

Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1HG



Published: 17.04.23

I hereby summon you to attend the meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks commencing at 7.00 pm on 25 April 2023 to transact the under-mentioned business.

Chief Executive

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.

This meeting will be livestreamed to YouTube [here](#):

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIT1f_F5OfvTzxjZk6Zqn6g

Apologies for absence

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2023 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 4 April 2023 (Pages 1 - 14) (To Follow)
2. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting.
3. Chairman's Announcements.
4. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.
5. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.
6. Matters considered by the Cabinet and/or Scrutiny Committee:
 - a) Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy & Action Plan 2023-24 (Pages 15 - 50)

- b) Environmental Protection Service Plan (Pages 51 - 98)
 - c) White Oak Residential (Pages 99 - 162)
7. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.
 8. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.
 9. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting. (Pages 163 - 164)
 10. Annual report on Special Urgency decisions (Pages 165 - 166)
 11. To receive reports from the Chairmen of the Audit and Scrutiny Committees on the work of the Committees since the last Council meeting.
 - a) Audit Committee - Chairman's report (Pages 167 - 170)
 - b) Scrutiny Committee - Chairman's report (Pages 171 - 176)
- 06c - White Oak Residential Appendix B (Pages 177 - 179)

CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT ITEMS

Recommendation: That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering Appendix B of item 06 C above, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 (information relating to the business or financial affairs of a particular person (or the Authority holding that information)).

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Layland (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Andrews, Ball, Bayley, Bonin, Brown, Bulford, Dr. Canet, Cheeseman, Clack, Penny Cole, Perry Cole, Collins, Dickins, Dyball, Edwards-Winsor, Esler, Eyre, Fleming, Fothergill, Griffiths, Grint, Harrison, Hogarth, Hudson, Kitchener, London, Maskell, McArthur, McGarvey, Morris, Pender, Purves, Raikes, Reay, Roy, Thornton, Waterton and Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barnes, Barnett, Clayton, G. Darrington, P. Darrington, McGregor, Nelson, Pett, Streatfeild and Williamson

Cllrs. Barnes and Streatfeild were present via a virtual media platform which does not constitute attendance under the Local Government Act 1972.

38. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 November 2022

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 15 November 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business included on the agenda for this meeting.

No additional declarations of interest were received.

40. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman announced that Christmas had now been and gone, and the brighter days would soon be coming, but that had not stopped her activities in the outdoors. This included the planting of an Alder Tree with the Lady Colgrain, Lord Lieutenant of Kent. The tree formed part of a spectacular sculpture outside of Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and was now in the grounds of Bradbourne Lakes. She had also attended the burial of a time capsule, with Cllr Dyball at White Oak Leisure Centre, as part of marking the 1 year anniversary since its opening. The Leisure Centre also hosted an event with activities on 12 February 2023 to mark the occasion.

The Chairman also announced that she was invited to attend the Chairman of KCC's Holocaust Memorial Day where we received personal accounts of those who had been directly affected and it gave everyone present a chance for silent reflection. It was an incredibly moving event.

Councillors were reminded that there was still time for thoughts and opinions to be given on the proposed Conservation Area Appraisal for Eynsford, Farningham and Kemsing. The draft proposed appraisal was still available until Friday 3 March 2023.

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III would take place on Saturday 6 May 2023, beginning three days of celebrations. The extended bank holiday weekend would provide many opportunities for everyone to come together to mark this special occasion with street parties and community events. The Chairman encouraged Members who knew of anyone considering holding an event, to think about any permissions they may need for certain activities to Kent County Council (KCC) by 3 March 2023.

Members were reminded of the 'Making it Happen' voluntary and community awards event on Wednesday 15 March 2023 at St. Nicholas' Church Sevenoaks. The awards recognised residents and organisations in the District that go the extra mile.

The Chairman was delighted to end her announcements sharing that the Council had been awarded an iESE Certificate of Excellence for its Mentoring Scheme, which was led by Jenny Godfrey and the Communities Team. She expressed her congratulations to all involved.

41. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No questions had been received.

42. To receive any petitions submitted by members of the public under paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No petitions had been received.

43. Matters considered by the Cabinet and/or Scrutiny Committee:

- a) **Homelessness Review 2022 and draft Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2023-2028**

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Maskell seconded the recommendation from Cabinet. The report detailed the feedback from the public consultation and sought approval for the Strategy to be adopted.

Resolved: That the

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- a) feedback received from the public consultation, be noted; and
- b) Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2023- 2023, be adopted.

b) Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Dickins seconded the recommendation from Cabinet. The report sought approval for the Treasury Management 2023/24.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24, be approved.

c) Property Investment Strategy 2023/24

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Dickins seconded the recommendation from Cabinet. The report sought approval for the Property Investment Strategy 2023/24.

Resolved: That the Property Investment Strategy criteria, be agreed.

d) Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Dickins seconded, the recommendation from Cabinet. The report sought approval of the proposed budget and required level of Council Tax for 2023/24, and proposed a net expenditure budget of £18.533m with the District Council Tax increasing by 2.98% resulting in Band D Council Tax being £236.70.

The Leader spoke to the motion stating that “Last year we met at the Stag Theatre, one of the last meetings we had away from this Chamber, we were at what we believed was the tail end of the pandemic and the budget position of the council was overshadowed by the significant impact that it had had on the council, the districts residents, and businesses. We met days before Russia’s major escalation of its illegal invasion of Ukraine and the terrible impact this continues to have on that country and its people, and the global economic shockwave that followed.

Whilst I spoke at the time of some of the pressures that were building, including rising inflation, at that stage no one could have predicted what we have seen, financial impacts on a global scale down to family and individual budgets with the rising cost of living. The council found itself moving from the support given to communities during the pandemic to supporting those most impacted by the economic pressures that followed. We saw an almost immediate rise in approaches to the council for housing support, financial and benefit advice.

We faced double digit inflation coupled with increasing demand for almost all our services. Government schemes to support those fleeing Syria, Afghanistan and Hong Kong were supplemented with numerous schemes in support of individuals displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. Sevenoaks residents opened their doors to this latest

refugee crisis and the district council alongside our partners supported and continue to support them. This year we had hoped to pause and recharge, but as this was not the case, we threw ourselves into the service of those residents most in need, both old and new, lifelong, and those here for a short time.

Throughout, we continued to provide over 80 services to the public, we continued our capital programme, investing in the future of our district, provided homes, jobs and the infrastructure that will move the district forward, we continued to work with partners and charities, we promoted the districts tourism and economic opportunities through our place campaign, we protected the districts environment, whether challenging inappropriate development, focusing on reducing our use of natural resources, improving air quality, prosecuting fly tipping criminals. All this, and so much more, made possible by the sound financial management of council taxpayers' money that you see continued in the budget before you tonight.

Throughout, all this uncertainty, rising costs, increasing demand, we have been as equally focused on delivering value for money to every single household in the district, we have made savings, we have reduced bureaucracy and embraced new ways of working. Sometimes we feel the impact of these changes, this year the district went through a waste round review, why?

We have seen consistently 20% more waste and recycling collected during and since the pandemic, with people spending more time at home and producing more waste, we saw double digit increases in fuel costs. Implementation was always going to be painful and unfortunately it didn't disappoint, whilst many of the issues have been ironed out, we will continue to make any small changes necessary. However, we stand to save residents thousands of pounds a month, we will purchase new vehicles to join our fleet, making the service more reliable and lessening the impact on the environment, and we have secured the weekly collection of waste and recycling for every household in the district.

Chairman, tonight you have before you a ten year balanced budget, we maybe in the 13th year, we may now take it for granted, nay Sayers said it wasn't possible, they said that you couldn't make a decade's worth of assumptions. A ten year balanced budget is not normal! This remains something we do, uniquely in the Sevenoaks District. This remains the sole reason that tonight we can protect services to the public. Enhance those services that are most needed to support residents. Continue to deliver our largest capital programme in decades. Reduce our proportion of the overall council tax bill with a below inflation rise, meaning more money stays in the pockets of Sevenoaks residents.

Why does any of this matter? It is a year and a week since the opening of the White Oak Leisure Centre, the council's largest single capital project in over 40 years, a year that has seen record breaking attendances, the centre is back at the heart of the Swanley and wider northern parishes' communities. The success of this project has redoubled our resolve to rebuild and refurbish the districts other leisure centres so they can continue to serve their communities for decades to come, the investment in leisure centres show this councils ongoing commitment to the health of the residents

it serves, access to sport and leisure activities builds the foundations of an individual's health throughout their lives.

There is another reason that it is the right decision to look to improve the infrastructure around our sport and leisure provision, that is our ongoing commitment to Net Zero 2030. This Council's Carbon Reduction Plan is nearly complete, we have had detailed surveys carried out to assess the councils' buildings and fleet and the possibility and cost of moving away from fossil fuels to more sustainable energy sources. The plan also looks at how we can meet our ambition for the district, particularly how we can work with our partners. Taking all the calculations together it will provide the Council with a costed pathway to Net Zero, that will allow members to make fully informed decisions around this crucial agenda.

This year we launched the districts first Local Cycling and Walking Strategy, preceded with a successful bid for over one million pounds in Active Travel funding to deliver the first route across Sevenoaks. We have secured funding not only for the preparatory work needed to take forward the second highest ranked LCWIP route but also monies to deliver a Swanley LCWIP

These projects alongside the District Council's Movement Strategy, ongoing work to deliver e-bike hire and a car club model for larger developments, show that we don't have to operate within the tightly drawn boundaries of a district council but with vision and commitment we can lead on initiatives that bring lasting benefits to the district and its environment. This year we have invested not only in Net Zero but in improving the wider environment, the ending of the successful, but of its time, joint Environmental Health partnership, bringing the team home has allowed us to be more flexible and focus on the issues that matter most to residents, currently most prominent is Air Quality, we have dedicated resources to make sure that the significant improvements in the districts air quality continue.

Chairman I could go on and on, this has been one hell of a year, for the Sevenoaks district and local government as a whole, particularly set against the backdrop of the preceding 18 months, when seen through this lens it is a wonder we are still on our feet, but we are more than just standing, more than merely surviving. We are pushing on, delivering for all the residents of this district.

Another year where residents come first, investing in support of those within our communities most in need, investing in the future health of generations of residents, building and buying properties that will house future generations and give them the best start in life."

In closing the Leader stated that he commended the budget to members, a balanced budget, a commitment to quality services, ambitious plans for the future delivered to each and every resident of the District.

A Member expressed his thanks for the balanced budget once again and for the continuation of services to the residents of the District.

Agenda Item 1

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The vote was taken by all those present in the Council Chamber.

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr. Abraham		
Cllr. Andrews		
Cllr. Ball		
Cllr. Bayley		
Cllr. Bonin		
Cllr. Brown		
Cllr. Bulford		
Cllr. Cheeseman		
Cllr. Clack		
Cllr. Penny Cole		
Cllr. Perry Cole		
Cllr. Collins		
Cllr. Dickins		
Cllr. Dyball		
Cllr. Edwards-Winser		
Cllr. Esler		
Cllr. Eyre		
Cllr. Fleming		
Cllr. Harrison		
Cllr. Hogarth		
Cllr. Hudson		
Cllr. Hunter		
Cllr. Kitchener		
Cllr. Layland		
Cllr. London		
Cllr. Maskell		
Cllr. McArthur		
Cllr. McGarvey		
Cllr. Morris		
Cllr. Pender		
Cllr. Purves		
Cllr. Raikes		
Cllr. Reay		
Cllr. Roy		
Cllr. Thornton		
Cllr. Waterton		
Cllr. Williams		
40	0	0

It was therefore resolved that

- (a) the Summary of Council Expenditure and Council Tax for 2023/24 set out in Appendix F, be approved;

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- (b) the 10-year budget 2023/24 to 2032/33 which was the guiding framework for the detailed approval of future years' budgets set out in Appendix C(i) to the report, including the budget changes set out in Appendix E to the report, and that where possible any variations during and between years be met from the Budget Stabilisation Reserve, be agreed;
- (c) the Capital Programme 2023/26 and funding method set out in Appendix J(i) and Capital Strategy 2023/24 set out in Appendix J(iii), be approved;
- (d) the changes to reserves and provisions set out in Appendix K, be approved;
- (e) the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23, be rolled forward to 2023/24, with effect from 1 April 2023 (Appendix M), be approved;
- (f) the Council Tax premium on long term empty dwellings, be shortened from the current 2 years (empty) to 1 year from 1 April 2024 (Appendix N), be agreed in principle for implementation following Royal Assent to the relevant Act of Parliament;
- (g) the 100% Council Tax premium on all second homes from 1 April 2024 (Appendix N), be agreed in principle for implementation following Royal Assent to the relevant Act of Parliament;
- (h) SCIA 18 be reviewed by Officers with the intention of the retention of the Out of Hours service during the peak months of the year;
- (j) that it be noted that at the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2023 the Council calculated as its council tax base for the year 2023/24:
 - (i) for the whole Council area as 51,990.30 being Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, (the "Act"); and
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix P;
- (k) that the council tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2023/24 (excluding Town and Parish precepts) be calculated as £236.70;
- (l) that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- (i) £57,711,755 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Town and Parish Councils.
 - (ii) £40,175,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (iii) £7,536,755 being the amount by which the aggregate at (i)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (i)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - (iv) £337.31 being the amount at (i)(iii) above (Item R), all divided by (a)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Town and Parish precepts).
 - (v) £5,230,651 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Town and Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix P).
 - (vi) £236.70 being the amount at (i)(iv) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (i)(v) above by the amount at (j)(i) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Town or Parish precept relates.
- (m) that it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Kent County Council, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:-

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>Precepting Authority</u>			
	Sevenoaks District Council £	Kent County Council £	Kent Police & C.C. £	Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority £
A	157.80	1,022.82	162.10	58.20
B	184.10	1,193.29	189.12	67.90
C	210.40	1,363.76	216.13	77.60
D	236.70	1,534.23	243.15	87.30

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E	289.30	1,875.17	297.18	106.70
F	341.90	2,216.11	351.22	126.10
G	394.50	2,557.05	405.25	145.50
H	473.40	3,068.46	486.30	174.60

- (n) that the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Appendix R as the amounts of council tax for the year 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and
- (o) that the Council's basic amount of council tax for 2023/24, shown in (l)(vi) above, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

44. Matters considered by other standing committees:

a) **Monitoring Officer's Annual Report**

Councillor Ball moved and Councillor Raikes seconded the recommendation from Standards Committee, noting the annual Monitoring Officer's report.

Resolved: That the Monitoring Officer's Annual report be noted.

b) **Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers**

Councillor Eyre moved and Councillor Bayley seconded the recommendation from Governance Committee, for the appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers.

A Member spoke to the motion, expressing his appreciation for the way successful way elections were run at the Council.

Resolved: That the Chief Officer Customer & Resources, the Electoral Services Manager, and the Deputy Electoral Services Manager, be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for Sevenoaks District Council.

45. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council:

a) **Pay Policy Statement**

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Dickins seconded the report which set out the authority's policies relating to remuneration of each of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship

between the two. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council must agree the Statement for the forthcoming year and ensure it was available to the public.

Resolved: That the Pay Policy Statement be adopted and published on the Council's website.

46. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

Two questions had been received from two Members in accordance with paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

Question 1: Cllr Purves

"Sencio is having financial problems due to a combination of factors ranging from the age of their buildings and plant, effect of COVID, competition from private gyms and rising utility costs.

I am assuming we are all agreed on the value of public swimming pools in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge. Should Sencio fail and government grants not be forthcoming, what are the Council's plans to make sure we retain public swimming pools in Sevenoaks and Edenbridge?"

Response: Leader of the Council

"Leisure centres can indeed be costly to operate. However, at present, Sencio has not formally raised that it is experiencing financial problems to the Council.

The Council was currently unable to review Sencio's current financial position due to the trust deferring its submission of audited accounts. No profit and loss or cash flow reports have been presented to either officers or Sencio Board members since September 2022. However, Council members requested this information at its most recent Scrutiny meeting when Sencio was in attendance. The information will be presented by Trust's Chief Executive Officer, Jane Parish, at the next Scrutiny Committee (being held in March).

Early in the new year, Sencio spoke with the press highlighting concerns with future utility cost projections. However, we are of the understanding that this has since been contained in the Trust's 2023 budget, in part due to utility costs beginning to stabilise and reduce and the addition of a new energy support package being announced by Government, which will benefit the Trust.

Sencio's Chief Executive Officer and Chair have given no indication to this Council that the Trust was currently failing. However, if this became the case, the Council would, of course, review all options to safeguard its leisure facilities in the district.

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Our new leisure operator, Everyone Active, at White Oak Leisure Centre, has confirmed that in line with the national picture, they have seen their utility costs stabilise over recent months, which has been further helped by bulk-buying energy from suppliers in advance in order to minimise any cost pressures.

Supplementary question: Cllr Purves

Should Sencio go into liquidation and the Council had to bear the costs, is the money budgeted for should it occur?

Response: Leader of the Council

The Leader advised that currently Sencio had not approached the Council to say they were in financial difficulties and it would be unwise of us to say they were without evidence to say so. That was the position and we would keep all options open should they come to us.

In accordance with the Constitution, no further discussion was allowed.

Question 2: Cllr Dr. Canet

“Heavy rains have resulted in the drainage system in Northern Ward becoming overloaded. This has resulted in the culverts discharging untreated sewage into the Mill Pond at the top of Mill Lane and local roads and gardens. This unpleasant and potentially harmful to human and wildlife situation has been happening for many years.

Can SDC do anything with the facilities providers to prevent this happening? Potentially this waterway joins up with the cherished chalk stream of the Darenth River. This matter is urgent as there are proposals to build more than 1100 new homes in the immediate area at the Gasworks, Pinehurst Nursing Home and the Greatness Quarry.

Can local residents be reassured that SDC is dealing with this importance matter.

Response: Leader of the Council

“A full report on Mill Pond was presented to the Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee on 6 December 2022.

The council has continued to work with Thames Water following their contamination that occurred in 2021 and some progress has been made with Thames Water carrying out works to the culvert cages. Discussions with Thames Water and partners, including KCC will continue to look at other sustainable options for the Pond in the future that will include full community engagement.

A general tidy up of the site took place last week which included litter picking, strimming and lightly cutting back the surrounding vegetation.

It won't have passed the Member that the Budget and Council Tax Setting 2023/24 agreed earlier this evening included a capital item for works on the site, and as approved a specialist contractor will be appointed to commence the work."

Supplementary question: Cllr Dr. Canet

Will the council use its power under Environmental Health legislation to make the strongest representation to Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT) and to the water companies to halt the release of the untreated water. Will the council also, using planning powers gained under the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Town Plan, that development will only be permitted when it is clear that drainage and sewage systems will not be overwhelmed.

Response: Leader of the Council

The Leader responded setting out that this was clearly an issue for utility companies, a statutory consultee within a planning consultation. It was therefore up to the utility company not SDC to decide whether the local water and sewage network can cope with development.

He went on to say that as stated in his previous answer the Council continued to work with Thames water who was a statutory Utility company which falls under OFWAT and the Environment Agency. Thames Water had been made aware of the issues but the Council had no direct powers over a utility company and that was down to the statutory bodies.

In accordance with the Constitution, no further discussion was allowed.

47. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No motions had been received.

48. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 31 October 2022 to 2 February 2023. He took the opportunity to remind Members of the free training provided by the Local Government Association.

49. To receive reports from the Chairmen of the Audit and Scrutiny Committees on the work of the Committees since the last Council meeting.

Members noted the report presented by the Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor McGarvey.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.45 PM

CHAIRMAN

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Item 6 (a) –Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Strategy & Action Plan 2023-24

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

The Portfolio Holder for People & Places presented the report which set out the 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places set out that the Strategy had seven priorities which were built on the Strategic Assessment and local data from Partner Organisations. The Community Safety Unit would work alongside these priorities in day-to-day work, with dedicated actions to reduce, enforce and education around each priority. The People & Places Advisory Committee had supported the report.

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 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan be adopted.

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SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 2023-24

Council – 25 April 2023

Report of: Chief Officer People & Places

Status: For Approval

Also considered by:

- People & Places – 23 February 2023
- Cabinet – 16 March 2023

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: The 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan is set out. The plan responds to the community safety priorities identified in the most recent Strategic Assessment

This report supports the Key Aim of: Community & Corporate Plan

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Kelly Webb, Ext. 7474

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To recommend to Council that the 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan be adopted.

Recommendation to Council:

To adopt the 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Recommendation to People & Places Advisory Committee

To recommend to Cabinet that the 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan be recommended to Council for adoption.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory responsibility on Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Health, Probation and Kent Police, together with other key partners, to undertake an

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audit of crime and disorder in the District and co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy and action plan for tackling local crime and disorder. The audit is known as the Strategic Assessment.

2 The Strategic Assessment was undertaken in December 2022. The seven priorities, as ranked in the Strategic Assessment, are:

- Serious and Acquisitive Crime including Crime Trends
- Anti-Social Behaviour including Environmental Crime
- Domestic Abuse
- Stalking & Harassment
- Safeguarding (including Mental Health, Prevent, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children
- Violence against Women & Girls
- Drug Misuse & County Lines

3 The draft 2023-24 Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan is attached as the Appendix. It sets out Partnership activity aimed at addressing the above priorities. The Action Plan is a multi-agency document and is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that actions are on target and are helping to meet the identified success measures.

