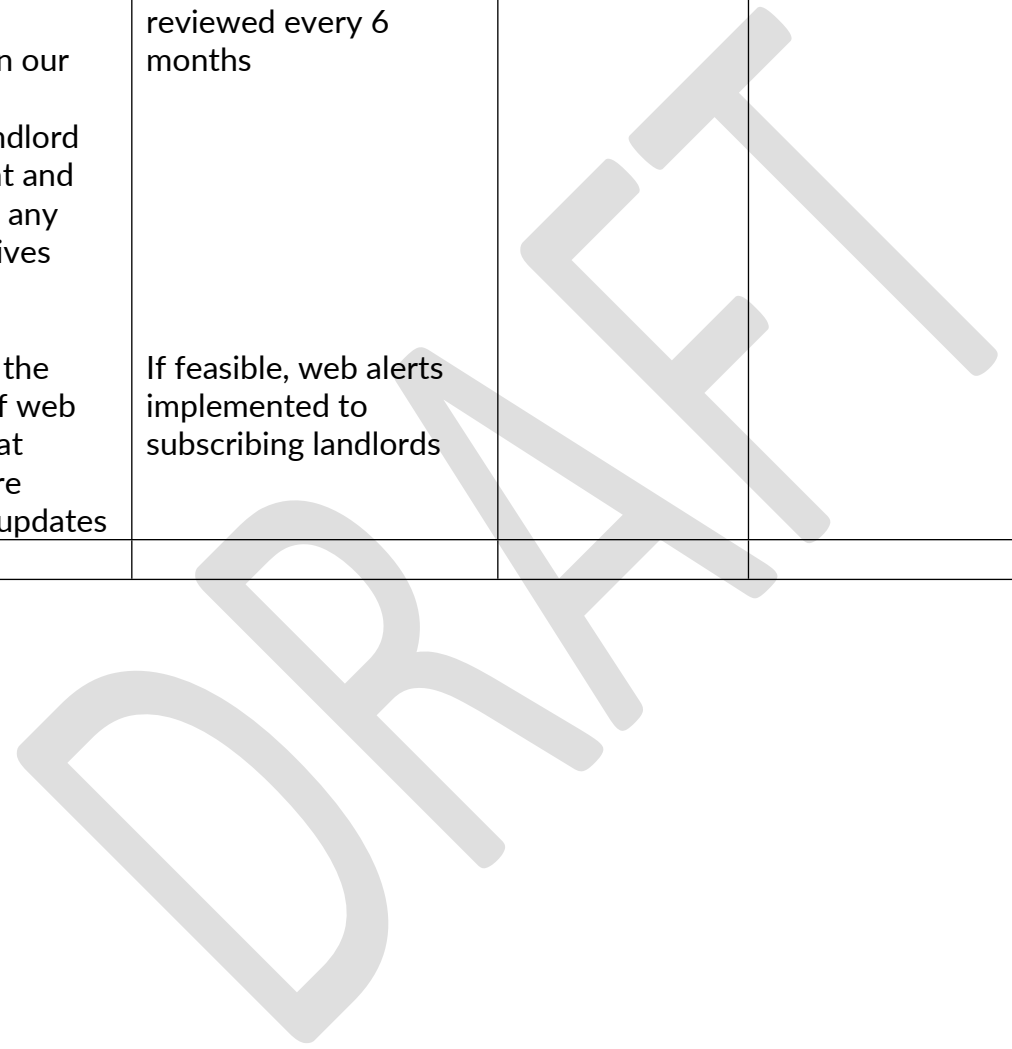
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<p>Councils and community groups to undertake a programme of local housing needs surveys across the District and to facilitate the delivery of new rural exceptions housing where needs are identified</p>	<p>Assistance provided to facilitate delivery of new local needs housing</p>	<p>period, subject to planning approval</p>			
<p>Include provisions in the emerging Local Plan to deliver accessible and wheelchair adapted housing</p>	<p>Policies included in new Local Plan to ensure new homes meet the needs of older and disabled households</p>	<p>Policies included in Local Plan Reg 18 consultation and onwards</p>			
<p>Within the existing Registered Provider stock, seek to refurbish, extend, or</p>	<p>Work with West Kent Housing Association and other Registered Providers to facilitate the best use of the existing</p>	<p>Planning applications submitted for remodelling of stock</p>			