Key Implications

None to SDC. It is a Partnership document

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 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

Wellbeing

This document supports wellbeing and looks at this throughout the document.

Conclusions

For the Committee to approve the report

Appendices

Appendix A – Sevenoaks District CSP Strategy & Action Plan 2023-24

Background Papers

Strategic Assessment

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places

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**Sevenoaks District
Community Safety Partnership
Annual Action Plan
2023-24 DRAFT**



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Anti-Social Behaviour incl Environmental Crime	Page 9
Domestic Abuse	Page 13
Safeguarding including Young People, Vulnerable Adults, CSE, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act and Mental Health	Page 16
Violence against Women & Girls	Page 19
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Action Plan 2023-24

Introduction

The Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership brings together all of the agencies in the District who can have an impact on crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime. A list of partners is set out on page 25. The Partnership has 3 key aims. They are to:

- Reduce and detect crime
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime
- Strengthen community involvement

Each year the Partnership, in common with all of the Community Safety Partnerships in Kent, undertakes an assessment of crime and disorder in the District, using data provided by partners and feedback from residents. The assessment identifies the priority issues for the next year using the following rationale for each community safety type:

- Whether there is significant community concern
- Whether there is an increasing trend
- Whether it contributes to a high volume of crime
- The level of harm it causes
- How well it is performing compared with other parts of Kent
- Whether the Partnership can add value to the work

This Action Plan identifies where we can best work together to achieve results.

Priority Issues for 2023-24

The Strategic Assessment was undertaken during the winter of 2022 and identified seven priorities for the Partnership to tackle during 2023-24. The data referred to in this Action Plan is based on the Strategic Assessment, and uses data between 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022, unless otherwise stated. Trends in the identified priorities continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis and the first monitoring will be available in July 2023.

The seven priorities, as ranked in the Strategic Assessment, are:

- Serious and Acquisitive Crime incl crime trends
- Drug Misuse and County Lines¹
- Anti-Social Behaviour incl Environmental Crime
- Stalking & Harassment
- Domestic Abuse
- Violence against Women & Girls
- Safeguarding (including Mental Health, Prevent, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children

Although the Partnership's main focus will be the seven priorities, it will continue to monitor and plan for trends in crime and other community safety issues and address them through the Community Safety Unit's daily briefings and other tasking arrangements in order to reduce recorded crime.

The Action Plan

The following pages set out the overall targets for the Community Safety Partnership. The Action Plan does not include details of the numerous activities already undertaken by partners, town and parish councils, the voluntary sector and others as part of their day-to-day work, but highlights activities in addition to core work, which partners will undertake throughout the forthcoming year. All priorities include actions around public perception and reducing repeat offenders/victims.

¹ County Lines refer to organised ways of dealing drugs

Funding and monitoring

Funding for the actions included within the Action Plan is available from a number of sources, including partners' own budgets, Police & Crime Commissioner's (PCC) funding which is allocated to district Community Safety Partnerships, Choosing Health funding and other small amounts of funding from a variety of sources.

Regular monitoring will take place to ensure that individual projects continue to deliver positive results as well as value for money and that this Action Plan is on target.

Equalities

In preparing the action plan, issues such as equality and diversity were considered to ensure that everybody feels safe in the District.

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SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - ACTION PLAN 2023-2024

SUCCESS MEASURES

All recorded crime

All Victim Based Crime – Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County.

Serious & Acquisitive Crime incl Crime Trends

Improve the position of Vehicle Crime and Burglary within the County

Domestic Abuse

Reduction in the percentage of repeat victims

Number of people attending survivor programmes and the male perpetrators programme

Anti-Social Behaviour incl Environmental Crime

Maintain position in the lowest 3 District/Borough in the County

Safeguarding (including Prevent, Mental Health, Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), Vulnerable Adults and Protecting Children)

Deliver training on safeguarding.

Work with organisations on Mental Health Champions

Violence against Women and Girls

Undertake VAWG Walks and work with the community on feelings of safety

Produce an online survey and action the results with partners

Stalking and Harassment

Reduce the number of repeat victims of stalking

Increase training for partners and communities

Drug Misuse and County Lines

Reduce the number of young people entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time

Number of young people engaged with around drug misuse

Serious & Acquisitive Crime incl Crime Trends

Criminals behind serious and tactical crime often intimidate and create fear, which is intended to prevent the local community reporting what they see. Often the criminals behind this don't even have to try hard to do this – instead relying on word of mouth and reputation. Over the past year, Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and crime trends has seen a more targeted approach by Partnerships. The most common crime types associated with these groups is commonly organised theft.

Acquisitive crime consists of Burglary (Residential and Commercial and Business) and Vehicle Crime (Theft of and Theft from – TOMV and TFMV). Although there have been rises and falls throughout the time period, the number of reported crimes are relatively low, but they do sit high in County comparisons. These types of crime have a high impact on the local community. These offences account for a relatively small percentage of total crime in the District, 4% for Burglary Residential and 2% Burglary Commercial & Business. The Sevenoaks District rankings have decreased by one place for Burglary Residential, and Burglary Commercial and Business.

Serious and Acquisitive Crime including Crime Trends

Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
1.1 Monthly Serious Crime & Tactical Group to address crime trends for the District and to deliver partnership actions/initiatives	Serious Crime & Tactical Group	CSU Kent Police All Partners	On Going
1.2 Through media campaigns and use of social media address perception of crime across the District as well as events and arrests. Work with residents and Town and Parish Councils especially through the forums	CSU	All Partners	March 2024
1.3 Work in Partnership to disrupt any recognised OCGs, crime trends and nominate potential OCGs	Serious Crime & Tactical Group	CSU All	On Going
1.4 CSU to offer reassurance and follow up visits following burglary and vehicle crime, including free giveaways to protect cars, out buildings. Greater use of Community Warden resource in follow up visits in communities where CWs are based.	CSU KCC Wardens	PCSOs	On Going
1.5 Positive media coverage on prolific offenders of vehicle and burglaries	Serious Crime & Tactical Group	All	Monthly

Anti-Social Behaviour including Environmental Crime

ASB accounts for the third largest recorded issue when compared to individual crime types in the District and makes up 12% of the total recorded figures when included in crime statistics. Figures show 1155 recorded incidents of ASB occurring within the District were reported to Kent Police. The District had the second lowest number of ASB reports in Kent and saw a decrease of 9.8% (461 reports).

The CSU Daily tasking's meetings dealt with 428 ASB/Community Safety calls from October 2021 - September 2022. This is a decrease of 329 calls (43%) compared to same period last year. All actions were followed up and residents were kept updated in all actions unless they had been reported anonymously.

Recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour were higher in the period from October 2021 until September 2022. The total number of ASB reports received by the Council during October 2021 and September 2022 equals 90 calls. This is 37 more calls than the same period last year, when 53 calls were received, which equates to a 58% increase in calls received.

Swanley St Mary's had the highest number of reports of anti-social behaviour to the District Council with 15. Swanley Whiteoak was 2nd highest with 14.

The highest type of anti-social behaviour reported is Nuisance Behaviour with 32 reports. This is followed by reports of Drug taking and Dealing and Noise. Calls by type are always higher than reports received as residents can report more than one type at a time.

During the period of October 2021 and September 2022, 34 Anti-Social Behaviour warning letters and 22 Acceptable Behaviour Agreement contracts were issued to named individuals. 4 Acceptable Behaviour Agreement Breach letters were also served.

We served ASB Vehicle Warning letters on 8 individuals for causing a nuisance with their vehicles in the Sevenoaks Town Car Park.

SDC CCTV

From 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022 the CCTV Control Room at Sevenoaks District Council assisted the police with 113 arrests for this period.

West Kent Housing

From 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2022 WKHA received 990 complaints of antisocial behaviour and other community safety related matters. This is an increase of 7% over the same period for the previous year.

SDC Environmental Health

Between 1st October 2021 and 30th September 2022, the Environmental Protection Team received 1099 service requests relating to issues within Sevenoaks District, this is 51 more than the same period last year, a 5% increase. Of the Service Requests received by Sevenoaks, 456 relate to matters associated with anti-social behaviour.

SDC Direct Services

For the requested reporting period of 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022 there were a total of 1,358 fly-tipping offences reported, which is a decrease of 4.1% from previous year. The illegal depositing of waste remains predominantly in the North of the District as with previous years

Graffiti

There were 57 graffiti reports (incl offensive) to the Council between 1 Oct 2021 – 30 Sept 2022. This is a decrease of 22 compared to previous year.

There were 19 offensive graffiti reports between October 2021 and September 2022 all of which were removed within the 48 hour deadline set by Sevenoaks District Council.

KCC Community Wardens

A valued element of the Community Warden role remains the uniformed presence which helps build community confidence and reassurance by reducing crime, the fear of crime, deterring ASB, improving access to local authorities and fostering social inclusion.

Whilst the role of the Community Warden is ever evolving, their over-riding objective remains '*to create safer and stronger communities*'. They work closely with/on behalf of other operational units within KCC and Community Safety Partners to address a wide range of issues

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ASB incl Environmental Crime & Rogue Trading

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
2.1	<p>Increase number of enforcement interventions and prosecutions for fly tipping using all actionable evidence.</p> <p>Increase the number of partnership, cross border and community working actions in repeat locations.</p>	SDC Direct Services CSU	KCC Wardens PCSOs Housing Assoc	March 2024
2.2	<p>Work with the Violent Reduction Unit to attain funding to deter violent crime and to prevent ASB for young people. Referring them to the Community MARAC and Safeguarding Contextual Group.</p>	VRU KCC CSU	All Partners	March 2024
2.3	<p>Deliver a number of initiatives through the 2014 ASB Act to deter ASB</p>	All Partners		March 2024
2.4	<p>Continue to set up Task and Finish Groups to deliver a focused approach to reducing repeat ASB and use ASB Powers where appropriate such as Closure Orders, Community Protection Notices and Criminal Behaviour Orders. Invite Community Wardens to Task & Finish Groups where issues pertain to their home communities. Team members have a great breadth of knowledge (issues, useful local stakeholders etc) that would enhance the partnership approach and ensuing actions.</p>	CSU	All	March 2024
2.5	<p>Deliver on local and national campaigns to address environmental crime and ASB</p>	SDC Enforcement Team	CSU	March 2024

Domestic Abuse

Please note: Domestic Abuse incidents are not reported as violence against the person. If there has been no violence recorded. For example, if there was a verbal altercation, this would be recorded as a Domestic Abuse Incident and not Violence against the Person and that is why the numbers are different.

It is important to remember that these figures are only representative of domestic abuse that was reported to the Police and it is widely recognised that there is a figure of domestic abuse, which remains unreported. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 gained royal assent in April 2021 which gave more powers and increased responsibility to the Police, Courts and local authorities for the protection of victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse incidents in the Sevenoaks District have increased by 27 crimes (1.1%). The District has the second lowest number of Domestic Abuse incidents (2501) compared to being the lowest in the same period last year.

Sevenoaks District Council and CSP fund a number of projects to address Domestic Abuse. These are:

12 week Freedom Programme runs 6 x a year including 2 evening sessions and 3 x 12 week Recovery Tool Kit, which is a follow on from the Freedom programme. On average 8-10 women attend these programmes.

Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme runs weekly on a Wednesday evening. For this time period the programme is run online with an average of 8 men attending weekly. The programme is a rolling programme that runs for 27 weeks.

DAVSS (Domestic Abuse Voluntary Support Services) which provides service for low and medium risk victims. In the period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021, they supported the following number of people in the Sevenoaks District – previous assessment have shown West Kent Statistics.

Data Oct 21-Sept 22	Oct 2021 - Dec 2021	Jan 2022 - March 2022	April 2022- June 2022	July 2022 - Sept 2022	Total
Referrals	77	95	86	84	307
men	7	6	6	6	25
children	114	141	135	117	498
Repeat Cases	8	3	8	6	25
volunteer case work hours total west kent	3939	3926	3549	3320	4697

Domestic Abuse

Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
3.1 Raise public and professional awareness of Domestic Abuse by updating County websites, articles for partner agencies and T&Pcs	DAVSS WK Domestic Abuse Forum KCC Commissioned Service	All Partners	On Going
3.2 Work with DAVSS to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse can receive support	DAVSS	WK Domestic Abuse Forum	March 2024
3.3 Address what actions the CSU can partners can take under the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021	West Kent DA Forum	All Partners	On Going
3.4 Continue with funded services Freedom Programme, Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme, Recovery Tool Kit and DAY programme in schools.	SDC/CSP	DAVSS PAS Look Ahead	March 2023
3.5 Work with the commissioning provider to deliver on local needs to address Domestic Abuse. Look Ahead as the commissioned service to provide updates and work with partners on their services.	Look Ahead		Ongoing
3.6 Get accreditation for DAHA and work with partners to achieve this as well	SDC	Housing Associations	June 2023

Safeguarding including Young People, Vulnerable Adults, Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act and Mental Health

Safeguarding includes Young People, Vulnerable Adults, CSE, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Prevent, Care Act, Missing Children and Mental Health.

Legislation places a statutory duty on local councils as well as some of the other partner agencies to protect the vulnerable under these crimes. It is also a major contributor to the Kent Police Strategy. The above are a community concern.

Counter Terrorism – Prevent Strategy

There have been 3 referrals to the Channel Panel, 2 have been taken on by the Panel and one was referred back to the Community MARAC Process.

Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

For the period of 01/10/21 - 30/09/22, Kent Police recorded 3 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking related investigations in the Sevenoaks District.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

According to Kent Police there were 2 reports of CSE in the Sevenoaks District, but both cases have been filed, insufficient evidence.

The Community Safety Manager continues to be a CSE Champion for the CSP and District Council.

Within Kent, the predominant 'Model' type experienced is the 'Inappropriate Relationship'. However, other types of 'Model' experienced also include, 'Gangs', 'Peer to Peer' and 'Trafficking', but to a much lesser extent. There have been occasions in Kent where females who have initially been highlighted as potential victims have later come to notice as facilitators and potential perpetrators of CSE.

Vulnerable Adults

During the period of 15th October 2021 – 30 September 2022 the PCSO for Vulnerable Adults has dealt with approximately over 40 vulnerable persons age ranging from 25 – 88 yrs.

Referrals to help the individuals were submitted to Social Services and The Community Mental Health Teams located in Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Dartford.

To be able to give the best service to assist these persons as well as the referrals regular conversations and emails are communicated via Professional Meetings to ensure they get the best outcome possible

When a person goes missing from their care home or home Kent Police will complete an At Risk of Going Missing Form which will be completed ASAP with the details of location found, any medical history and contact details for their GP and family contact with a recent photo. Should they go missing again this information can be sent to officers to assist in the fast locating of the person.

Vulnerable Young People

The PCSO for Vulnerable Young People was able to go back into schools from April 2021.

They have worked with over 40 young people who have needed additional needs and this could be from anti-social behaviour, school exclusions and missing children. Kent Police are employed Schools Officers and there should be 2 for the District. We are waiting allocation of this and was told this would be early 2022, but to date this has not occurred.

SAFEGUARDING (including Mental Health, Prevent, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, Vulnerable Adults and Children)

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
4.1	Continue to develop the Youth Mentoring Programme to address mental health for young people. Increase number of referrals	SDC	All Partners	On Going
4.2	Work with the Health & Wellbeing Action Team on their actions to address Mental Health	CSU	All Partners	On Going
4.3	To work with Prevent Team on training and education on Counter Terrorism	CSU	All Partners	March 2024
4.4	Work with Police to address Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. Work on evidence received to deliver a partnership approach	Police SCD	CSU All	March 2024
4.5	Attend Chanel Panels where appropriate and provide support to individuals when required and Promote the Prevent Strategy within the community via Social Media etc.	CSU KCC Prevent Team		March 2024
4.6	Work with Vulnerable Adults and sign post to appropriate services including the new Hoarding Officer	PCSO Vulnerable Adults	CSU All Partners	On going
4.7	Work as a collective on site visits where modern slavery and human trafficking has been identified	Serious Crime & Tactical Group CSU	All Partners	March 2024

Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG)

The CSU went out and did 4 VAWG walks in Edenbridge, Westerham, Swanley & Sevenoaks to talk to women about feelings of safety and any improvements that could be made. Most that were spoken to say they felt safe, but enquired about more lighting in some areas which were all passed to KCC Highways. This was followed up by a VAWG event in Swanley in November 2021.

VAWG, is at the core of the Kent Police control strategy. This can broadly be broken down into four key areas: prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and a stronger system. The CSP have an important part to play. Awareness of VAWG criminality, such as Stalking and Child Sexual Exploitation, should be raised within the CSP, electorate and the wider community. Access to victim support services should be explored and promoted. Schemes like Best Bar None should be reinforced in order to reduce VAWG offending in the night time economy.

Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG)

Priority Action		Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
5.1	Promote Safe Streets App and Community Voice to increase followers to receive advice and information	CSU	All Partners	On Going
5.2	Deliver a community survey, list results and actions to address VAWG	CSU	All Partners	Sept 2023
5.3	Work with agencies to deliver defence classes for women and girls across the District	CSU	All Partners	March 2024
5.4	Deliver an action plan for the 16 days of no violence and addressing Domestic Abuse and VAWG in November	West Kent DA Forum	DAVSS PAS Look Ahead	November 2023
5.5	Set up a West Kent VAWG Action Group	West Kent DA Forum	All Partners	May 2023

Stalking & Harassment

Stalking and Harassment has been identified by the Community Safety Partnership to be a separate priority. It has been previously linked in with Domestic Abuse and also with VAWG (Violence against Women & Girls), but is deemed a priority in its own right.

There were 1179 reports to Police of Stalking and Harassment for Sevenoaks District. This is an increase of 50 compared to the same period last year (Oct 2020– Sept 2021).

Statistics from PAS (Protection against Stalking are set out below

PAS 2021/22 Statistics	Oct – Dec 21			Jan – Mar 22			Apr – June 22			July – Sept 22		
Advocacy Service	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	TOTAL	Full Advocacy Support	Short Term (Initial Support & Safety Advice)	TOTAL
Tunbridge Wells	10	22	8	24	8	24	8	24	32	12	26	38
Sevenoaks	8	28	13	22	13	22	13	22	36	24	34	58
Tonbridge and Malling	16	33	16	23	16	23	16	23	49	13	23	36
Maidstone	8	34	8	36	8	36	8	36	42	11	41	52
Sub-Total	42	117	45	105	45	105	45	105	159	60	124	184

Stalking & Harassment

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
6.1	To investigate a potentially deliver a cyber stalking café in the District	PAS	CSU	June 2023
6.2	Deliver safe packages for PAS clients to include personal alarms, window lock, safety information	CSU	PAS	May 2023
6.3	Deliver training on Stalking & Harassment to local community groups and partner agencies	PAS	West Kent Domestic Abuse Forum	On Going
6.4	Link in with National and Local Campaigns	West Kent Domestic Abuse Forum	All	On Going
6.5	Reduce number of repeat cases of stalking and harassment via PAS and Kent Police	PAS Kent Police		March 2024

Drug Misuse & County Lines

Drug offences have slightly increased from 186 to 159 a decrease of 27 reports. The District remains the lowest in the County for Drug reports. There is a high number that is also under reported of drug offences.

There has been an increase of young people reported using drugs and especially the gas canisters

Kenward Trust is funded by the CSP and continue to do outreach work across the District. Our focus in 2023/2024 is to continue to support young people caught up in exploitation, grooming and gang culture. With the continued work of reducing ASB and Substance misuse the teams see around 300 young people each quarter and build up good relationships with hard to reach young people.

The team went to all locations that was identified by the CSU to support the young people. The 1-2-1 work has started to show great outcomes.

CGL work closely with a range of partner agencies to improve outcomes for substance misusers. Greensands, a supported housing project in Sevenoaks, is assisted by CGL through the provision of group work and peer support to residents for their substance misuse. A joint working programme has also been developed with West Kent Mind to deliver CGL programmes on a weekly basis and a bi-weekly drop in and referral service for Mind service users. This will facilitate better access to drug and alcohol services for these clients.

Addaction are commissioned by Public Health to deliver services to young people.

County Lines

Over the past year there has been a number of County Lines identified in the District, which is naturally linked to gang and gang culture, which is seen by some young people as a “status”. The CSP has been working with the Violent Reduction Unit in working with young people in County Lines and support groups that can be referred to. In September 2022 the CSU received £18k to tackle County Lines and work with young people.

Drug Misuse and County Lines

	Priority Action	Lead Agency	Other Partners	By When
7.1	Deliver outreach work to designated areas to address substance misuse using CSU reports via the Daily Tasking	Kenward Trust	CSU Schools Youth Groups	March 2024
6.2	Continue to develop a package around substance misuse for primary schools around positive choices to go alongside a parental package	Kenward Trust Addaction	CSU	Sept 2023
6.3	Through the VRU Funding deliver on activities to reduce county lines, drugs and violent crime	VRU CSU	All Partners	March 2024
6.4	Work with schools to deliver an education package around County Lines and drugs	Kenward Trust VRU	CSU	December 2023
6.5	Work with young people to stop them becoming high risk or into the criminal justice system. Reduce numbers compared to previous year	KCC Youth Team Police	CSU	Ongoing
6.6	Violent Reduction Unit (VRU) to use Community MARAC to make referrals for young people & DCSM	VRU KCC Youth Services	All Partners	On Going

Membership of the Community Safety Partnership and contact details

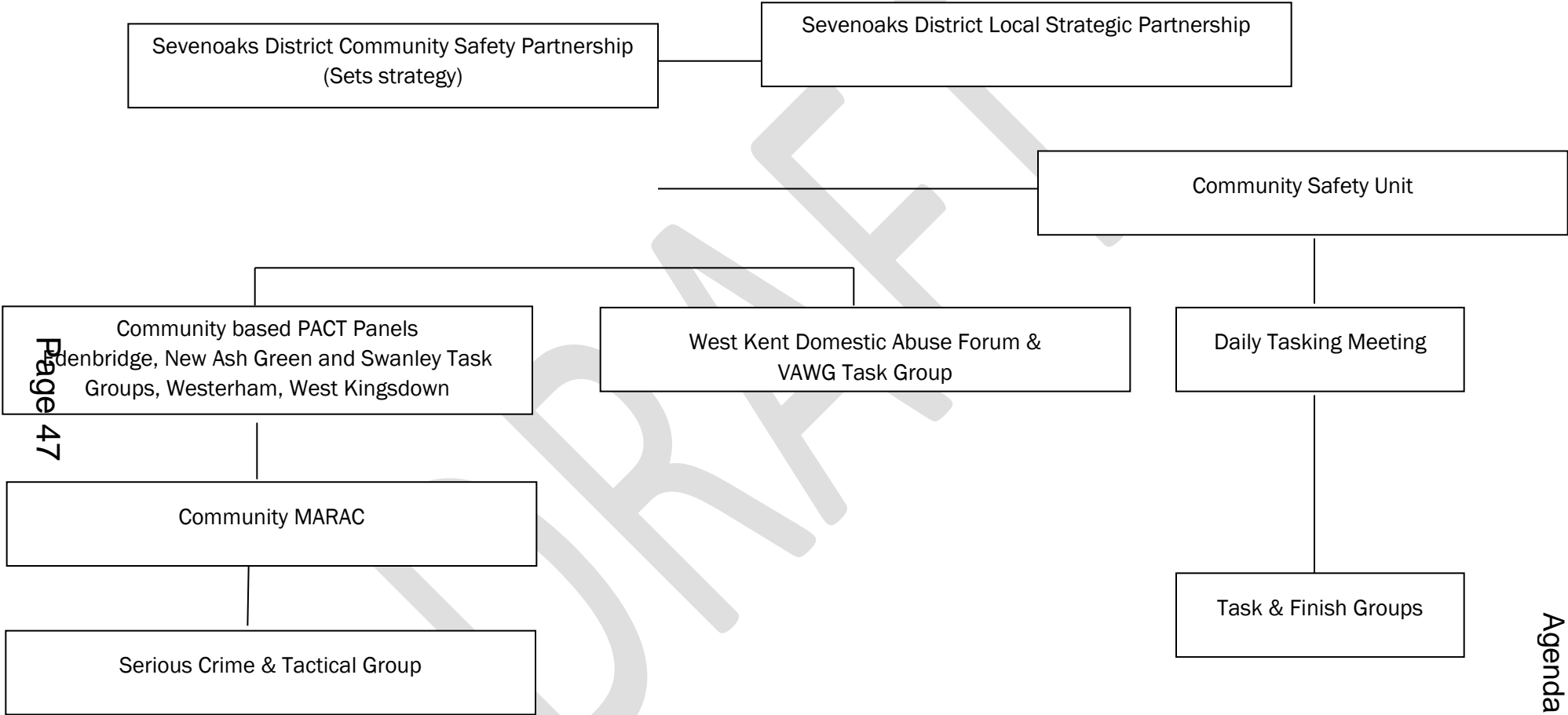
<p>Sevenoaks District Council Argyle Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1GP Tel: 01732 227000 Web: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk</p>	<p>Kent Police 1 Pembury Road Tonbridge Kent TN9 2HS Tel:01622 690690 Web: www.kent.police.uk</p>	<p>Kent Fire & Rescue Service West Group HQ Sevenoaks Fire Station London Road, Sevenoaks Tel: 01622 692121 Web: www.kent.fire-uk.org</p>	<p>Police & Crime Commissioner Kent Police Headquarters Sutton Road Maidstone ME15 9BZ Tel: 01622 677055 Web: www.kentpa.kent.police.uk</p>
<p>NHS West Kent CCG Wharf House, Medway Wharf Road Tonbridge Kent TN9 1RE Tel: 01732 375200 Web: www.westkentpct.nhs.uk</p>	<p>Kent Surrey and Sussex CRC Ltd Maidstone Corporate Centre 3rd Floor, Maidstone House King Street Maidstone Kent, ME15 6AW Tel: 01622 239147 Website: www.ksscrc.co.uk</p>	<p>KCC Social Services The Willows, Hilda May Ave, Swanley Kent BR8 7BT Tel: 0300 041 1400 Web: www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Imago 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1LS Tel: 01892 530330 Web: www.imago.org.uk</p>
<p>KCC Early Help & Preventative Service C/o Swanley Youth Centre St. Mary's Road Swanley Kent BR8 7BU Tel 01322 615275 Web: www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Protection Against Stalking Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells Referrals support@protectionagainststalking.org www.protectionagainststalking.org</p>	<p>KCC Community Safety Team Maidstone Fire Station Loose Road Maidstone Kent ME15 9QB Web: www.kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>West Kent Housing Association 101 London Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1AX Tel: 01732 749400 Web: www.westkent.org</p>
<p>Kenward Trust Kenward Road Yalding, Maidstone Kent ME18 6AH Tel: 01622 814187 Web: www.kenwardtrust.org.uk</p>	<p>MOAT Homes Galleon Boulevard, Crossways Dartford Kent DA2 6QE Tel: 0300 323 0011 Web: www.moat.co.uk</p>	<p>West Kent Extra 101 London Road Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1AX Tel: 01732 749400 Web: www.westkent.org</p>	<p>DAVSS PO Box 530 Tunbridge Wells Kent TN2 9TB Tel: 01892 570538 Web: www.davss.org.uk</p>

Terms of Reference

The Partnership's terms of reference are to:

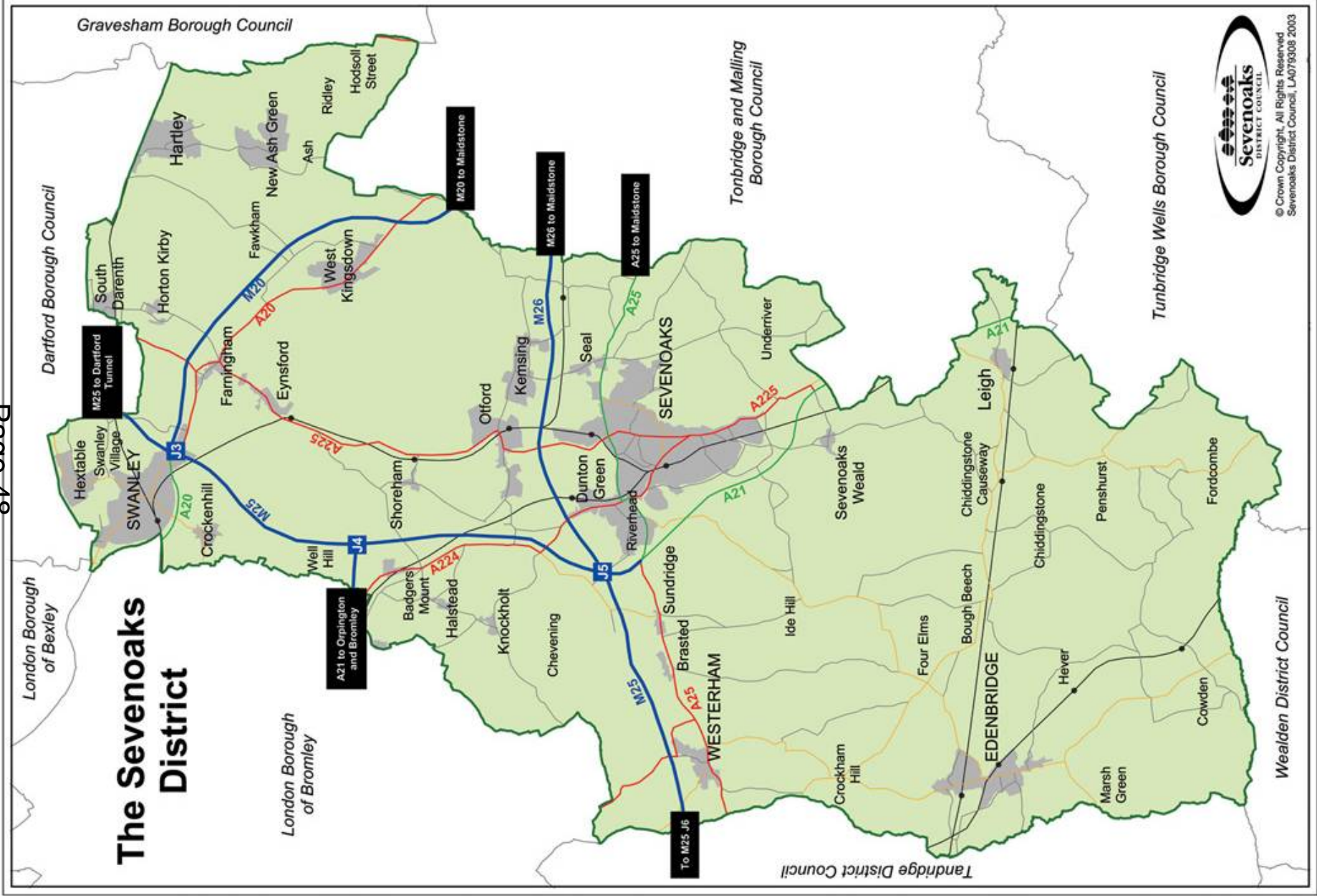
- Undertake periodic reviews of community safety in the District and disseminate the findings to the public
- Develop a yearly strategy and action plan to tackle community safety
- Monitor and report progress in meeting the agreed targets and actions
- Secure resources and funding from parent organisations and others for projects to address agreed shared priorities in the Community Safety Action Plan
- Act as a forum for discussion of topical local community safety issues and agree follow up actions if appropriate
- Promote community safety in the District in conjunction with other local organisations and bodies
- Co-ordinate and maintain an overview of all activities relevant to community safety in the District.

Structure and Meetings Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership Meetings



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Agenda Item 6a



Enquiries to:

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Item 6 (b) – Environmental Protection Service Plan

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

The Portfolio Holder for Cleaner & Greener presented the report, which outlined how the Environmental Health Team intended to meet and discharge its statutory obligations with regards to Statutory Nuisance, Animal Welfare, and Licensing and Environmental Permitting Regulations for the upcoming year.

The Environmental Protection Team Leader set out that the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee considered the same report and recommended its adoption. He explained that the report also outlined the volume of work undertaken by the team and how it had streamlined its processes with technology to cope with increase workloads with current resources.

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 Environmental Protection Service Plan 2023-2024 be adopted.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICE PLAN 2023/2024

Council – 25 April 2023

Report of: Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For Comment.

Also considered by:

- Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 14 March 2023
- Cabinet – 16 March 2023

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of: Meeting a statutory duty of the council.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. McArthur

Contact Officers: Colin Alden, Ext. 7186, Nick Chapman, Ext. 7167

Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Committee:

Recommend that Cabinet approves adoption of the service plan.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

Recommend that Council approves adoption of the service plan.

Recommendation to Council:

Recommend that Council adopts the Environmental Protection Service Plan 2023-2024.

Reason for recommendation: This Environmental Protection Service Plan outlines how the Environmental Health Team intends to meet and discharge its statutory obligations in respect of Statutory Nuisance, Animal Welfare and Licensing and Environmental Permitting Regulation.

Agenda Item 6b

Introduction and Background

- 1 This Service Plan details the work undertaken by the Environmental Protection Team. It also provides an overview of current demand on and performance of the team with details of service improvements and innovation since the dissolution of the Environmental Health Partnership with Dartford Borough Council in July 2021. The plan has an overview of future challenges, including new areas of work, areas of increased demand and new statutory duties.
- 2 The Environmental Protection Team aims to improve the lives of those who live, work and spend their leisure time within the Sevenoaks Council areas also to protect the environment and public health with this service plan.
- 3 The objectives of the plan outline how the aims of the team are implemented and how those objectives link to the Council Plan on environment, economy, housing and community safety. The service plan also has strong links to Better Together – A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022-2032.
- 4 This is the first Environmental Protection Service Plan produced since the dissolution of the Environmental Health Partnership at the end of June 2021. It identifies current workloads and our priorities going forward. This has been a steep learning curve for three new members of staff with staff development being a key element of the service plan to allow for specialist functions to be undertaken and an element of resilience incorporated into the team structure. The team has worked hard to meet our objectives with the flexibility to address seasonal demand and increasing numbers of service requests. Current data indicates that in 2022/2023 customer service requests may exceed 2600.
- 5 The service plan includes a breakdown of service requests in our key areas since 2019. It can be seen that the team's work is very diverse and often undertaken in partnership with other council departments and external agencies.
- 6 New and emerging issues that this service plan will address includes unlicensed animal activities, an increase in stray and abandoned dogs, increased concern for animal welfare, illegal waste sites and dump sites, new requirements of the Environment Act 2021 on PM_{2.5}, lack of suitably qualified EP officers and the challenge of net zero and Carbon reduction. This increase in workload is being addressed within existing resources as incorporated within the service plan.
- 7 The demands on service and emerging issues identified have required service improvements and innovation in a number of ways. We are developing our own talent by identifying necessary, specialist training and experience for individual officers to enable them to eventually become our required subject

matter experts across contaminated land, air quality, private water supplies and acoustics.

- 8 We are expanding the use of electronic inspections with the use of the 'Safety Culture App' on the iPad to save time, improve accuracy and providing greater efficiency in animal licensing and risk assessment of private water supplies but are also exploring the benefits of expanding its use in Environmental Permitting and service request investigation.
- 9 We are acquiring new noise nuisance recorders to replace existing sound level meters that are reaching the end of their operational lifespan. This includes associated analysis software. Other software improvements are the expansion of our use of Enterprise for Uniform for more powerful functionality and launch of NoiseApp 2 with additional features to aid service request investigation.
- 10 Process redesign has ensured wherever possible that administration tasks have been moved from Environmental Protection Team officers to our Technical Administrators generating additional capacity. We are working to the knowledge and experience of these officers so that, with the support of experienced Environmental Protection officers, they are able to respond to basic enquiries and requests allowing improved response to customers.
- 11 The Environmental Protection Team receive a large number of complaints associated with social housing and whilst we work closely with some providers, we believe there is an opportunity through the provision of proactive information, advice and guidance to reduce the number of complaints we receive. Working with these organisations should allow operational efficiencies.
- 12 We have developed a customer feedback survey to identify trends and help drive improvements. We continue to utilise our website as a source of information for residents and businesses. The work of the Environmental Protection team is subject to scrutiny by senior management, councillors, internal auditors, DEFRA, Drinking Water Inspectorate and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. We therefore ensure that all officers delivering environmental protection interventions meet an appropriate qualification criterion and demonstrate knowledge and competency across a number of skill sets.

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Key Implications

Financial

Minimal cost as undertaken within existing resources.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Environmental Protection Plan is a document that sets out how several statutory and non-statutory duties will be met within the wider legal framework of the district council.

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

Appendices

Appendix A – Environmental Protection Service Plan 2023/2024

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – Planning and Regulatory Services



Environmental Protection Service Plan 2023/2024

The contents box below will automatically update when you use headings in the 'Styles' gallery.

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1. Introduction

This service plan details the work being undertaken by the Environmental Protection Team. It should be read in conjunction with the current versions of:

- The Environmental Health Policy 2022
- Environmental Health Service Plan 2022/2023 & 2023/2024

The service plan is intended to provide the following information:

- An overview of current demand on and performance of the Environmental Protection Team
- Details of service improvements and innovations made following the dissolution of the Environmental Health Partnership with Dartford Borough Council in July 2021
- An overview of future challenges facing the Environmental Protection Team including new areas of work, areas of increased demand and new statutory duties.
- An overview of our ambitions for the Environmental Protection Team including the use of new technology, development of staff and smarter working.

2. Service Aims and Objectives

2.1. Aim

The Environmental Protection Team aims to improve the lives of those who live, work and spend their leisure within the Sevenoaks Council areas. We aim to protect the environment and public health through education, persuasion and enforcement in relation to:

- Air Pollution
- Statutory Nuisance (including noise)
- Contaminated land
- Protection of public health
- Private water supplies
- Accumulations of waste
- Anti-social behaviour
- Environmental Permits
- Pests (primarily rats & mice)
- Animal control & welfare
- Animal licensing

2.2. Objectives

- To investigate all allegations of statutory nuisance using appropriate monitoring techniques and procedures within a reasonable time scale. To make decisions

and determinations of cases as quickly as possible. To ensure that customers are kept informed during investigations and understand decisions made.

- To utilise legislative powers, education and persuasion to improve the environment and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- To protect the health of the public through the use of legislation to reduce infestations of rats and mice, accumulations of waste and defective drainage.
- To proactively identify steps and measures to protect residents, businesses and visitors from new sources of noise, poor air quality, contaminated land and other public health factors through the planning and licensing consultation processes.
- Monitor air quality in areas of identified pollution and develop methodologies and actions to reduce exposure and/ or pollution levels.
- Implement an appropriate inspection regime of all industrial premises with an Environmental Permit issued by the Local Authority
- Risk assess all Private Water Supplies at suitable frequencies and implement an appropriate water sampling and testing regime to protect supply users.
- Operate a best value service for the collection, kennelling, return and disposal of stray dogs which maintains high animal welfare standards and minimises the need to destroy dogs.
- Inspect and license all relevant animal activities (as defined by regulations), zoos and dangerous wild animals within our area.
- To promote good animal welfare standards and work with partners to minimise harm to animals.

2.3. Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

2.3.1. The Council Plan

Environment

- Support high standards for new development, including design, safety, connectivity to services and transport and neighbourhood links; open up our countryside so people enjoy our footpaths and bridle paths more. Health will be a major consideration in our Local Plan.

Economy

- Support new and existing businesses through our “Team Around the Business” approach, excellent customer service and supporting local employers to promote mental and physical wellbeing at work.

Housing

- Protect the strong local identities of our neighbourhoods, ensuring residents will be safe, healthy and proud of the area in which they live and work.

Community Safety

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- Build strong and connected neighbourhoods where residents feel proud of where they live and have a sense of belonging.
- Protect our residents by making sure that all of our policies, partnerships and teams are working together to safeguard people and communities.

2.3.2. Better Together- A Community Plan for Sevenoaks District 2022-2032

Our Place:

- Prioritise environmentally sound policies that enhance biodiversity alongside new development

Our Economy:

- Support market towns, high streets and villages to thrive by encouraging new businesses and enterprises, alongside sustainable, quality public and private investment
- Work closely with our businesses to create suitable employment opportunities for people who find it hard to get into work

Our Communities:

- Address anti-social behaviour within our communities, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable to ensure they are appropriately supported.

Our Environment

- Develop a Net Zero Action Plan which will set out a roadmap to achieving our carbon reduction targets for the Council and the district.
- Work with partners to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points across the district to promote the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles.
- To promote active travel to work, with a specific focus on co-benefits for climate change.
- Ensure the design and location of new development takes account of the need to improve air quality through the Local Plan in line with Sevenoaks District Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

2.4. Current performance indicators for Environmental Protection

PI Code	Indicator	Annual Target
LPI EH6	% of Animal License applications processed within 10 weeks	90%
MPI EH7	Average time taken (days) to provide a meaningful response to service requests (5 days). (excl Lic/Tens/Planning; inc Noise and FOI)	90%
MPI EH9	TENS timely response (within 3 working days)	85%

PI Code	Indicator	Annual Target
MPI EH14	% of Planning Applications provided with relevant comments within 21 days Consultations timely response within 21 days	90%
	Licensing applications timely response (within 28 days)	100%
	Available data captured from Air Quality Monitoring Stations	90%
	NO ₂ Diffusion Tubes changes as per National Schedule	90%

2.5. Other data reported for Environmental Protection

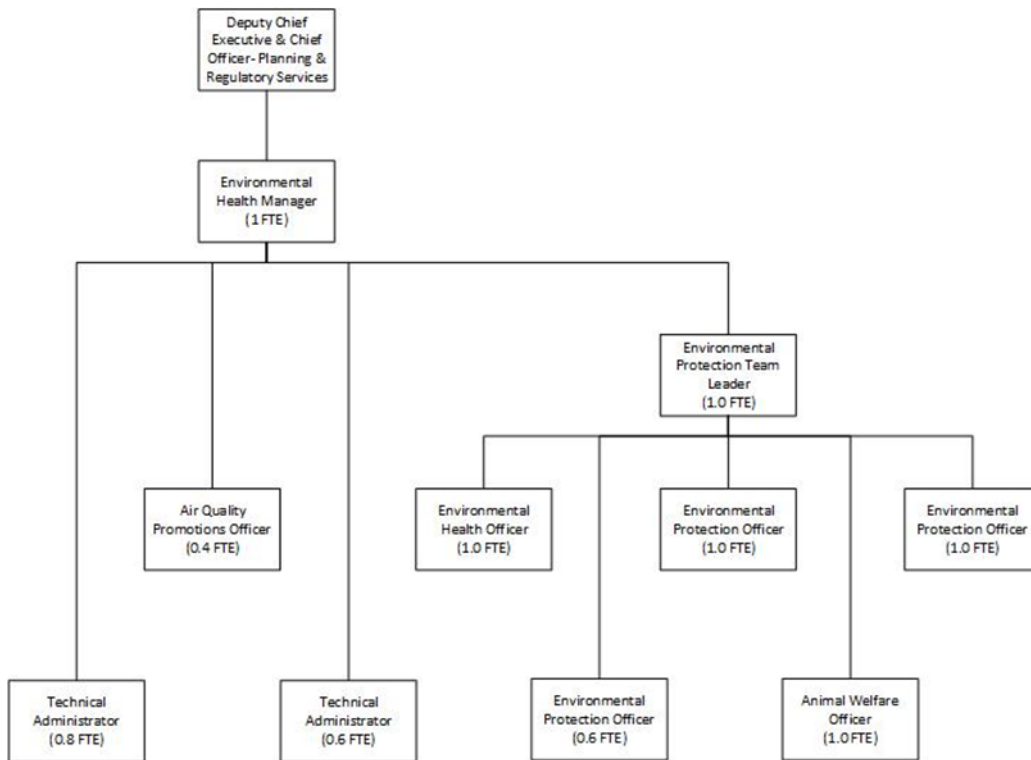
Code	Indicator	Period
Data EH 001	Total number of dogs received at kennels	Month
Data EH15	Number of stray dogs returned to their owner within 7 months	Month
Data_ EH 012	Number of service requests - dangerous dog incidents	Month
Data_ EH 002a	Total number of service requests (EP)	Month
Data_ EH 006	Number of Noise complaints (all types)	Month
Data_ EH 006a	No. of Animal licenses processed	Month
Data_EH 013	Number of FOI requests received by team	Month
	Environmental Permits	Year

3. Structure of the Environmental Protection Team

The Environmental Protection Team carryout a number of specialist functions and duties within Environmental Health. The EP team reports via the Environmental Protection Team Leader to the Environmental Health Manager who in turn reports to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Planning and Regulatory Services.