<p>repurpose existing dwellings to make better use of them</p>	<p>stock, including the remodelling of social housing schemes that are no longer fit for purpose</p>				
<p>Seek to introduce an enhanced rightsizing incentive scheme for social housing tenants</p>	<p>Subject to agreement with partner Registered Provider's and approval of the use of Section 106 affordable housing commuted sum funding, a rightsizing incentive scheme (including an officer to coordinate the scheme), developed and submitted for approval</p>	<p>Scheme approved by Cabinet</p>			
<p>Support owners of empty homes through the Council's membership of</p>	<p>Development of a new Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan</p>	<p>Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan approved, and empty homes brought back into use and</p>			

<p>Kent No Use Empty, to create a downward trend in the number of long term empty homes</p>		<p>provided as affordable housing wherever possible</p>			
<p>Create a coalition of temporary and move on accommodation landlords to provide sustainable, reliable, cost effective temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Work with Kent Housing Group to ascertain emergency accommodation charges from private providers across the County and seek consistency</p> <p>Review all emergency accommodation providers used by the Council and develop a preferred provider list</p>	<p>Consistency of charging for temporary accommodation across Kent</p> <p>List of preferred providers in place based on suitability/affordability</p>			
<p>Provide regular Landlord Forums to ensure</p>	<p>Provide regular Landlord Forum events for private sector landlords</p>	<p>Events held</p>			

<p>relationships with local private rented sector landlords are strengthened and to maximise the potential for the placement of homeless households into long term housing solutions</p>	<p>Develop support pages for landlords on our website, to increase landlord engagement and to highlight any new incentives available</p> <p>Investigate the provision of web alerts so that landlords are notified of updates</p>	<p>Website updated and reviewed every 6 months</p> <p>If feasible, web alerts implemented to subscribing landlords</p>			
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**Item 11 - Mill Pond Capital Works**

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 6 December 2022. The relevant Minute extract was not available prior to the printing of these papers and will follow when available.

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**MILL POND CAPITAL WORKS**

**Cabinet - 8 December 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, Finance & Trading

**Status:** For Information

**Also considered by:**

- Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 6 December 2022

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report updates the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee about a capital work plan for Mill Pond, Sevenoaks.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Making Sevenoaks District to be a place where people can enjoy clean and high quality urban and rural environments.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer:** Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

Trevor Kennett, Ext. 7407

**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee:** That the Mill Pond Capital works as detailed in this report be considered by the Committee, and its views be submitted for consideration by Cabinet.

**Recommendation for Cabinet:** That the Mill Pond Capital works plan along with any proposals submitted by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee be considered and support for a capital bid to be developed as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

**Reason for recommendation:** The District Council owns Mill Pond, Seal Road, Sevenoaks and as the landowner we have the responsibility for its upkeep and maintenance as the pond, is fed by adjacent springs and storm water drains, which assists the road drainage in the area.

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### Background

- 1.0 Mill Pond, Seal Road, Sevenoaks is owned by the District Council. The land comprises of a pond, which is fed by adjacent springs and storm water drains, which assists the road drainage in the area.
- 2.0 The pond is relatively small only 0.25 acres in size. It has sloping banks, which provide good habitat for wildlife. The two islands are covered in bramble and willow trees, again providing some wildlife value but is not very aesthetically pleasing for visitors. It has a boardwalk at the ponds edge and has several benches to allow visitors to sit and watch the ponds wildlife.
- 3.0 In 2011 the Greatness Resident Association was successful in acquiring a Cory funded grant to transform this pond into a nature reserve. This include installing the silt traps, which are emptied by Kent County Council, desilting and re-profiling the pond, planting reeds and flag iris and installing the boardwalk and benches.
- 4.0 The pond is currently very overgrown and heavily silted. This is believed to have been initiated by previous, nearby building works accidentally leaching materials into the pond increasing the levels of silt. This in turn allowed more reeds and vegetation to be able to grow. As the larger amounts of vegetation dies, this creates more silt and an accelerating cycle of increased silt and increased reeds has led, in part to the Mill ponds current condition. This has had a negative knock on effect on the wildfowl that use the pond and is a concern for many local residents that visit or live close to the pond.
- 5.0 In 2021 Mill Pond suffered contamination from sewerage from the Thames Water culvert, which delayed the opportunity to de-silt the pond, as the Environment Agency would not permit disposal. This contamination was report to the Environment Agency and lengthy discussions have taken place between all parties to try to resolve the contamination issue.
- 6.0 Legal advice was sought by the Council, which recommended that the Council try to resolve these issues informally.
- 7.0 In August 2021 NRM Laboratories, which confirmed the sewerage contamination, undertook a full silt analysis but also highlighted other levels of contamination of grease and oils which included road detritus. Following a number of meetings and site visits Thames Water engineers carried out a works programme on Mill Pond that included pipe investigation and clearance and culvert cages to trap waste. Thames Water engineers also advised for further analysis to be carried out as the sewage contamination would naturally clear.
- 8.0 In September 2022 NRM Laboratories undertook a further silt analysis, which showed the silt still to be contaminated with oil, fats, grease and lead. The sewage level had reduced significantly.

- 9.0 Given the levels of contamination of the silt the Environment Agency require a specialist contractor to be appointed to clear and dispose of the silt, under a permit issued by them.

**Capital Works Programme**

- 10.0 The Mill Pond is designated a main river, which requires permission from the Environment Agency (EA) to carry out any works required on this waterway/asset. The exemption licence received states that as this pond falls into the classification of a ‘salmonid’ river/pond (fish, which are gravel spawners, depositing their eggs in nest cut by spawning fish in the gravel bed), requiring full licensing authority from the Environment Agency to carry out these works.
- 11.0 The appointed specialist contractor (Canvins Group) has proposed to the following schedule of works: (Bog Matts will be used to prevent damage to the ground and path and all silt removed from the pond.)

1	The site to be secured with security fencing to protect the public while work is undertaken
2	A full pumping system will be deployed to divert over the pond while works are taking place.
3	Removal of silt and decking planks.
4	Clean up of the pond and surrounding vegetation
5	Disposal of the contaminated silt under an Environment Agency licence.
6	Reinstatement of a new boardwalk

- 12.0 Our Clean & Green and Countryside Team will liaise with Kent County Council to allow large vehicles to be parked on the highway and for machinery to cross their land to get onto Sevenoaks District Council land.
- 13.0 The above works programme and on-going maintenance for Mill Pond will cost in the region of £60,000.
- 14.0 The Council is concerned that given the history of sewerage contamination events in Mill Pond from the Thames Water culvert and sewerage system, and the substantial costs to de-silt the Pond, that the same sewerage contamination event does not happen in the future, as it has in the past. Therefore, further discussions will be held with Thames Water and partners to look at other sustainable options for the Pond in the future that will include full community engagement.

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### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

Any service delivery projects that contain financial implications have been detailed within this report. A Capital bid is being developed and will be part of the overall Council budget setting process.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

No legal implications. Sevenoaks District Council is the land owner with a statutory duty for the upkeep of Mill Pond.

#### Equality Assessment

No decisions are being made within this report, so there is low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

#### Net Zero

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be a decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

The restoration and renovation of Mill Pond will ensure it operates more effectively, positively effecting flooding and surface flooding in the area. There will also be positive impacts on habitats, biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife all of which positively contribute to lowering carbon emissions.

### **Conclusions**

Direct Services has delivered limited on-going repairs and maintenance of Mill Pond over the last 12 months, despite the challenges of the contamination issues. This report details future vital capital work improvements.

#### **Appendices**

None

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Adrian Rowbotham**

**Chief Officer Finance & Trading**

## **Item 12 West Kent CCTV Control Room Hub**

The attached report was considered by the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee on 18 October 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

### **West Kent CCTV Control Room Hub (18 October 2022, Minute 24)**

The Chairman introduced the report which updated the Committee on a technical report on the Council's CCTV system and options to create a multi-council West Kent Hub.

Members were advised of the progress made since 2016 with the feasibility of merging the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) CCTV Control Rooms, with the hub based at SDC. Further reports had been considered and although the Council had approved for a central control hub, partnering authorities had decided not to proceed with the project. As a result, Officers investigated the options available.