A structure chart for the Environmental Protection team is shown below:

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3.1. Allocated Staffing Resources

The staffing resources of the Environmental Protection team is currently provided by 6 specialist officers and 2 part time technical administrators (equivalent to 6.7 full time equivalent).

Role	FTE
Environmental Protection Team Leader (EPTL)	1.0
Environmental Health Officer (EHO)	1.0
Environmental Protection Officer (EPO)	2.6
Air Quality Promotions Officer (AQPO)	0.4
Animal Welfare Officer (AWO)	1.0
Technical Administrators (TO)	0.7
TOTAL	6.7

These staffing resources are allocated across the service functions as follows:

3.2. Allocated Budget

The Environmental Health Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Environmental Health Service (including Environmental Protection) is delivered within allocated budgets.

The budget allocated to Environmental Protection includes funding for the provision of:

- Staff (including training and development costs)

- Specialist equipment for the investigation of complaints
- The Animal Welfare Vehicle (for the collection of stray dogs)
- Maintenance of 2 Air Quality Stations
- Data analysis of air quality data
- Stray dog kennelling contract

3.3. Staff Development Plan

The District Council places significant importance on the development and training of staff to ensure that quality services are delivered to our customers.

The Environmental Protection Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that Environmental Protection Team Officers are appropriately qualified and receive regular training to maintain their level of competency and continuous professional development.

The team undertakes regular training as part of team meetings to ensure that knowledge and interpretation of legislation and guidance is maintained.

Training needs are reviewed during the annual performance appraisals and regular 1:1s.

All staff maintain a training and development file containing evidence of formal qualifications and CPD certificates from external and internal course attended, together with details of agreed, planned training for the forthcoming year.

Whilst some training is relatively low cost and in some cases free, there can be a significant cost associated with the specialist training required in areas such as acoustics, contaminated land, air quality, animal welfare and licensing and private water supplies.

4. Current Service Demand

The Environmental Protection Team undertake a variety of proactive and reactive functions on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council.

These duties cover a wide range of specialist disciplines governed by varying legislation and our officers are required to maintain sufficient technical competencies in order to ensure that we adequately discharge the duties

Many of the functions undertaken by the team are mandated by legislation/ statute but the team also undertake a number of discretionary duties which have been adopted to address concerns and priorities of the public, councillors and senior management.

Demand for services provided by Environmental Protection continues to be extremely high. The Covid-19 Pandemic lockdowns resulted in a spike (7% jump) in customer service requests made to the team (2550 in 2020/2021 vs 2374 in 2019/2020). Whilst levels subsided slightly in 2021/2022 current data indicates that in 2022/2023 customer service requests may exceed 2600.

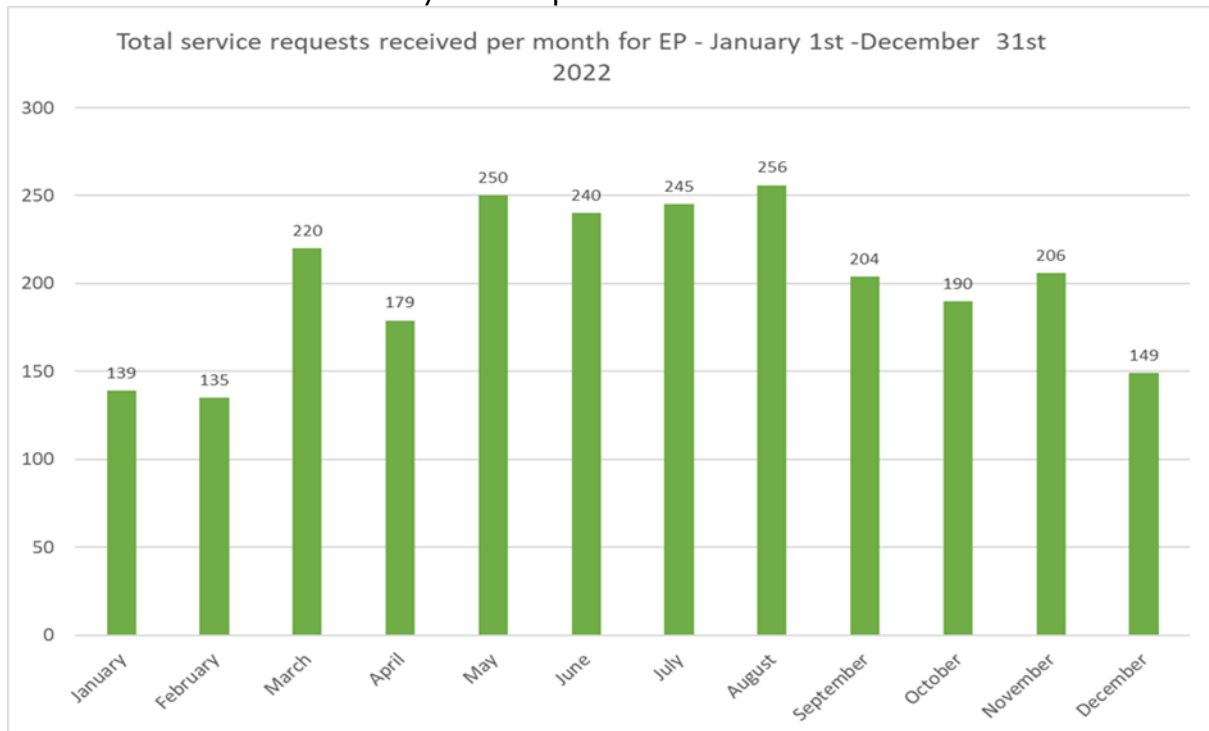
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	Number of EP Service Requests received
2019/2020	2374
2020/2021	2550
2021/2022	2465
2022/2023	2029 (up to Dec 2022)

4.1. Seasonal Demand

The Environmental Protection Team experiences significant seasonal variation in demand. We receive significantly more service requests during the spring and summer than during the autumn and winter. Peak demand occurs between June and August each year with the lowest demand received around the Christmas holiday period.

Seasonal demand is driven by noise service requests. Residents are far more likely to be affected by noise during warmer periods when they may have their windows open and external events are more likely to take place.



4.2. Statutory Nuisance and Public Health Complaints

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to investigate complaints of statutory nuisance (as defined by section 79/80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). The District Council also has a number of duties conveyed by the Building Act 1984, Public Health Act 1936, and Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949. The Environmental Protection Team discharges these requirements on behalf of the District Council.

Complaints are logged on Uniform as Service Requests and are then allocated to individual officers for investigation. The assigned officer will impartially investigate the complaint and determine if the matter falls within the statutory legislative framework.

Officers will also consider the use of discretionary powers to address reported issues.

4.2.1. Noise Nuisances

The Environmental Protection Team have adopted procedures for the investigation and enforcement of noise complaints. These comply with the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy and reflect current best practice in nuisance complaint investigation.

Customers can raise service requests either directly with the District Council (via Customer Solutions, Out of Hours via CCTV or directly with Environmental Health) or can create a NoiseApp account and make an instant record of the noises they are experiencing.

Once a noise service request has been raised, our officers will contact the customer (normally by telephone) within 5 working days to discuss the complaint. If as a result of this conversation we determine that an investigation is required we will write to the customer and the alleged offender to explain our investigation processes and normally offer the customer complaining about the noise use of the NoiseApp (if they do not already have access).

NoiseApp recordings will generally be monitored for a defined period (between 2-4 weeks) and if evidence of an ongoing and persistent problem is identified we will undertake additional monitoring by officer visit or use of a noise nuisance recorder.

Our professional officers will analyse the data captured using the NoiseApp, Diary Sheets, Noise Nuisance Recorder and during visit to determine if a statutory nuisance is occurring and if it is, we will issue an abatement notice (legal duty).

Categorisation of Noise Nuisance Complaints

The Environmental Protection Team breaks down complaints about noise into various sub categories:

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
NOIALM	Noise - Alarms	46	36	13	12
NOIANI	Noise - Other Animals	7	11	8	9
NOIDIY	Noise - DIY	11	1	10	12
NOIDOG	Noise - Dog	73	28	89	84
NOIFIR	Noise - Fireworks	1	65	8	2
NOILOW	Noise - Low Frequency	4	2	2	
NOIMAC	Noise - Machinery	64	1	80	57
NOIMUS	Noise - Loud Music	114	137	109	107

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Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
NOIOTH	Noise - Other	55	134	72	38
NOIPAR	Noise - Party	25	95	27	20
NOIPEO	Noise - People	37	34	1	26
NOIPLA	Noise - Plant (Construction Equip)	11	53	45	3
NOIRAI	Noise - Railway	1	2	4	0
NOISHO	Noise - Shooting	1	1	3	0
NOISTR	Noise - In the street	8	8	6	1
NOITV	Noise - TV/Radio	4	2	5	5
NOIUNS	Noise - Other/Unspecified	9	10	3	0
NOIVR	Noise - Vehicle Repairs	1	0	1	1
TOTAL		472	620	486	377

The NoiseApp

The Environmental Protection Team use the NoiseApp to assist them with the collection of evidence to assess statutory noise nuisance. The NoiseApp is a mobile application developed by RH Environmental which allows a customer to create an electronic diary of noise incidents they are experiencing. In addition, for each report, the customer is encouraged to upload a short recording (taken by their device) to demonstrate the complaint.

Information obtained using the NoiseApp is considered more accurate than that obtained via traditional paper diary sheets. Customers using the NoiseApp are compelled to complete mandatory fields before submitting their report and the recordings allow more accurate assessment of noise being reported. The system uploads reports almost instantaneously allowing assessment of complaints to take place more quickly.

In order to ensure that all customers can maintain access to the service offered we continue to offer paper diary sheets where required. We also maintain an Android based tablet which can be loaned to customers as required to enable them access to the NoiseApp.

The NoiseApp has been popular and well used by the majority of customers. In 2022/2023 (to date) there have been 218 NoiseApp users submitting a total of 3385 noise recordings/ reports.

In 2022, we undertook a review of how the NoiseApp was being used by customers. As a result we modified our existing procedures to allow customers to raise service requests directly from the NoiseApp (previously they were sent an automatic email

requesting that they contact the District Council through usual channels). We also changed responsibility for managing NoiseApp cases to our Technical Administrators. These changes have increased our ability to respond quickly to complaints from customers and have resulted in improved customer service to NoiseApp users.

Noise Nuisance Recorders/ Sound Level Meters

The Environmental Protection Team maintains four sound level meters. Two of these units have the ability to undertake 1/3 octave analysis and fast fourier transform (FFT) which allows them to be used for complex noise investigations. The other two units can only be used as simple noise nuisance recorders. Officers can deploy these units into customers' homes (normally for a period of 1-2 weeks) in order to collect evidence of noise

Our sound level meters are specialist pieces of equipment and are expensive to purchase and maintain. Every 2 years they require calibration by a professional company to ensure the measurements they collect are sufficiently robust for court purposes.

Noise data obtained using the sound level meters is analysed using specialist software and can be played back through speakers or headphones. Recordings are suitable for evidential purposes.

Our current sound level meters are reaching the end of their operational life expectancy and are becoming unserviceable. In the next 12 months, we will be undertaking a procurement exercise to replace our existing units.

Brands Hatch Noise Management Plan

In March 2008 Sevenoaks District Council and MotorSport Vision (MSV), the operators of Brands Hatch motor racing circuit agreed a Noise Management Plan (NMP).

The NMP is treated as a voluntary, working document that is subject to review and change over time in response to noise monitoring and complaints.

The plan is considered to be a balance between the needs of the circuit operator to ensure that the circuit remains a viable enterprise and the need to reduce/ minimise the noise impact of activities on the community of West Kingsdown.

Compliance with the NMP is considered 'best working practice' in minimising noise disturbance from the circuit conducting its normal day to day activities.

The NMP was fully reviewed in 2022 and officers continue to monitor compliance with the plan on an annual basis.

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4.2.2. Bonfire Service Requests

Smoke from a bonfire can constitute an actionable statutory nuisance (the District Council has a duty to investigate such complaints) and where dark smoke is emitted from a fire associated with a commercial activity, may constitute an offence under the Clean Air Act 1991.

In addition, where bonfire smoke has an unreasonable and detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and is of a persistent or continuing nature we have powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to prevent them from occurring.

Approximately half of the bonfire service requests received by the District Council are about irregular/ "one off" small scale domestic bonfires often comprising green waste. In accordance with our enforcement policy we normally deal with such cases on an informal basis through the provision of advice.

The remainder of bonfire service requests relate to fires on commercial/ industrial sites and whenever possible we will undertake robust enforcement action to prevent their recurrence.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
BNDOM	Bonfire - Domestic	70	203	67	33
BONOTH	Bonfire - Other	43	112	62	34
	TOTAL	113	315	129	67

4.2.3. Accumulations of Rubbish/ Waste

The District Council has multiple enforcement powers and duties in respect of accumulations of rubbish and waste. These powers are shared across several teams of the District Council depending on the nature of the waste, where it is located and how it has been deposited.

- Environmental Health- are responsible for the investigation of accumulations which pose a risk to public health (because they attract rats/ mice or flies), those that constitute a statutory nuisance (odour) of which are considered detrimental to the amenity of an area.
- Environmental Enforcement- deal with waste crime including incidents of fly tipping and or illegal waste activities
- Planning Enforcement- deal with 'untidy sites'.

The EP team have a variety of regulatory powers depending on the impact of the accumulation including:

- S79/80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990- where the accumulation is causing odour or flies

- The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949- where an accumulation is likely to attract rats or mice
- S43 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014- where an accumulation is detrimental to the amenity of an area.

Following the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 the EP Team now has significantly wider powers to address accumulations of waste on private land and consequently enforcement within this area has dramatically increased and we have been successful in clearing plots of land.

Our powers under s43 of the ASBCPA2014 are discretionary and the Councils do not have a statutory duty to utilise them.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
EPACPC	Accumulations (Commercial Premises)	19	23	18	12
EPACPD	Accumulations (Domestic Premises)	58	67	40	38
	TOTAL	77	90	58	50

4.2.4. Odour Nuisance

Odour from a commercial property or activity can be a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Council has a legal duty to investigate such complaints. Such complaints normally relate to cooking odour from restaurant extract systems or chemical odours from nail bars.

The majority of service requests received by the District Council relate to odour from domestic properties (normally cooking odour) but legislation explicitly excludes us from taking action to address these issues

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
ODRAGR	Odour - Agricultural	1	0	1	2
ODRCOM	Odour - Commercial	2	4	10	5
ODRDOM	Odour - Domestic	24	18	22	15
ODRIND	Odour - Industrial	9	12	5	3
ODRUNS	Odour - From unknown source	8	10	4	7
	TOTAL	44	44	42	32

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4.2.5. Drainage Complaints

The Environmental Health Team ensures that rural drainage systems and private drains do not cause a risk to public health. We do this by ensuring that they are of sufficient capacity to treat sewage discharged to them and making sure that they are maintained such that they do not overflow.

Drainage complaints are often extremely difficult to investigate. Systems are often located on third party land and can be geographically large extending over several hundred meters. Investigation of drainage systems present health and safety challenges and so are resource intensive to inspect.

In addition to the District Council, the Environment Agency have duties to ensure that rural drainage systems do not cause groundwater pollution.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
DRAIN	Drainage	30	29	30	16

4.2.6. Light Nuisance

In 2005, light (from artificial sources) was added to the schedule of potential statutory nuisances under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The legislation is primarily designed to deal with the impact of overpowered and poorly directed security lighting but we also regularly receive complaints about architectural lighting systems.

Light Nuisance investigations can only be properly investigated after dark as they require the investigating officer to visit the customer's home to assess the problem. Investigating officers will make arrangements with the customer being affected to attend their property after dark in order to make an assessment and if a statutory nuisance is witnessed are legally required to issue a statutory notice.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
EPLGHT	Light	17	23	9	14

4.2.7. Pest Complaints

A local authority has a duty to take steps to ensure that as far as is practicable their area remains free from rats and mice. Whilst the District Council offers paid for treatments through Direct Services many residents believe that that their neighbours are responsible for the rats or mice they have seen and in these cases an officer from Environmental Protection will need to investigate.

Pest Control investigations are often very resource intensive. Rats can travel over large geographical areas and consequently can affect multiple residents and properties. The only way to fully investigate such issue is via site visits to multiple addresses. Such visits can be difficult to coordinate efficiently.

Whilst mice infestations can be limited to a single property issues often extend between residential properties making investigation and enforcement difficult.

In addition to complaints about rats and mice we receive a small number of enquiries regarding unidentified insects, ants, bedbugs and flies.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
EPAMIC	Mice (Neighbour Complaint)	2	1	4	2
EPARAT	Rats (Neighbour Complaint)	49	119	91	55
EPOPC	All other pest complaints	10	13	7	6
	TOTAL	61	133	102	63

4.2.8. Invasive Plants

Invasive plants include Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. The Council does not have a statutory duty to take legal action to require the destruction of such plants unless a land owner/ occupier is deemed to be encouraging their spread.

The Environment Agency and Natural England have primary responsibility but the Environmental Protection Team can use discretionary powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Within the Sevenoaks District we most commonly receive complaints about Japanese Knotweed.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
EPWEED	Weeds	6	11	7	11

4.2.9. Anti-social behaviour from Dogs

The District Council continues to receive a large number of service requests relating to what are commonly referred to as 'dangerous dogs'. Often these complaints relate to dogs which have either attacked another animal, or which have bitten or threatened to bite a human.

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The Police are solely responsible for investigating complaints about dogs being dangerously out of control in a public place (an offence under the Dangerous Dogs Act) and the enforcement and seizure of banned breeds.

Whilst the District Council does not have a statutory duty to do so, our Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) will investigate less serious incidents (not considered criminal offences by the police). Generally these incidents will be where a dog has attacked another dog (or other domestic animal), is regularly straying or it appears aggressive within the confines of a domestic garden.

The AWO will investigate the circumstances of each complaint received to determine if the owner had sufficient control of their animal at the time of the incident, if the dog was under sufficient control and what steps if any could have prevented the incident or mitigated the impact. The AWO cannot assist an injured party to recover costs incurred for veterinary treatment.

Where we determine that a dog owner caused (through their action or inaction) an incident which was detrimental to the amenity of the public we will utilise the powers available to us under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Anti-social behaviour associated with dogs is very emotive and often it is difficult for the District Council to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the customer.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
DGVIC	Dog - Vicious/Dangerous	71	121	115	61

4.2.10. Animal Welfare

The District Council is at its discretion entitled to investigate and enforce complaints about Animal Welfare under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. At the District Council we have therefore appropriately authorised the Animal Welfare Officer to act as an Animal Welfare Inspector.

Traditionally, the District Council referred almost all animal welfare complaints to the RSPCA as the experts in this field. In recent years however, they appear to have less capacity and resources to investigate welfare complaints and so more issues are referred back to the Local Authority.

In 2022/2023 we have seen a significant increase in the number of animal welfare related service requests. Analysis of the relevant service requests suggests that this increase is driven by inexperienced animal owners (who perhaps purchased a pet for the 1st time during lockdown), and increased concerns about specific welfare cases publicised on social media.

Whilst we usually deal with animal welfare issues through discussion and negotiation with the owner, in 2022 it was necessary for the AWO to issue legal improvement notices for the first time requiring that animal owners improve the welfare conditions for their animals.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
ANWEL	Animal Welfare	21	21	12	24
DGWEL	Dog - Welfare	35	33	34	71
	TOTAL	56	54	46	95

4.3. Legal Action/ Enforcement Notices

Whilst the majority of complaints investigated by the EP Team are resolved without legal action becoming necessary, we do have a number of statutory and discretionary powers which allow us to take legal action to resolve a complaint.

These powers vary depending on the type of incident being investigated. The EP Team adhere to the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy and relevant investigation specific procedures when determining what action to take.

The table below shows that enforcement action taken by the EP team has remained relatively consistent over the past three years despite increasing numbers of complaints.

Type of Notice	Description	2020	2021	2022
s79/80 Environmental Protection Act 1990	Statutory nuisances (mainly noise)	2	6	3
Community Protection Notice	Anti-social behaviour from accumulations/ dogs/ odour/ noise etc	6	1	5
s43 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014				
s59 Building Act 1984	Drainage Issues	0	0	2
s4 Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949	Control of Rats and Mice	0	0	1
s60 Control of Pollution Act 1974	Noise from construction sites	0	1	0
s16 Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act	Request for property information	0	0	0
Microchipping of Dogs Regulations 2015		5	2	3
	TOTAL	13	10	14

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Where a recipient of a legal notice fails to comply with its requirements the District Council can take further action to secure compliance. In 2022 we have seen an increase in the number of enforcement actions taken by the EP Team (as per the table below):

	2020	2021	2022
Works in Default	0	0	1
Fixed Penalty Notice	0	0	1
Prosecution	0	0	0
Forfeiture Order	0	0	0
Criminal Behaviour Order	0	0	0

4.3.1. Other Actions

Prior to issuing a Community Protection Notice under s43 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, we are required to have first issued a Community Protection Notice Warning (CPW) Letter. A CPW is not a notice but can be considered to have an enhanced status over a standard letter.

Consequently compliance with CPWs is very high, reducing the number of cases where it becomes necessary to serve a notice.

The number of CPWs issued to residents and businesses has remained fairly static over the past 3 years.

	2020	2021	2022
Community Protection Notice Warnings	6	4	7

4.4. Service Request Performance

The Environmental Protection Team is resourced to meet the normal demands of the service and its customers. The team is set up to provide a high quality, customer focussed service and we pride ourselves on contacting each and every customer that raises a service request with us. Whenever possible we aim to make this meaningful contact within 5 working days.

All cases are triaged and prioritised on the basis of public health need and so the vast majority of our service requests receive a meaningful response well within this time scale.

In 2022, our performance indicator was changed to provide a clearer indication of the actual response times experienced by our customers.

	PI	2020	2021	PI	2022
MPI EH7	90% of Service Requests responded to	86%	77%	Average number of days to	4

	PI	2020	2021	PI	2022
	within 7 working days (excluding TENS + Planning)			provide a meaningful response to service request (5 days)	

4.5. Air Quality

Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, places a statutory duty on local authorities to periodically review and assess the air quality within their area. Where it appears that the air quality objectives will not be met by the designated target dates, local authorities must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and develop action plans in pursuit of those objectives.

The Environmental Protection Team are responsible for delivering these statutory duties on behalf of the District Council.

Air Quality Monitoring in Sevenoaks

The District Council currently maintains two ‘real time’ air quality stations located at:

Reference	Location	Parameters monitored
CM1	Bat and Ball Junction, Sevenoaks	NO ₂ , PM ₁₀
CM2	Greatness Park, Sevenoaks	NO ₂ , PM ₁₀ , Ozone

These air quality stations require regular calibration and maintenance and the EP Team maintain a contract with a specialist engineering company for this purpose.

In addition, every fortnight the NO₂ and PM₁₀ analysers require calibration and we have an agreement with Imperial College London for them to do this on our behalf.

In addition to the Air Quality Stations, we maintain a network of approximately 60 passive diffusion tubes. These are located throughout the areas of poorest air quality (see AQMAs below) and are exposed to the air over the period of a month in order to measure NO₂. Each month, the diffusion tube is replaced and the monthly results are used to calculate annual NO₂ levels at each given location.

The diffusion tube changeover is conducted in house by an EP Officer.

Air Quality Reporting

Data captured by our Air Quality Station is published at www.londonair.org.uk.

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Each year, the Environmental Protection Team also produce an Annual Status Report within which we publish air quality data from the previous calendar year. This report is reviewed by DEFRA and once agreed is made available on our website.

In 2021 as part of our work to develop a new Air Quality Action Plan, we commissioned a specialist consultancy to undertake a detailed review of our existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). This work identified that 4 of our previous 9 AQMAs could be removed and following discussions with DEFRA this revocation took place in July 2022.

In autumn 2022 a further review was undertaken to assess the AQMA within the Swanley area. This work identified that the Swanley AQMA remained necessary.

Action Planning

When a Local Authority declares an AQMA it is required to develop a plan of measurements and actions to improve air quality and/ or reduce pollution exposure.

In 2022, the Environmental Protection Team developed, consulted upon and published a new Air Quality Action Plan, which will operate until 2027.

This new AQAP is ambitious and forward thinking. It was developed in conjunction with colleagues in Planning Policy and Net Zero and draws together key learning from those areas to tie air quality into key infrastructure and carbon neutral policies and strategies already in development.

Air Quality Promotion

Following the return of Environmental Health to Sevenoaks following the dissolution of the Environmental Health partnership with Dartford Borough Council, it was identified that a gap existed in the EP Team's ability to influence and bring about positive change in air quality.

Whilst there had always been a desire to undertake activities to promote green travel, reduce emissions from private vehicles and raise awareness of health impacts associated with poor air quality, officers within the team traditionally lacked the necessary skillsets to achieve these aims.

To address this, we created a new 'Air Quality Promotions Officer' role with the specific remit of developing campaigns, promotions and resources that would help improve air quality or reduce exposure to poor air quality. This post was successfully filled in January 2022.

4.6. Contaminated Land

The Environmental Protection Team discharges the District Council's statutory duties in respect of contaminated land within the district.

Every Local Authority is required to produce, publish and adopt a Strategy detailing how it will discharge its requirements under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This legislation requires each Council to inspect land within their areas with the purpose of identifying contaminated land.

Sevenoaks District Council adopted its revised strategy in April 2022. This is published on the council's website and sets out how contaminated land will be identified and remediated when necessary.

The current strategy predominantly requires remediation through the development management process as Contaminated Land is a material consideration in the consideration of a planning application. The Environmental Protection Team provides specialist technical advice to the planning department to ensure that requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework are met.

Contaminated Land Searches

The District Council regularly receives requests for information on specific sites (often during property transactions). These requests require officers to undertake a detailed review of a site's previous history and former use, using historic documentation, GIS system details and officer knowledge.

Local Authorities are able to charge for the provision of this information but Sevenoaks District Council do not currently do so.

Currently, in order to respond to these enquiries, our officers must manually interrogate the historic mapping and geological information held on GIS to determine previous site usage and contamination risk. This information is then conveyed by either telephone or email to the enquirer.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
CNTLND	Contaminated Land	28	20	30	16

4.7. Environmental Permitting of Industrial Processes

The District Council has a statutory duty to issue and regulate Environmental Permits for some industrial processes as designated by the Environmental Permitting Regulations.

Officers within the Environmental Protection Team draft and issue these legally binding permits that limit emissions from specific polluting processes. Our officers then undertake periodic inspections of the activities including their plant and equipment, records and operational procedures to determine the risk that they pose to the environment.

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Operators of these regulated processes are required to pay a local authority a fee upon application and then annual subsistence fees to maintain their Environmental Permit. These fees are set on an annual basis by DEFRA and a Local Authority has no ability or remit to vary them.

Currently within the district we have 21 active Environmental Permits.

Process type	Number
Petrol Stations (PVR 1)	2
Petrol Stations (PVR 2)	4
Dry Cleaners	9
Cement Batchers	2
Mineral Dryer	1
Concrete Crusher	2
Wood Process	1
TOTAL	21

4.8. Private Water Supplies

Environmental Protection regulate Private Water Supplies (PWS) as defined by the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 on behalf of the District Council. All PWS in our area must be regularly Risk Assessed and sampled at a frequency depending on the nature of the supply, volume of water used and identified risks.

There are currently 7 known PWS located in the Sevenoaks district which can be categorised as follows:

Nature of supply	Location	Approx. number of supply users
Borehole	Eynsford	500 residents
Private Distribution System	Halstead	200 office users+400 residents
Spring	Westerham	50 office users +200 residents
Spring	Sevenoaks	20 office users +60 residents
Borehole	Kemsing	50 residents
Borehole	Otford	8 residents
Private Distribution System	Otford	11 residents

Private Water Supply Sampling

The District Council is required to periodically sample PWS at a frequency determined by the nature of the supply (i.e. commercial or domestic) and the volume of water

supplied. Risk assessments are then used to determine which chemical and microbiological parameters may be present within each individual supply.

Within the district, we have one supply that is at theoretical risk from radiological contamination from radon gas.

Water samples are collected from customer’s taps and then sent to a specialist laboratory for analysis. Water samples can only be taken by UCAS accredited samplers and we currently have 2 qualified officers within the Environmental Protection Team.

Following the return of Environmental Health to Sevenoaks we are fully compliant with the sampling regime required by the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

PI	2022
100% of samples due to be taken (number required informed by risk assessment)	100%

Private Water Supply Risk Assessment

The EP Team are required to risk assess each of our PWS’s every 5 years. This process requires us to undertake a full audit of the supplies operation and hazards, which may introduce contamination including the source, distribution network and treatment.

In 2022, our officers Risk Assessed 2 of our 7 PWS including the largest and most complex. In order to facilitate the risk assessment process we developed electronic inspection forms based upon the Drinking Water Inspectorate’s risk assessment templates which allowed information collected during the inspection to be imputed directly into a clear and easily accessible report.

Unfortunately, one of these risk assessments identified a number of serious hazards that posed a risk to those consuming the drinking water on the supply and as a result it was necessary for us to issue a notice requiring remedial works to ensure that the water was safe to drink. Following the service of the legal notice, our officer has worked closely with the supply owner to ensure that they focus of putting in place the necessary steps and measures to enable us to withdraw this legal action at the earliest opportunity.

Private Water Supply Regulation

Unfortunately, it is occasionally necessary for the officers to intervene to ensure that drinking water provided via a PWS remains safe to drink. Within the past year it has been necessary for officers to take legal action to secure the safety of drinking water at two supplies within the district.

In addition, we have had to work with a further supply manager to ensure that a safe water supply has been maintained throughout a series of network failures.

4.9. Planning Application Consultations

The Environmental Protection Team operate as consultees for Sevenoaks District Council on planning applications.

We provide specialist assessment and advice in respect of environmental issues including air quality, acoustics, odour control and contaminated land to our planning colleagues. This work often includes assessing submissions from specialist consultants on behalf of developers, liaison with consultants as to appropriate assessment standards, rebuttal of evidence and information and attendance at Planning Committees and attend planning inquiries and hearings as an expert witness.

Not all officers within the Environmental Protection Team are at present sufficiently experienced to make comments across all aspects of planning applications. This has affected the EP Teams performance in this area. The Environmental Protection Team Leader is working hard to address this issue and we are providing specialist training to officers so that they gain the relevant skills and knowledge needed.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
CONPLN	Consultation - Planning	253	350	398	236
CONREC	Re-consultation Planning	1	6	15	57
	TOTAL	254	356	413	293

Performance

	PI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 to Dec
MPI EH14	85% Planning Applications Consultations timely response (within 21 days)	73%	81%	31%	64%

4.10. Licensing Application Consultations

The Environmental Protection Team operate as statutory consultees for Sevenoaks District Council on licencing applications (New and amended premises licences and Temporary Event Notices).

Officers assess applications and where they are determined to have a potential impact on 'public nuisance' or public safety' can object to the licence and/ or request that conditions are added to a licence (premises licences only).

When an officer objects to a premises licence or a Temporary Event Notice (TEN), they are required to attend the relevant committee hearing and provide professional evidence to support their concerns and any suggested conditions.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
CONLIC	Consultation - Licensing	43	37	53	24
CONTEN	TENS Licensing Consultation	454	52	306	369
	TOTAL	497	89	359	393

Performance

	PI	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 to Dec
MPI EH9	85% of TENs responded to within 3 working days	100%	98%	93%	98%
	100% of Premises Licence Applications responded to within 28 days	83%	92%	79%	100%

4.11. Animal Control

The District Council is required to provide a 24hr reception point for the receipt of stray dogs. Once a stray dog has been found we are then required to keep them for a minimum of 7 clear days. After this time, the dog becomes the property of the District Council and we can dispose of it as we see fit.

The Environmental Protection Team have procured a contract with a local kennels to provide our stray dog kennelling service. This contract requires our supplier to not only home all strays found within our area but also compels them to rehome them at the end of the 7 day period.

Dogs rehomed by our kennelling contractor are neutered, vaccinated and microchipped before they are rehomed. Their new owner's property is checked for suitability by an experienced operative and dogs are rehomed to addresses outside of the district. Thanks to our stray dog kennelling arrangement, we have been able to avoid having to put a dog to sleep for the past 4 years

Description	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 to Dec
Stray dogs collected	93	43	45	73

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Description	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 to Dec
Stray dogs returned to owner	39	26	17	28
Stray dogs rehomed	54	17	28	45
Stray dogs put down	0	0	0	0

4.12. Licensing of Animal Activities

The District Council is responsible for licensing certain activities involving animals including, pet shops, riding, boarding and performing animals under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

Separate to this legislation we licence Dangerous Wild Animals (DWA) and Zoo's. Currently we regulate two zoos (Eagle Heights and Willow Bird of Prey Centre). We are able to charge for animal licences on a cost recovery basis and fees are set annually.

Following the success of electronic inspections within our Food & Safety Team, we have now introduced them to our Animal Licensing Service. This system has proved extremely effective at reducing the time taken to generate reports and issue licenses. The iPad inspections allow our officers to incorporate photographs into reports and the resulting output is clear and simple for the business operator to understand.

Description	2020	2021	2022
Pet Shops	16	17	15
Animal Boarding	23	22	21
Home boarding/day care	8	12	15
Riding Establishments	7	6	7
Performing Animals	4	4	4
Dangerous Wild Animal	1	1	1
Zoo	1	1	1

4.13. Freedom of Information/ Environmental Information Requests

The Environmental Protection Team create and hold a significant amount of information. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, members of the public are entitled to request access to information held by public authorities.

Often information is not held in an easily disclosable format and requires an officer to transpose the information held into an acceptable format for publication.

The majority of FOI/EIR requests received by the Councils do not meet the threshold for our costs to provide the information to be recharged.

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
FOIEP	Freedom of Info/Env Info request EP	51	49	47	40

4.14. Formal Complaints against Service

The Environmental Protection Team are committed to providing excellent customer service. We have put in place policies and procedures to ensure that customers are treated fairly, are kept informed of decisions we make and that we act in a transparent manner.

Unfortunately, we do sometimes make mistakes. On these very rare occasions we are committed to undertaking a frank assessment of what has gone wrong and putting in place measures and steps to improve and learn from our errors.

Owing to the nature of the work we undertake, the majority of which is enforcement, we do receive a number of unfounded complaints about the decisions of officers (particularly when they are unfavourable towards the original complainant).

Category	Description	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - Dec
EHSTG1	Stage 1 or 2 formal complaints	5	13	10	3
N/A	Complaints considered justified	1	3	2	1

4.15. Out of Hours

Some of the service requests received by the Environmental Protection Team require that officers conduct investigations outside of normal office hours (for example when the noise is at its most impactful or when a light is in operation). Whenever possible (i.e. when the noise is predictable) officers are expected to make proactive arrangements for such visits in their own time.

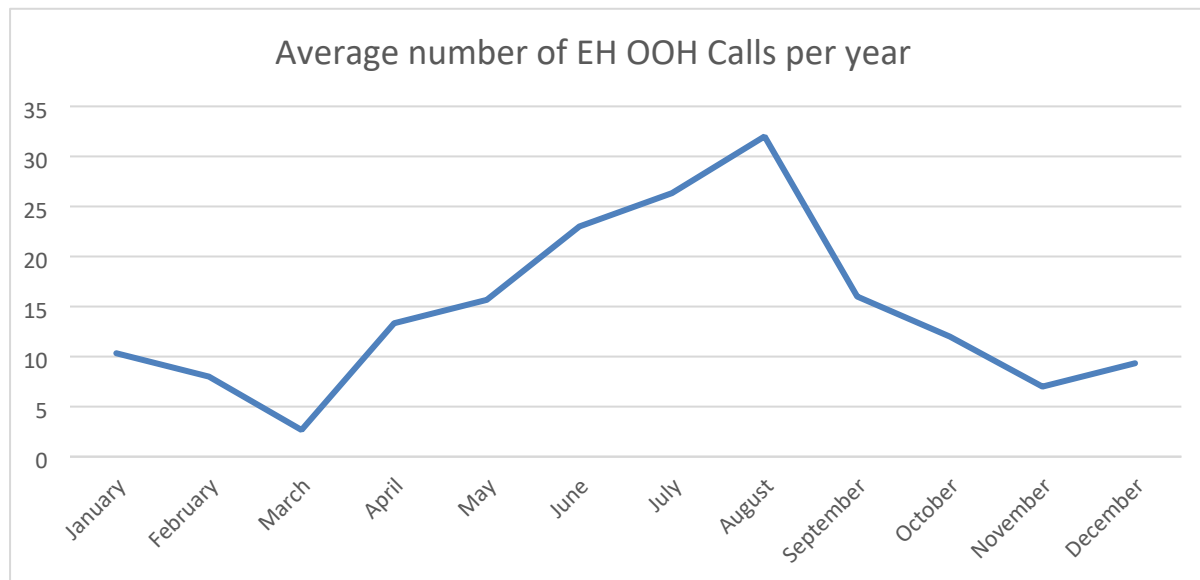
Unfortunately, some service request types are not predictable and require reactive investigation and action.

On average, the District Council receives 185 out of hours Environmental Health calls each year. The majority of these (84%) are noise related service requests/ complaints

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but we also receive reports relating to bonfires (10%) as well as requests relating to overflowing drainage, private water supply contamination, health & safety, light nuisance, odour nuisance, and food related complaints (Total 6%).

Demand is seasonal with the majority of calls (71%) received between April and September when weather is generally warmer and residents are more likely to be affected by the activities of their neighbours.



Out of Hours Service

The Environmental Protection Team currently operate a reactive Out of Hours Service (OOH) between 18:00 and 00:00 on Friday and Saturday evenings, every week throughout the year. This is a discretionary service and is not required by law.

Officers from within the EP Team, Food & Safety Team and Private Sector Housing Team staff this OOH service on a weekly rota.

The majority of Friday/ Saturday EH OOH calls are dealt with through the provision of telephone advice but where appropriate, the duty EHO will undertake a visit to gather evidence of the problem. In certain circumstances, and where it is safe to do so, the duty EHO may visit the person causing the problem to offer advice and/ or may take enforcement action.

The OOH duty officers work alone. They must therefore consider the health and safety implications of lone working and must not put themselves at risk. This can limit the effectiveness of the OOH service to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of residents. The service is unable to approach and stop/ reduce the noise from 'one off' parties for this reason.

Kent Police do not have the resource to provide support to Local Authorities undertaking OOH visits.

Typical types of call received by the Friday/ Saturday EH OOH Service are outlined below:

- 1st time complaint where the customer has never complained before and where investigation will require the gathering of evidence over a longer period (i.e. frequent noise disturbances from a neighbour) - normally dealt with through the provision of telephone advice OOH and then followed up as per EH Performance Indicators.
- Private Parties (normally one off incidents) - Owing to health and safety considerations, duty EHOs are not currently expected to approach the alleged offender. Therefore, these cases are often dealt with through the provision of advice to the complainant however, in exceptional circumstances a visit may be undertaken to witness the problem to allow further action to be taken at a later date.
- Complaints about licenced premises - Where appropriate to do so a visit will take place and the issues witnessed. If safe to do so the relevant licence holder will be approached if an issue is observed
- Alarms (Car and Premises) - Where action can be taken within service hours an officer will visit to witness and if a statutory nuisance is established an abatement notice will be served. Works in default will then be arranged to silence the alarm.
- Behaviour noise (banging and crashing often between flats) - this type of complaint cannot easily be dealt with on a reactive basis and so will not generally be visited by the duty EHO.
- Bonfires - where the source has been identified and it appears smoke is significantly affecting the complainant a visit may be undertaken to the alleged offender in order to offer advice.
- On-going noise complaints

On average 54 calls are received through the Friday/ Saturday duty EHO system (29% of all calls received).

Cascade System

In addition to the scheduled Friday/ Saturday OOH service, officers are able to respond to environmental health emergencies (eg service requests with significant public health or where decision is required immediately) via a cascade system.

This service is staffed on a voluntary basis by officers and the majority of calls responded to through this system are dealt with by the Environmental Health Manager and Team Leaders.

5. Working in Partnership

The Environmental Protection Team have developed a number of effective partnerships both with other teams and colleagues within the District Council and external agencies

Community Safety Unit

The Environmental Protection Team are active members of the SDC Community Safety Unit. We regularly attend multi-agency tasking meetings to address problems with specific sites and often take a lead in enforcing against problem sites.

Every year we produce statistics for the CSU Strategic Assessment produced by the SDC CSU.