The Head of Direct Services detailed the options available to Members as set out in the report.

Resolved: That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering item 13 (Minute 25) and Appendix 1 of Item 12 (Minute 24), on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information was involved as defined by Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 (Relating to the business or financial affairs of a particular person (or the authority holding that information)).

Members discussed the report and the exempt information. Members also discussed the usefulness of CCTV for the security of the District.

### Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the report be noted and that officers further consider with the Councils partners the options presented in the technical report.

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**BRIEFING REPORT - CCTV & WEST KENT HUB UPDATE**

**Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 18 October 2022**

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Finance & Trading

**Status:** For Information

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report updates members on a recently undertaken technical report on the Council's CCTV system and options to create a multi-council West Kent Hub.

**This report supports the Key Aim of: Safe Communities:** A safer place to live, work and travel.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer:** Trevor Kennett, ext. 7407

Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee:** That the CCTV & West Kent Hub report is noted and that officers further consider with our partners the options outlined in the technical report.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That the CCTV & West Kent Hub report is noted and that officers further consider with our partners the options outlined in the technical report.

**Reason for recommendation:** The Council's CCTV service plays a critical role in making our communities and public spaces safer, they also assist the police evidentially in preventing, reducing and detecting crime.

**Introduction**

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) maintains a system of 144 cameras. The majority transmit their data, either via cables (owned or hired) or over an encrypted internet connection, to the SDC CCTV control room. Images can be shared by operators, with the Police. The majority of the 144 cameras have Pan Tilt and Zoom (PTZ) capacity. The CCTV system and equipment dates back to 1997 when Central Government funding was provided to encourage camera systems nationwide, though most of the original cameras have subsequently been repaired or replaced, however the transmission

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operating system remains as originally supplied and is analogue in operation, which is no longer supported.

- 2 On 14 April 2016 the Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee considered a report provided for information that had been considered by the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee on 12 April 2016 and would be considered by Cabinet on 21 April 2016. The report provided an update on the feasibility of merging the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) CCTV Control Rooms and proposals to establish a West Kent CCTV hub, based at the Sevenoaks Offices.
- 3 The proposal, depending upon the monitoring option taken forward, could provide a return to 24/7 staff monitoring whilst achieving identified savings on monitoring costs and increasing resilience in the control room, particularly for the out of hours service.
- 4 The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that the Direct & Trading Advisory Committee had considered the report and agreed to recommend it to Cabinet.
- 5 On 21 April 2016 the Council's Cabinet considered further a report from the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services that reported and updated figures for the preferred Option, advising that the potential savings were less than those quoted in the report at £18,000 for SDC, £21,000 for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (T&MBC) and £10,000 for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). However, it was likely that this could be even less if the monitoring arrangements were exposed to competitive tendering.
- 6 Cabinet resolved that a) in principle, a joint agreement be entered into with TWBC and T&MBC to establish a West Kent CCTV hub, based at the Sevenoaks offices; b) the preferred monitoring arrangements be '24 hour CCTV coverage and out of hour's service for all 3 Councils. This model includes a dedicated Supervisor and 12 operators. This provides, mainly for three operators to be on duty, but at certain less busy times this will be reduced to 2 operators. Estimated Cost: £104,933 per Council; and c) a one-off Capital budget of £37,300 be approved, representing 50% of the cost of enlarging the existing Sevenoaks CCTV control room.
- 7 Although the proposal for a West Kent CCTV Hub was approved by SDC, partnering borough's decided not to proceed with the project.
- 8 In 2015 all 3 councils upgraded the server matrix to a Meyertech system. This is coming to its end of life with limited support available for spare parts. In 2019 SDC Upgraded the CCTV Control Room with new recording equipment, monitor wall screens, rewired the control room and refurbished all furniture and desks. In 2020 all the old cameras started to be replaced with hybrid cameras, this project has only another 20 cameras to be upgraded from the total of 144 cameras.