Development Services

The Environmental Protection Team recognise that Development Management are important internal customers. We are committed to providing the best possible service to this team so that they can undertake their own statutory duties.

A change in roles within the Environmental Protection Team and the appointment of new staff within the team resulted a skills shortage in those available to comment on planning applications. It was necessary to engage specialist contractors to fulfil this function from February 2022 to August 2022.

This allowed new staff to find their feet in the organisation whilst commencing training in several aspects of their new role including training on how comments on planning applications are undertaken.

We have implemented Performance Indicators that reflect the constraints of the consultation process and have developed procedures and reports to maximise the number of responses provided within time.

We continue to provide advice and expertise during the Planning pre-application process and regularly support planning officers on site visits and when dealing with specialist contractors. Whilst our planning colleagues charge a fee for this service the Environmental Protection do not receive any income for the support we provide.

We continue to review our practices in order to try and identify areas where we can enhance the service we offer. We hold regular meetings with the Planning Managers to identify areas of concern and improvement.

Planning Enforcement

The work undertaken by the EP Team often overlaps with that being undertaken by the Planning Enforcement Team. We recognise the need to maintain good communication between the teams to ensure a coordinated approach to cases.

We regularly share intelligence and information between the teams and whenever possible minimise the need for multiple visits by either undertaking joint inspections or prompting either team to collect needed information and evidence for the other.

Licensing

The Licensing Team rely on the advice and information provided by the EP Team and are important internal customers. We are committed to providing the best possible service to these teams so that they can undertake their own statutory duties.

We have created Performance Indicators which reflect the operational timescales of the licensing team as set by legislation.

We continue to review our practices in order to try and identify areas where we can enhance the service we offer.

Safety Advisory Group

Officers will attend Safety Advisory Groups at SDC as necessary to ensure that events do not result in statutory nuisance and to offer advice as appropriate on matters within our expertise.

We review new event notifications and will offer advice as required

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Our officers have an excellent relationship with the DWI. We have previously assisted them by providing training on best practice regulation to other local authorities and have had constructive discussions regarding best practice when issuing notices and producing risk assessments.

West Kent Housing Association

Our Officers have excellent working relationships with area officers at WKHA. We regularly undertake joint site inspections at their properties and work with them to resolve issues caused by problem tenants.

Our Animal Welfare Officer regularly participates in WKHA led 'days of action' providing advice around responsible dog/ animal ownership.

6. New and Emerging Issues

6.1. Unlicensed animal activities

We are regularly made aware of unlicensed dog breeders and animal boarders (often operating out of domestic properties) who are trading via social media platforms, private selling sites and closed market place forums. Our investigations also suggest that there may be multiple dog breeders within our area who have failed to obtain the relevant permissions.

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These sellers and boarders often obscure their actual details by providing pseudonyms, dummy addresses and false information within their posts. Mobile telephone numbers may be changed if and when their activities are challenged by officers. As a consequence, it is extremely difficult to regulate these businesses and potentially the welfare of animals being sold or boarded is being compromised.

Where officers become aware of an unlicensed activity we investigate and seek to get it regulated. More often than not this drives such businesses underground for them to later resurface with different contact information.

In order to combat this growing issue, a significant amount of regulatory time and effort would be needed to gather clear and persuasive evidence of perpetrators and their activities so that they may be prosecuted for non-compliance with the law.

6.2. Stray and Abandoned dogs

It is well reported that dog ownership increased during the Covid-19 Pandemic. As a result many inexperienced households adopted or purchased a new pet for the first time.

Now that the pandemic restrictions are over, and many people have been asked to return to the office (at least on a part-time basis) it appears that some owners can no longer care for their new family members. In addition to this, animals are expensive to care for and veterinary treatments are for some unaffordable.

This combination of pressures has resulted in the District Council collecting more and more dogs as strays. Many of these animals are so called 'designer' breeds which would have traditionally been quickly reclaimed by their owner. We have also seen an increase in strays that have costly medical needs.

Whilst our new kennel contract ensures that we are not exposed to additional kennelling and rehoming costs as a result of this increase, it is probable that our veterinary costs to provide urgent medical care will begin to rise.

6.3. Animal Welfare

Our service requests statistics show that animal welfare concerns are increasing and the Animal Welfare Officer is encountering more and more cases of neglect that require intervention.

Whilst this is not a statutory duty for the Environmental Protection Team, animal welfare concerns are highly emotive and often generate significant social media interest resulting in case investigations that are time consuming and difficult to administer.

6.4. Illegal Waste sites and dumping

We believe we are beginning to see a trend whereby criminals are undertaking large-scale, illegal waste operations on unpermitted parcels of land. Whilst these cases should

ordinarily fall to the Environment Agency for investigation and regulation, it is the District Council who are often the first point of call for our residents.

These sites are extremely difficult to regulate and require a multi-agency approach for regulation to be effective. This can be extremely resource intensive.

6.5. **PM_{2.5}**

The Environment Act 2021 required the government to set two new legal targets for air quality by the end of 2022. Currently these targets are proposed as follows:

- Annual Mean Concentration Target ('concentration target') - a maximum concentration of 10µg/m³ to be met across England by 2040
- Population Exposure Reduction Target ('exposure target') - a 35% reduction in population exposure by 2040 (compared to a base year of 2018).

DEFRA have consulted with Local Authorities on how these targets will be achieved and we are awaiting their final decision. Nevertheless, it is extremely likely that additional duties will be given to the District Council requiring us to monitor emissions or PM_{2.5} and or identify measures that will reduce emissions and exposure.

6.6. **Suitably Qualified EP Officers**

It is recognised within the Environmental Health Profession that there is a lack of suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Health Officers and Environmental Protection Specialists.

Owing to the highly technical nature as well as the diversity of the environmental protection function most officers are not qualified to undertake all tasks to an equal level and it is unrealistic to expect them to do so. Whilst it is relatively easy to train or acquire officers who are able to undertake complaint investigations we have ourselves experienced difficulties bringing in knowledge and experience within the specialist areas of contaminated land, air quality, private water supplies and acoustics.

We were very fortunate that during the dissolution of the EH Partnership we retained expertise within these allowing us to continue providing the necessary functions whilst we train our own specialists in house.

6.7. **Net Zero/ Carbon Reduction**

The work undertaken by the Environmental Protection team has direct and indirect impacts on CO₂ emissions (both from District Council activities, the public and industry). We will continue to work with both internal and external partners to identify measures and initiatives to reduce our own carbon footprint and to assist others in reducing theirs.

We will maintain a presence on relevant internal working groups and work constructively to assist with the reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Our new Air Quality Action Plan aligns air quality ambitions and priorities with those from Net Zero and we continuously look for opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both types of emission.

7. Innovation/ Service Improvement

Over the next 12 months the Environmental Protection Team want to be ambitious and make changes to our service that improve efficiency and customer service, generate operational income and reduce emissions or waste.

7.1 Develop our own talent

As outline above, it is extremely difficult for environmental health teams to recruit already qualified and experienced officers. We have therefore chosen to develop our own subject matter experts.

In September 2021 and April 2022, we employed three new Environmental Protection Officers. Whilst each of these new recruits has some experience of complaint investigation and had worked for other local authorities, none were specialists in any area of environmental protection. However, at interview each of these officers demonstrated potential to grow and learn and showed an enthusiasm to progress their careers.

The Environmental Protection Team Leader together with the Environmental Health Manager have worked with these officers to identify areas in which they can specialise. We are currently working to provide each of them with the necessary training and experience to enable them to eventually become our required subject matter experts across contaminated land, air quality, private water supplies and acoustics.

Whilst the decision to recruit these officers has placed an additional burden upon those with existing experience within the team (to train and mentor our new officers) and has caused some short term resilience issues, we are confident that once trained the District Council will have three excellent officers who understand our particular requirements and ways of delivering our service.

7.2. Expand our use of electronic inspections

As outlined above, we have already introduced electronic inspections to some aspects of environmental protection (notably animal licensing and private water supplies). These inspections are inputted into bespoke template forms (created by officers) within the 'Safety Culture App' on an iPad.

To date, this technology has proven effective at saving officer time, improving accuracy and reducing challenge. The output from the electronic inspections is also highly professional, easy to read and understand and can be easily translated using accessibility software.

We will continue to review the benefits of the electronic inspections and whenever beneficial expand their use to other areas such as potentially Environmental Permitting, and service request investigations.

Currently the system does not actively integrate with our Uniform database, instead generating a report which can be stored within the record. We will therefore work with our colleagues in the projects team to try and identify software/ mechanisms which will allow officers to directly amend or input into the uniform data base remotely in order to minimise double entry of information.

7.3. Acquire new Noise Nuisance Recorders

Our existing Sound Level Meters are reaching the end of their operational lifespan and funding has been secured to obtain replacements. We will therefore be undertaking a review of the equipment available within the relevant market and procuring new best value equipment.

Where possible we will seek to ensure that this equipment generates operational efficiencies for the team.

7.4. Expand our use of Enterprise for Uniform

In September 2021, we introduced Enterprise for Uniform. This software provides officers and managers an overview of the service requests allocated and unallocated to officers.

Whilst the introduction of Enterprise has been successful, we are aware that it has more powerful functions than those currently being used by the Environmental Protection Team. Therefore, we intend to undertake a review of this software over the next 12 months to ensure that we are using it in the most effective way.

7.5. NoiseApp 2

RH Environmental have expressed their intention to release version 2 of the NoiseApp later on this year. This new version promises to bring additional functionality for customers and new improvements to assist officers with their investigations.

Officers from the Environmental Protection Team have worked with the developers providing information on our use and experiences to help refine and influence the features of the new application. We have participated in focus groups and feedback sessions with other users and we hope that that this work will result in an improved experience for Sevenoaks residents when it is released.

7.6. Process Redesign

We have ensured that whenever possible, administration tasks have been moved from our environmental protection team officers to our technical administrators generating additional capacity. We are working to increase the knowledge and experience of these

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officers so that, with the support of the experienced environmental protection officers, they are able to respond to basic enquires and requests improving the speed of our responses to customers.

We have worked with our colleagues in Customer Solutions to ensure that the 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) (accessed during a customer's initial contact with the Council) are accurate and informative. This has helped to ensure that customers are where necessary signposted to other organisations (such as Environment Agency, DEFRA, APHA etc) and resolve some common enquiries at point of first contact without the need for officer involvement.

We have begun to review the out of hours manual held by CCTV for the same purpose and hope that this will allow them to provide simple advice designed to resolve some simple issues at first point of contact.

7.7. Work more effectively with our Social Housing providers

The Environmental Protection Team receive a large number of complaints associated with social housing. Whilst we already work closely with some of these providers (notably WKHA) we believe that there is an opportunity through the provision of proactive information and advice and guidance to reduce the number of complaints we receive.

Further, we consider that by working with the organisations, operational efficiencies could be made. We will seek to offer training to area housing officers, and ASB officers within these organisations such that they are able to better understand our legal remits and ensure that information and evidence provided to us by them and their tenants conforms/ meets our evidential requirements.

7.8. Develop a new Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document

We will work with our Planning Policy colleagues to develop a new Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that can be applied to all new developments with the potential to impact air quality. This SPD will ensure that all developers understand their duties and requirements in respect of air pollution and that they take these into account during the planning phase.

The SPD will also provide a mechanism for developers to contribute/ fund off site measures to improve or mitigate air quality problems when such measures cannot be achieved within the development itself.

7.9. Move to an electric Animal Welfare Vehicle

We have begun the process of sourcing an electric vehicle to replace the current diesel animal welfare van. This vehicle is currently used by the Environmental Protection Team to collect stray dogs, undertake promotional events and change diffusion tubes within our AQMAs.

It is our ambition, whenever possible to replace diesel and petrol vehicle journeys (i.e. made in officers personal vehicles) to this new EV van reducing Environmental Health's carbon emissions.

7.10. Customer Feedback

We have developed a new customer feedback survey within Survey Monkey. This short web form is accessed via a link or QR code which is sent with every communication from Environmental Health. Customers are encouraged to complete this survey anonymously so that we can start to identify trends or themes within our service which in turn will help us drive improvements.

7.11. Website Updates

We continue to utilise our website as a source of information for residents and businesses. We work with our Communications Team to ensure that the content we produce is accurate and user friendly and that it assists our customers and their needs. We do not recreate resources available elsewhere and link to authoritative sources whenever possible such as the gov.uk website.

8. Quality Assessment

The work of the Environmental Protection Team is subject to scrutiny by senior management, councillors, internal auditors, DEFRA, Drinking Water Inspectorate, and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

We ensure that all officers delivering environmental protection interventions meet an appropriate qualification criterion and demonstrate knowledge and competency across a number of skill sets. The competency framework drives personal and team training and development. It is also used to highlight gaps in the team's knowledge and skills.

The following monitoring arrangements are in place to assist in quality assessment:

- inspection audits including associated paperwork
- performance and development reviews
- performance monitoring of target response times
- Customer satisfaction questionnaires
- 1:1 meetings with team members
- Team and department meetings
- use of Enterprise in the IDOX Uniform database to improve monitoring of the inspection programme and service requests

9. Areas for Improvement

Every effort is being made to maintain a high quality service to the public and to meet and exceed performance targets. We aim to:

- Improve the accuracy of the UNIFORM database

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- Ensure all customers receive a response within 5 working days
- Make faster decisions on compliance/ non-compliance whenever possible
- Reduce the number of stage 1 and 2 complaints against the service
- Work more closely with partners in other departments
- Improve and exceed our Planning Response Performance Indicator
- Encourage customers to provide feedback via a survey monkey link

10. Contact Officer

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Item 6 (c) – White Oak Residential

The attached report was considered by the Cabinet, and the relevant minute extract is below:

The Portfolio Holder for Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee updated Members on the development proposal for White Oak Leisure Centre Residential Scheme. Particular emphasis was given to the decreased density from 81 to 61 units, to create a better-quality environment and more family houses. The Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee had considered the same report and endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet and Council.

The Regeneration Development Project Manager further advised Cabinet that the procurement approach had been updated to reflect the needs of modern methods of construction. The Council had successfully obtained £840,000 of Brownfield Land Release grant funding for the site, and had a guaranteed fixed works price from its contractor, which gave the cost plan a high degree of certainty.

Members were advised this will be the Council's first modern methods of construction scheme that will deliver high quality, environmentally efficient and sustainable homes with new open space, trees and enhanced landscaping.

Members discussed the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

- a) the receipt of £840,000 grant funding from the One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund which has required the need to adopt an accelerated procurement process, be noted;
- b) this would be the Council's first modern methods of construction (MMC) scheme that would deliver 61 new high quality, environmentally efficient and sustainable homes and that the Council has procured a preferred contractor in compliance with procurement regulations and the Council's standing orders, be noted;
- c) the development site as outlined red in Plan A (appendix E) be appropriated for planning purposes in accordance with the section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (in reliance on section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) consequentially facilitating the Council's powers under sections

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203 to 206 of the Housing & Planning Act 2016 to override any outstanding interests, be agreed;

- d) the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Trading and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, be delegated authority to submit a planning application and to enter into any necessary contracts to facilitate the development and construction of the proposed scheme in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules and for the disposal of the residential units to be developed;
- e) the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial and the Chief Officer Finance and Trading, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Investments, be delegated authority, to undertake further detailed design and feasibility work and to proceed with the scheme subject to final scheme viability; subject to Council's approval of the capital provision of £21,852,476; and
- f) it be recommended to Council that the total project budget be increased to £21,852,476 and that the Capital Programme, be accordingly amended to deliver the scheme, which was to be funded as set out in the Financial Implications of the report, be approved.

**WHITE OAK LEISURE CENTRE RESIDENTIAL QUARTER, SWANLEY –
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

Council – 25 April 2023

Report of: Strategic Head of Property and Commercial

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

- Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee – 28 February 2023
- Cabinet – 16 March 2023

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary:

In February 2022, Council approved the development of a residential scheme on phase 3 of the former White Oak Leisure Centre Complex. Approval was granted to undertake further feasibility and detailed design work and the budget was set and appropriate delegations were granted to allow the scheme to progress subject to the scheme remaining viable and planning permission being obtained.

In October 2022 the Council completed its first two phases for the re-development of the former White Oak Leisure Centre Complex and further feasibility work was undertaken for the residential development. During the intervening period since approval was granted, global and market events have had a significant impact on the project. The procurement approach has also been adapted to reflect the needs of modern methods of construction and the receipt of grant funding and following consultation with key stakeholders, improvements have been made to the scheme's design. The scheme remains feasible and a planning application is to be submitted in spring with construction works commencing in September 2023.

This report supports the Key Aim of: improvements to public realm and infrastructure and meeting housing targets. The provision of new housing is a key priority and pressure for the District.

Portfolio Holder: Cllrs. Peter Fleming, Matthew Dickins and Kevin Maskell

Contact Officers: Detlev Munster, Ext. 7099

Recommendation to Improvement and Innovation Advisory Committee:

- (a) The Advisory Committee endorse the proposed recommendations to Cabinet and Council.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Cabinet notes the receipt of £840,000 grant funding from the One Public Estate Brownfield Land Release Fund which has required the need to adopt an accelerated procurement process;
- (b) Cabinet notes that this will be the Council's first modern methods of construction (MMC) scheme that will deliver 61 new high quality, environmentally efficient and sustainable homes and that the Council has procured a preferred contractor in compliance with procurement regulations and the Council's standing orders;
- (c) Cabinet recommends to Council the total project budget be increased to £21,852,476 and that the Capital Programme is accordingly amended;
- (d) Subject to Council's approval of the capital provision of £21,852,476 in the Capital Programme, Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial and the Chief Officer Finance and Trading, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Investments to undertake further detailed design and feasibility work and to proceed with the scheme subject to final scheme viability; s
- (e) Cabinet approve that the development site as outlined red in Plan A (appendix E) be appropriated for planning purposes in accordance with the section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (in reliance on section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) consequentially facilitating the Council's powers under sections 203 to 206 of the Housing & Planning Act 2016 to override any outstanding interests;
- (f) Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Head of Property and Commercial in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and Trading and the Head of Legal Services to submit a planning application and to enter into any necessary contracts to facilitate the development and construction of the proposed scheme in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules and for the disposal of the residential units to be developed.

Recommendation to Council:

Council approves the provision of £21,852,476 in the Capital Programme to deliver this scheme which is to be funded as noted in the Financial Implications of this report.

Reason for recommendation: To provide much needed housing in the district particularly in Swanley.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Swanley is an urban settlement in the Northern part of the Sevenoaks District adjoining Dartford, Bexley and Bromley. Swanley is the most deprived area within the Sevenoaks District, with two of the wards (Swanley St Mary's and Swanley Christchurch) noted as having relative deprivation in the Local Plan. The town itself has excellent transport links with a motorway interchange providing junctions on the M25, M20, and A20 enabling travel both into Kent, Surrey and Central London. Swanley is within London Travel Zone 8 with Oyster travel into London in under 30 minutes.
- 2 The site sits within a residential area on the northern side of Swanley Town Centre. The new White Oak Leisure Centre and surface car park is located to the south and east of the site and the White Oak Indoor Bowls Club adjoins the site to the west. Existing residential units surround the remainder of the sites perimeter.
- 3 The proposed development aims to provide:
 - New homes including both flats and houses with private gardens
 - Communal green space at the centre of the site
 - Car parking
 - Trees
 - Enhancement of the urban fabric surrounding the new leisure centre
 - Energy efficient new homes
- 4 Profit from the construction of the residential phase is required to part contribute to the construction of the new leisure centre, already completed. As a result, all housing will be market sale with no affordable provision.

The Proposed Development Scheme

- 5 Several design options were considered for the site and the White Oak Residential scheme was approved by Cabinet on 10th February 2022 and Council on 22nd February 2022. The approved scheme was to provide up to 81 units, however further design and viability testing in addition to initial feedback from planning and Councillors has demonstrated that 61 units within its context and setting has the ability to create a better quality environment while maintaining viability and securing the required capital receipt. The preferred option (detailed in appendix A) proposes:
 - 13 x 3b5p houses
 - 8 x 1b2p flats
 - 40 x 2b4p flats
 - Car parking spaces, private gardens, soft and hard landscaping and trees.
- 6 The proposed layout offers 61 residential units comprising one block of flats at four storeys in height, alongside 13 two storey houses with private gardens.

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This layout also provides 68 parking spaces with a green space and soakaway at the centre of the site. The remainder of the site is reserved for green space.

- 7 Initial planning and Councillor feedback has been obtained and suggestions have been incorporated into the preferred option to be taken forward.
- 8 The options appraisal suggests that the preferred option is viable from a planning and financial perspective, but further detailed analysis is required to refine the preferred option.
- 9 The next stage will undergo a further detailed investment appraisal to confirm viability, and the project will only proceed if it meets the scheme's aims and is within the financial parameters set (see Appendix B – confidential).
- 10 The scheme will be delivered through modular construction - a Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) technique. This is the creation of pre-fabricated buildings in a factory offsite, then delivered to the site for installation. The scheme consists of repeated sections called modules that are slotted together when installed on site. The modules can be of different shapes and sizes but are generally repeated to allow for economies of scale when producing the modules in the factory setting.
- 11 The benefits of this approach are that it allows for a speedier construction, greater cost control and faster return on investment, it minimises the time spent on site and therefore disruption to residents, it minimises waste and is more environmentally friendly. Construction in a factory setting also allows for a better quality product than on site where it is more open to user error and construction being affected by being open to the elements.