- 9 In November 2021 SDC, TWBC and T&MBC agreed that the West Kent CCTV Hub could now be an option as all of the Council's CCTV requirements had changed over the last 5 years. It was agreed by all three Council's that a technical report would be undertaken by an independent CCTV expert to see what the current options are.
- 10 Ilker Dervish was commissioned to carry out the technical CCTV review and to report his findings on all three Council CCTV systems and the options for combining these systems into a West Kent CCTV Hub based at SDC.
- 11 Ilker Dervish is a very experienced CCTV and Security professional with more than 35 years' experience in dealing with a wide range of public sector organisations at all levels. He has invaluable insight into understanding how organisations operate and has sat on several boards and committees devising policy, reviewing compliance and setting standards. He is currently Vice Chairman of the National CCTV User Group (NASCAM) and Managing Director of Comfort Zone Technology. Ilker is also the lead consultant for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets CCTV Transformation project.
- 12 The CCTV Technical report can be found in Appendix 1.

#### **CCTV Technical Report - Overview**

- 13 In summary the overwhelming conclusions of the CCTV technical report are two-fold, 1) the current condition of the Council's own CCTV system and 2) the options around providing a West Kent Hub opportunity.
- 14 SDC CCTV system - It is clear that regardless of progressing the West Kent CCTV Hub, although it would be critical for this opportunity to be delivered the Council's current system is in dire need of upgrading.
- 15 Our current CCTV system uses and relies upon end-of-life equipment which no longer can be supported by the respective manufacturers, which will result in the gradual piecemeal (or in the worst case catastrophic) failure of the CCTV system which it turn would have corporate reputational damage for the Council.
- 16 West Kent CCTV Hub - It also clear that the existing systems operated by Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council are all at an end of life status and the continuing use of which present a significant risk to services provided to residents mitigating security public space concerns.
- 17 In regards to Kent Police funding CCTV networks, Matthew Scott Kent's Police & Crime Commissioner has said that 'the Crime Reduction Grant can be used to support CCTV, however CCTV provision is not a core function of the Police and it is up to Local Authorities to decide what the CCTV service looks like going forward. The CCTV service will also be meeting and working with the district's new commander, Chief Inspector Elizabeth Jones to

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ensure the CCTV system is being used in the best interests of keeping the public safe by supporting and working with the police.

- 18 In 2021-2022 our CCTV Service were involved in over 100 assisted, monitored and instigated arrests with over 300 evidence and CCTV seizures from Kent police and other partners. Our CCTV Operators also dealt with over 1,500 requests from Kent Police's Force control centre for CCTV assistance within the district.

### Strategy Options

- 19 The CCTV technical report sets out five strategic options for consideration for the West Kent CCTV Hub project, which are:

- **Do nothing** - resulting in gradual decline in effectiveness and the potentials for the eventual ceasing of equipment and the service;
- **Go it alone** - Each authority to deliver their public space CCTV service separately and upgrading their own system when required. How each authority's systems are to be monitored will need to be resolved (may have significant maintenance and monitoring cost implications).
- **Switch to an unmonitored operation with incremental system upgrades in response to equipment failure** - resulting in immediate decline in effectiveness and eventual ceasing of the service for each authority or authorities (as failure in the system may impact in another authority's service delivery).
- **Create a single operating centre (West Kent Hub) utilising existing equipment and delivering incremental system upgrades in response to equipment failure** - results in improvement in monitoring effectiveness but postpones the requirement for further investment in upgrading cameras
- **Create a single operating centre (West Kent Hub) utilising existing equipment and upgrade all systems to the latest IP technology** - brings the systems up to current standards and futureproofs the service whilst reducing system revenue costs

### Recommendation

- 20 That officers further consider with our partners the options outlined in the technical report and provide a further update to members on options that are available.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

All budget and financial issues are detailed in the main report.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The technical report has highlighted a risk to system failures on all CCTV equipment, which could render the system as unusable if the equipment fails, due to the age of the infrastructure.

### 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.

### Net Zero Implications

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there will be neither an increase nor decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

## **Conclusions**

Clearly further decisions are needed between all partners to decide if there are any possible options for progressing and developing this project. Once partners position have been decided upon Sevenoaks District Council will need to consider its position regarding the CCTV equipment and its future development and operation.

**Appendices - Appendix 1 Technical CCTV Report**  
**Background Papers - None**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Adrian Rowbotham**  
**Chief Officer - Finance & Trading**

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