Procurement

- 12 In order to accommodate a MMC build, the procurement process has been adjusted to ensure early engagement of a MMC contractor. This is to ensure the designs are appropriate for the manufacturing process to be employed.
- 13 As a result the Council has procured a contractor through the Building Better Framework, set up by National Housing Federations Greenhouse Innovation programme in 2018. The framework is specifically for MMC developments and a call-off from the framework provides quicker and more efficient access to approved manufacturers and a readymade marketplace. The Council has subsequently appointed Top Hat as MMC contractor having undertaken additional due diligence checks. The contract has been accordingly staged to minimise risks and the project only proceeds subject to planning permission being obtained and the scheme remaining viable.
- 14 A visit was undertaken to see Top Hat, who are building out a 30,000 sqm site in Chatham (Kitchener Barracks), delivering 280 homes. They are currently delivering homes on several sites across the country, with this being one of

their largest sites. Top Hat has reviewed the designs and have also provided costings to support the viability appraisal. Another added benefit is that the White Oak residential project architects, Bond Bryan Architects, are the project architects on the Kitchener Barracks development in Chatham, and so already have established a good working relationship with Top Hat.

- 15 Top Hat is currently under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA), allowing Top Hat to support the appointed architect and provide design input through RIBA Stages 2 and 3, before entering into a formal building contract during Stage 4. This ensures that they will only be fully appointed once planning is granted and the scheme remains viable. The two-stage process requires them to submit a bid for the second stage, allowing the Council the opportunity to review the position and withdraw should they wish to. A JCT Design and Build 2016 standard form of contract will be used and Top Hat will be procured on a fixed fee lump sum basis.
- 16 Further information regarding Top Hat and examples showcasing the quality of their work and projects delivered is attached at Appendix D.

Public Consultation

- 17 Input from Councillors has been taken into account and it is proposed that the local community and interested parties will be consulted in Spring 2023 to present the emerging scheme. Feedback will be used to refine the scheme where appropriate prior to submitting a planning application.
- 18 Following the pre-planning consultation, further consultation will take place as part of the statutory planning process.

Delivery Programme

- 19 The project’s indicative delivery programme, assuming planning consent is granted, is outlined in the table below. Note this is subject to change:

Milestones	Date
Milestone	Date
Public consultation	Spring 2023
Planning Submission	May 2023
Planning Determination	August 2023
Start on site	October 2023
Practical completion	Spring 2025

Project Costs

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Supporting information at Appendix B - exempt from publication under paragraph 3 "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"

- 20 The sales values used by the external property consultant have remained as per the previous viability studies and have therefore been kept at 2021 values. Construction costs and interest rates have however increased substantially given global market conditions. At the time of the Council's decision in February 2022, interest rates from the PWLB were circa 1.5% and have now increased to 4.5%. Construction materials have also experienced significant inflationary pressures of up to 30% since February 2022. These have consequently impacted on the scheme's financials since last reported to Cabinet in February 2022. Our updated cost plan prepared by our cost consultants in consultation with Top Hat suggest that the scheme remains financially viable and their assessments have been closely scrutinised by the Council's consultants, Property and Finance teams.
- 21 It is important to note that the cost plan reflects Top Hat's unit pricing noted in the framework agreement and that these unit prices remain fixed and are adjusted annually (in September) in accordance with inflation. As a result, the cost plan has a very high degree of cost certainty and this price will be locked into. Details of the development appraisal can be found in Appendix B, where it can be noted that the scheme generates a profit that will be used to part-finance the new White Oak Leisure Centre. As the scheme progresses, the appraisal will undergo continuous stress testing to determine its sensitivities to cost pressures, interest rate rises, decline in sales values whilst the design continues to be developed and costs fixed via the pre-construction services agreement with Top Hat.
- 22 SDC was also successful with securing a grant of £840,000 via the Brownfield Land Release Fund for the White Oak Residential Scheme. The Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) is a cross-government initiative between the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and One Public Estate (OPE) which is delivered in partnership by the Local Government Association and the Cabinet Office. The funding will go towards infrastructure and remediation works.

Appropriation

- 23 It is recommended that as part of the development process Cabinet legally appropriate the development site for planning purposes. That is, that the Council is to declare that the land is no longer required for its former purposes but is required for facilitating the development and ensuring proper planning in the area. In order to appropriate the land, the Council should be satisfied on the requirements of sections 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

- 24 In particular, although the Council has taken reasonable steps to identify limitations on the land, appropriation would protect the Council from unexpected and disruptive injunctions.
- 25 Over time the site has become subject to assorted rights and covenants while the Council's former, extensive, holdings have become fragmented including under the transfer to West Kent Housing in 1989 and various Rights to Buy. It is possible that undocumented rights may have arisen, although no harms have been identified from this project.

Appropriation will facilitate the carrying on of development or redevelopment or achieve the interests of proper planning

- 26 The previous use of the site was as the former White Oak Leisure Centre. A new centre has been constructed and in operation for more than a year.
- 27 The proposed development has an extant permission granted under planning reference 19/02951/HYB. It is intended that a detailed permission will be sought for the housing phase and it would be dependent upon achieving that.
- 28 The appropriation would allow confirmation that the land was no longer required for its former purpose but was to be utilised for the carrying out of a development which has been given due permission.

The development is likely to contribute to the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area

- 29 The proposed development has outline permission as granted under planning reference 19/02951/HYB for development up to 40 residential units. The existing proposals are currently seeking a modest increase to the units.
- 30 In either case the development would provide high quality new housing for the town, which was recognised by the Officer's report for the original planning application as helping to meet a social need set out in policy. Further, the development of the housing also facilitates the development that has already taken place to provide modern leisure facilities for the north of the district.

Whether the use of Section 203 (to override rights) is proportionate with any interference with the human rights of those involved

- 31 In all its functions the Council must consider the impact of its decisions, ensuring that any negative or any positive impacts are balanced against each other and that any final decision is proportionate.
- 32 In this case Section 203 necessarily engages the rights to private property (Article 1 of the First Protocol of the ECHR) and Family Life (Article 8). The Council must therefore consider the balance in the decision to appropriate and whether the steps are only those necessary to achieve the legitimate aim.

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Should an interference arise in practice then it is considered that the role that the development would provide with much needed housing in the District and in facilitating the new leisure centre outweighs the impacts that the development would have. The steps are necessary but proportionate.

Contact with third parties with interests

- 33 Parties have not been individually contacted for the reasons set out above, while the certainty needed for the development would not in practical terms allow correspondence with all potential parties within existing timeframes.

Other Options Considered

- 34 The February 2022 Cabinet and Council report outlined the various alternative development options. Pertinent to this report, is that there are alternative procurement approaches that could have been deployed but were discounted. In particular, the Council could have continued down the route of a traditional design and build route, obtain planning permission and then tendered for a contractor. This route does not support MMC build, as it is imperative that for MMC projects, that a contractor is involved upfront in the design process. This ensures the scheme can be constructed and delivered cost effectively using MMC. Additional benefits of employing MMC are outline above in the report.
- 35 A condition of the grant funding is also a need to be in contract by 31 March 2023, and the procurement approach adopted facilitates this condition.

Risk Assessment

- 36 A table outlining the key risks relating to this project are outlined in Appendix C.

Key Implications

Financial Implications

- 37 The scheme is intended to be funded (ultimately) from capital receipts from the sale of the residential units (see Appendix B for more information).
- 38 The table below shows the expected expenditure over the duration of the project.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Expenditure	250,000	2,050,000	9,500,000	7,450,000	2,602,476	21,852,476

- 39 61 residential units will be disposed of in the open market and according to the

Council's property consultant, they are expected to generate a sales receipt that will cover the scheme's cost and return requirements (see Appendix B).

- 40 Until the receipts from the sales of the residential units are received, short-term external borrowing will be used to fund the scheme. The potential financing costs are outlined in Appendix B.
- 41 Consideration will need to be given to the VAT implications of the project. Dependent on the use of some of the elements of the project it may require specific VAT treatment. Further VAT advice will be sought.

Legal Implications

- 42 The Council has freehold title of the site.
- 43 The Council leased White Oak to Sencio. This has now expired, allowing SDC to redevelop the site. There are no covenants that the council are aware of that are relevant to the development site. The property register states that the land is subject to easements arising from 1) sales of land to West Kent Housing and 2) sales to the public under right to buy. These are mostly unspecified. A full title report has been commissioned and further investigation will be undertaken.
- 44 The Council will need to apply for planning consent and obtain all other necessary statutory approvals (e.g. building control approval).
- 45 Due diligence assessments have identified that it would be suitable to appropriate the site for planning purposes including to ensure proper planning. The Council is authorised to appropriate land that it owns under Section 122 of the Local Government Act where no longer required for the purpose for which it was previously held. The Council may not appropriate any land which consists of open space land unless it has published its intention in a local newspaper for at least two consecutive weeks and given due consideration to any responses received.
- 46 The Council has procured a contractor using a public framework agreement that is compliant with public procurement regulations and the Council's standing orders. The JCT Form of contract is being used and the contract has been staged to safeguard the Council's position from unnecessary costs.
- 47 The Council will need to comply with the OPE Land Release Fund grant conditions. While the conditions are not overly onerous, a key requirement is for the Council to be in contract by the 31 March 2023. The Council has consequently procured a contractor using the Building Better Framework and has accordingly staged the contract.
- 48 There are no state subsidy implications associated with the proposed scheme.

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- 49 The legal implications of appropriation are as otherwise set out in the report.

Equality Assessment

- 50 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. A positive impact on end users is, however, anticipated. In particular, it is worth noting that appropriate “equalities requirements” will be specified in the various contracts to be entered into for the demolition and construction of the scheme. In addition, the scheme is designed to promote an inclusive environment.

Sustainability

- 51 A sustainability checklist has been completed and was previously reported. The scheme will aim to be delivered in line with SDC’s Net Zero ambitions.

Conclusion

- 52 This dynamic scheme provides good quality new homes on the site of the old White Oak Leisure Centre and car park. In addition, it will provide new open space, trees and enhanced landscaping. Together with the new White Oak Leisure Centre it presents a unique regeneration opportunity for Swanley that will set a new design and sustainability benchmark for future growth.

<p>Appendices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A –Design details • Appendix B – Cost plan and development appraisal (Gold Papers – exempt from publication exempt under paragraph 3 “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)” • Appendix C – Outline Risk Assessment • Appendix D – Top Hat Information • Appendix E – Site Plan for appropriation purposes
<p>Background Papers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid planning application ref: 19/02951/HYB • LSI Architects: White Oak Residential Feasibility Study • Geotechnical Investigation report • Cabinet Report dated February 2022 <p>The following background documents are exempt from publication. The applicable reason for this redaction is paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). This is because it could prejudice the returns of a commercial tender that the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathfinders Development Consultant (October 2021): White Oak Residential Viability Appraisal • LSH’s Residential Market Assessment – Bevan Place • Playle and Partners (October 2021): White Oak Residential Order of Cost Estimate • Airey Miller (November 2022): White Oak Residential Financial Appraisal

Detlev Munster
Strategic Head of Property & Commercial

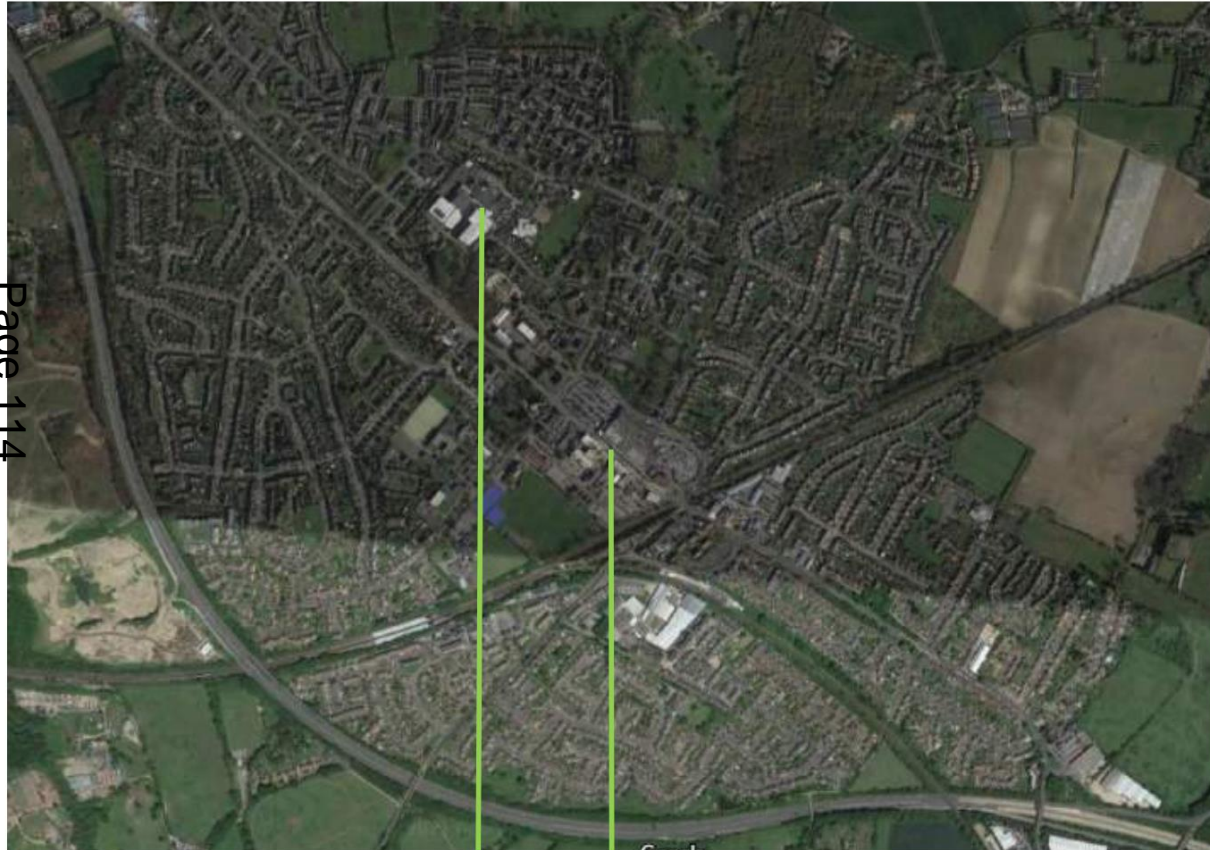
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B O N D B R Y A N

White Oak Residential Development
Swanley

Situation



Development site

Town Centre

Area for residential development

Built 2022

White Oak Residential Development

Context



Page 115



Leisure centre



2 storey dwellings



Apartment blocks

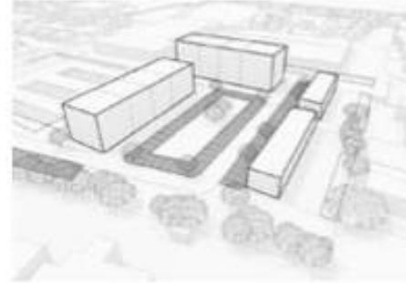
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White Oak Residential Development

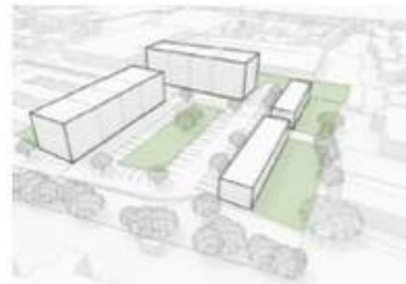
Design development



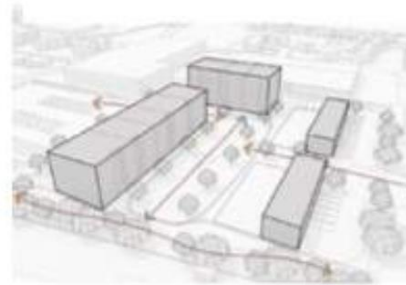
Precedent images: communal green space and varied building forms



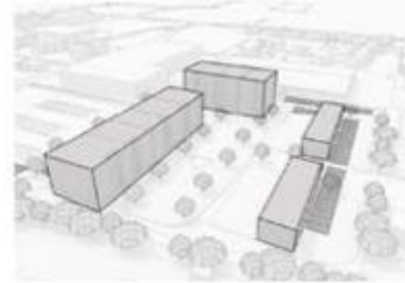
Stage 1 proposal: dominating car park arrangement



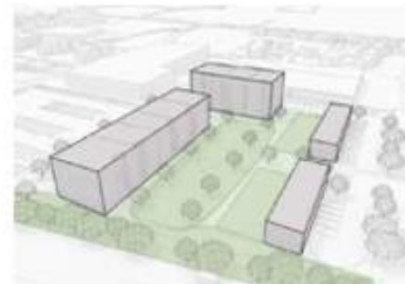
Stage 1 proposal: fragmented green space



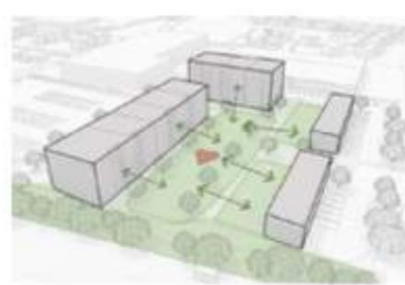
Potential to improve permeability and connectivity through the site



Potential to push parking to perimeter



Potential to bring green spaces together



Creating a green heart with building frontages responding to the shared green space

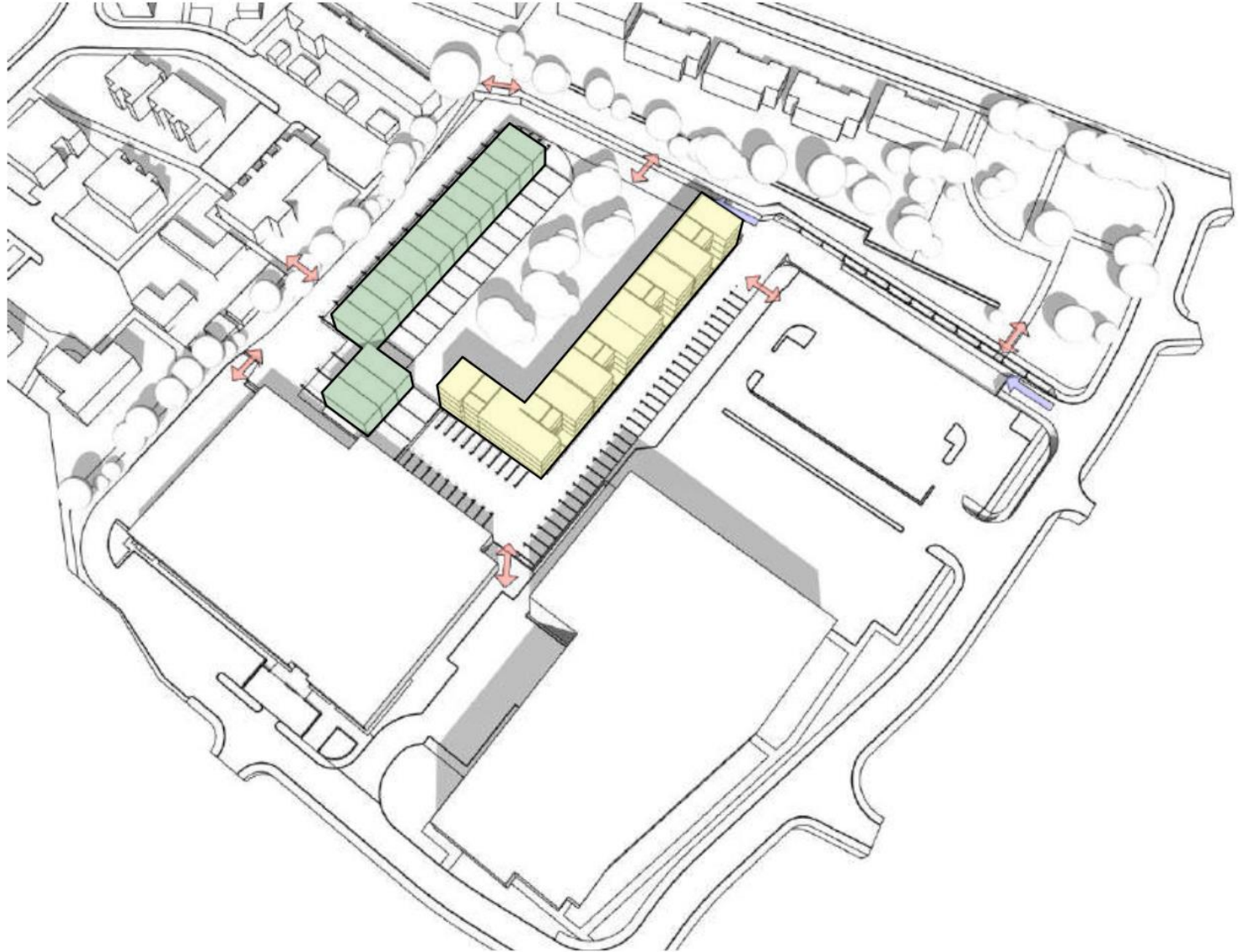


White Oak Residential Development

Design development



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White Oak Residential Development

RIBA 2 – Option B (Preferred Option)



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Typology				
Key	Type	Number of storeys	NDSS Target area (sqm)	Quantity

Apartment 4 storeys block				
	1b2p	1.00	50.00	19
	2b4p	1.00	70.00	31
				50

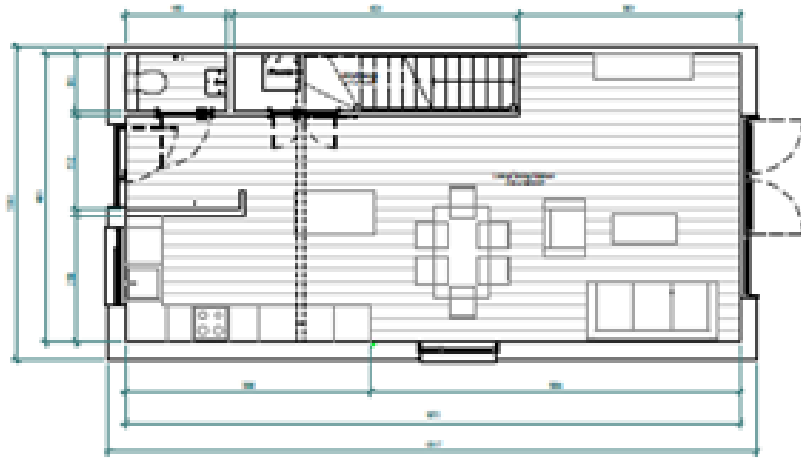
House				
	3b5p	2.00	93.00	13
				13
				63

Parking Schedule		
Type	Quantity	

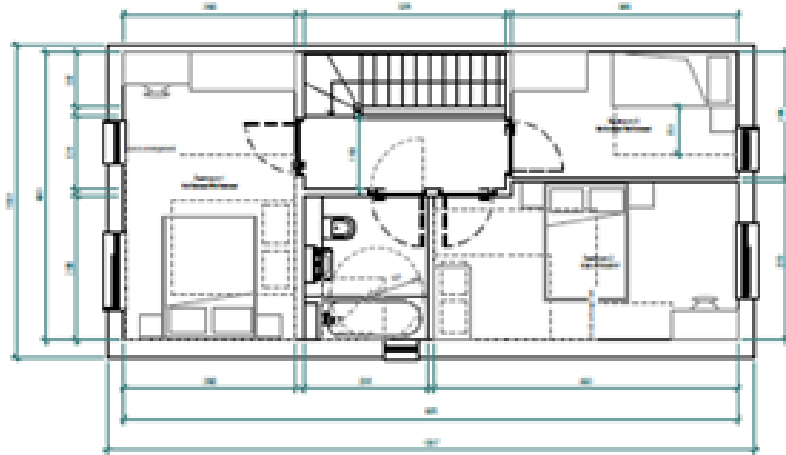
Space_Parking	68
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3-Bed house internal layout

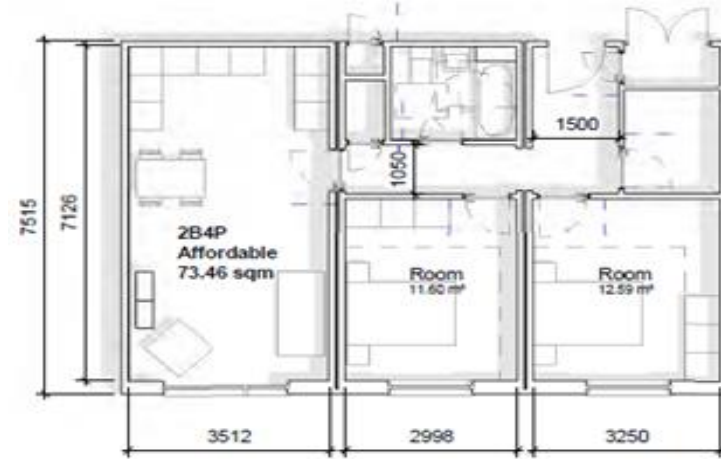


Ground floor plan



First floor plan

2-Bed flat internal layout





White Oak Residential Development

Modular Construction



Artist's Impressions



Appendix C - Outline Risk Assessment

The table below summarises the projects risk register and outlines the key project risks considered relevant for this report.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	MITIGATION
Finance	Capital receipts from the sale of the residential units are not achieved.	Residential units are appropriately designed and to be finished for the target market. Intention is to also commence marketing of units as soon as possible to achieve off-plan sales. This will allow us to gauge and track market interest. In unlikely event that sales are not achieved, Council will consider issuing AST (place on market for rent) through an appropriate vehicle and delay capital receipts.
Finance	Change in interest rates resulting in a higher cost of capital	Rates will continue to be monitored and always considered on the side of caution.
Finance	Correct VAT treatment for this complicated scheme may increase costs.	Expert VAT advice being sought to assess and minimise any financial impact.
Planning	Planning consent not obtained.	Pre-planning discussions will take place with the planning and highways authority and advice incorporated in the scheme. Initial feedback has been positive.
Developer	SDC acting as developer is exposed to more risk than in previous capital projects where it has transferred risk by procurement via frameworks and developers.	Ensure adequate resourcing, programming, contingencies and robust project management in place. Team will ensure procurement of suitable, well qualified consultants and advisors to assist in delivery where needed.
Economic/Health	Impact of Covid-19 pandemic, (tender pricing, risk pricing, programme fixing, contractual amendments, availability of labour, availability of materials, onerous sub-contractor conditions), causes additional cost and/or delay to the programme.	Include Covid19 question in PQQ. Provide detailed tender information to assist on risk assessment and mitigation. Close monitoring of Covid-19 and latest government guidance. Contingency and inflation allowance provided.
Construction	Capital costs exceed budget due to factors including: construction market tender disinterest, tender risk cover pricing, tender period over Christmas, covid-19 costs.	Contractor appointed using BBF Framework which has agreed rates schedules that are competitive. As a result, cost certainty with construction costs (manufacturing) is obtained.
Construction	Delays in scheme approval lead to increased costs due to construction inflation.	Robust information submitted to allow SDC Committees/Cabinet/Council to make timely decisions. Project Contract sum based on programme.
Construction	Problems during ground works (contamination/obstructions/soil type) exceed allowances based on RIBA stage 3 surveys, cause delay and extra costs.	Detailed ground investigation surveys will be undertaken prior to a contractor being appointed. Realistic contractor and client contingencies in place for unforeseens.

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		Knowledge already available from Leisure Centre construction to feed into design/construction of residential.
Public opposition	Residents oppose the scheme.	Community engagement undertaken in 2017 when consulting on leisure centre redevelopment. Extensive discussion with local Members to refine and improve the design.



TopHat

Who we are

Technology enabled manufacturer of volumetric modular homes, established in 2016.

Based in a dedicated 125,000sqft advanced manufacturing facility in Foston, Derbyshire, the business currently employs 200 people.

TopHat's integrated technology platform drives industry leading design variation and customisation, manufacturing efficiency and quality.

The UK's first zero embodied carbon house builder TopHat has diversified routes to market through:

- ✓ Turnkey
- ✓ Partnerships
- ✓ Private sale

TopHat has invested more than £150m of private sector funds to date in the development of the company.



Key accomplishments

- First true digital home manufacturer with scalable systems and process
- UK's first zero embodied carbon home builder
- 200 homes already in the ground featuring 12 different house types
- Catalogue of 22 semi-detached and detached homes and 7 apartment types, with an established 4 week DfMA process for a new production ready house type using TopHat standard details
- 5 year framework with Ikea/Skanska joint venture, Boklok, to deliver all their off-site homes in the UK
- Place on the Building Better Framework to deliver circa 500 homes per year

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Pipeline -strategic partnerships



Boklok

5 year framework Agreement to deliver upwards of **1,500** homes.

- 2022 - 210 homes**
- 2023 - 500 homes**
- 2024 - 500+ homes**
- 2025 - 500+ homes**

This represents 70% of F1 capacity.



Goldman Sachs

Strategic Partnership with Goldman Sachs BTR fund to deliver several billion pounds of BTR product with the first 4 sites, **800** homes already identified.



Building Better

A 5 year framework covering over 30 housing associations allowing the direct appointment of TopHat to deliver both houses and apartments. The framework, in the first 2 weeks, has generated close to **1,000** homes of enquiries.



Delivered projects



The Slivers, Rugby

CLIENT	NUMBER OF HOMES
Urban & Civic	38



Kitchener Barracks, Chatham

CLIENT	NUMBER OF HOMES
TopHat Developments	280



Airport Road, Bristol

CLIENT	NUMBER OF HOMES
BoKlok	77



White Road, Chatham

CLIENT	NUMBER OF HOMES
Medway Council	20

Kitchener Barracks, Chatham

NUMBER OF HOMES	CLIENT	SQUARE METRES
280	TopHat Developments	30.000



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Kitchener Barracks, Chatham

This project involves the construction of over 300 residential units on a former Ministry of Defence site in Chatham, Kent.

The homes are a mixture of 1 and 2-bedroom apartments and 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses. All houses are either delivered to national space standards or above and all significantly exceed the requirements of Part L.

The project is a development owned by TopHat and being delivered as a turnkey solution by TopHat Communities under a D&B JCT contract with the development SPV.

The site involves the delivery of over 600 modules, across each of the different house types and phases.

The site is very difficult, with a significant fall from the top to the bottom of the site. It has therefore been essential that the phasing and sequencing is cognisant of the site challenges. The project is being delivered in various phases, with Phases 1 and 2 now complete and Phase 3 due to commence in February 2021.

The site also includes a heritage building, which TopHat has also developed and completed. This demonstrates our ability to take on more complex sites than most offsite manufacturers.

All completed units have been sold by TopHat, with no issues occurring in sales from concerned mortgage lenders etc. In fact, the sales point of Kitchener Barracks has exceeded other local developments.

The houses have been delivered to an outstanding air tightness, with less than $1\text{m}^3/\text{hr}/\text{m}^2@50\text{pa}$ being achieved in some of the homes. This has been achieved through the use of triple glazing and exceptionally high levels of insulation.

The homes have been delivered with a number of environmentally efficient technologies, including MVHR systems and wastewater heat recovery. This is in addition to the exceptional air tightness.

The completed units have therefore all received excellent EPC scores.

The final phase of the work commences in February 2021 and is used to offset any spare capacity in the factory.



The Slivers, Rugby

NUMBER OF HOMES	CLIENT	SQUARE METRES
38	Urban & Civic	3500



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The Slivers, Rugby

This project involves the construction of 38 residential units for Urban & Civic in Rugby, Northamptonshire.

The homes are a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms, terraced and semi-detached. In total, 76 modules are being used for the delivery of this project.

The project is a supply-only contract, delivered under a JCT D&B Contract, directly with the developer.

The site is very tight and known as the Slivers, with access from a single entrance, as shown in the below image.

TopHat has worked with the developer and the Local Authority to ensure the project obtained planning permission based on the standard TopHat designs.

The houses are being delivered across a phased, 6-month programme to suit the sales aspirations of the developer.



White Road, Chatham

NUMBER OF HOMES

20

CLIENT

Medway Council

SQUARE METRES

1500



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White Road, Chatham

The design, supply and installation of 20 affordable homes at an infill site in White Road, Chatham.

The project was delivered under a D&B JCT contract. The project was constructed using 40 volumetric modules, with the top volume of the house having an integral roof structure.

The homes are all 2-bedroom, 4 person homes, delivered in accordance with national space standards and exceeding the requirements of Part L.

All homes have achieved an airtightness of less than $3\text{m}^3/\text{hr}/\text{m}^2@50\text{pa}$, a significant improvement on the $5\text{m}^3/\text{hr}/\text{m}^2@50\text{pa}$ required by the client.

The homes have been delivered under a turnkey, design and build contract by TopHat, working with a local groundwork subcontractor preferred by the Local Authority.

The site is very tight, located behind an existing community centre and was essentially a waste ground. As can be seen from the plan above, there is a single, tight entrance onto the site.

TopHat secured the project in early 2020 and worked with the Local Authority to develop the design and obtain planning permission, based on the standard TopHat house designs.

TopHat commenced the works in the summer of 2020, clearing the site and installing infrastructure for the homes. The first modules were installed in October 2020 and completion was achieved in December 2020 to the high satisfaction of the client.



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Airport Road, Bristol

NUMBER OF HOMES

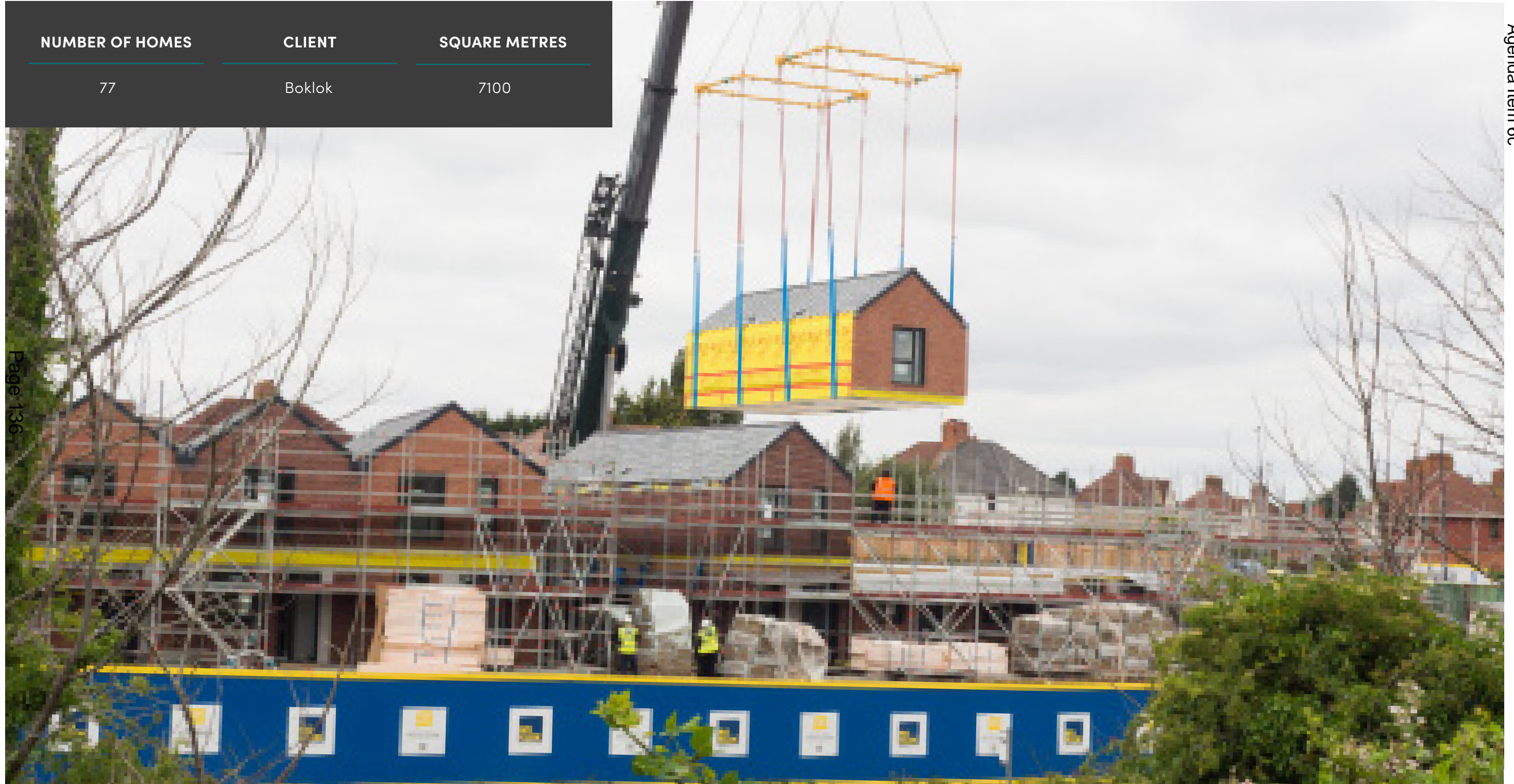
77

CLIENT

Boklok

SQUARE METRES

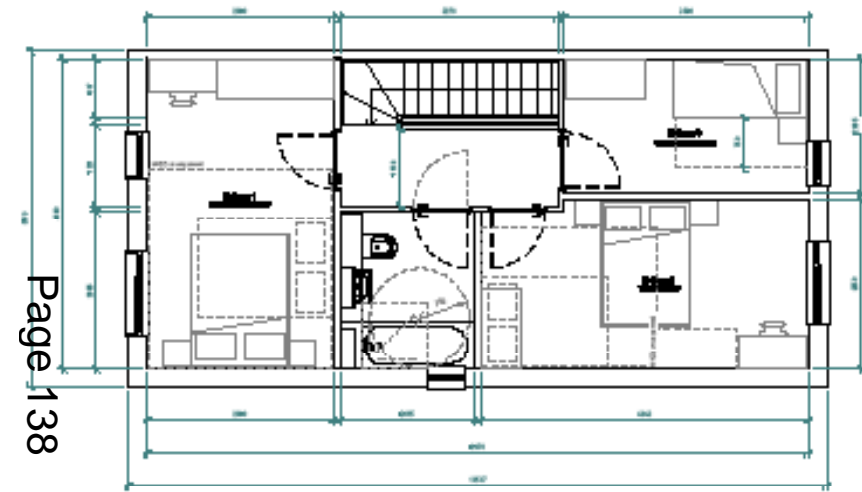
7100



Proposed house type

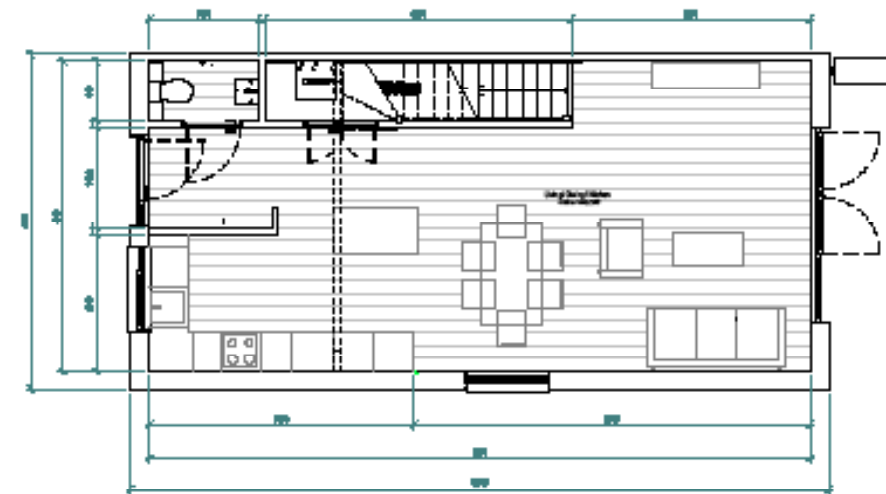


3Bedroom_5Person



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First floor plan



Ground floor plan



Tenure:

Market Sale and Affordable

Standards:

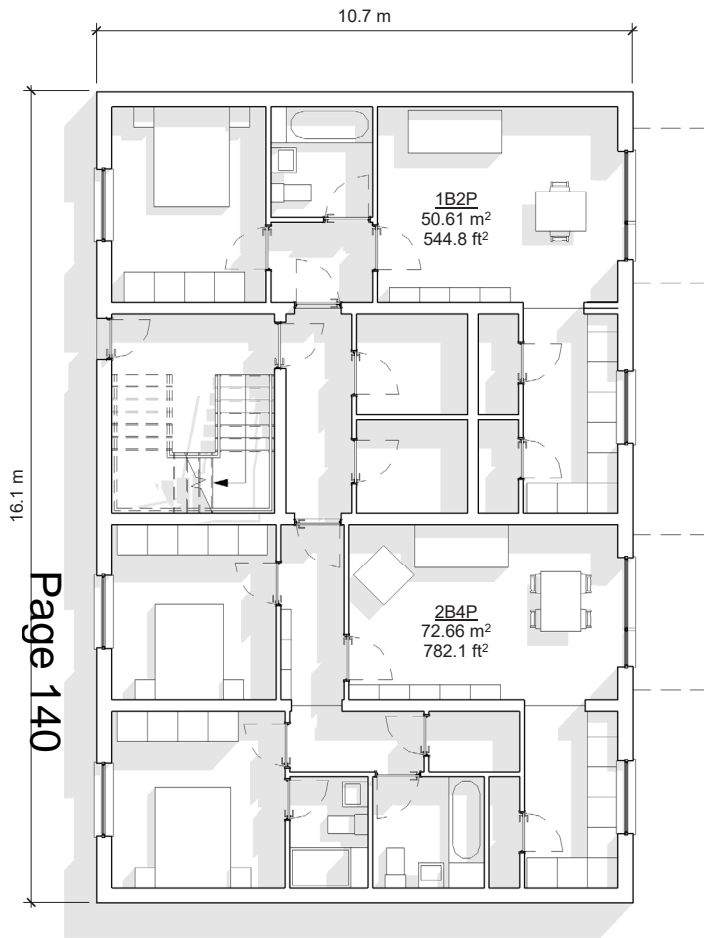
- NDSS compliant as 3B_5P (if en-suite variation selected NDSS compliant as 3B_4P only)
- M4(2) compliant (porch upgrade required, not shown on the plan)
- Doors and windows are Secured by Design compliant
- Window positions shown on the plans above will vary depending on the elevation option selected
- Please refer to project specific specification for product's layout options, finishes and fittings

Proposed apartment type



THGA 1_50.6 sqm / 72.66 sqm

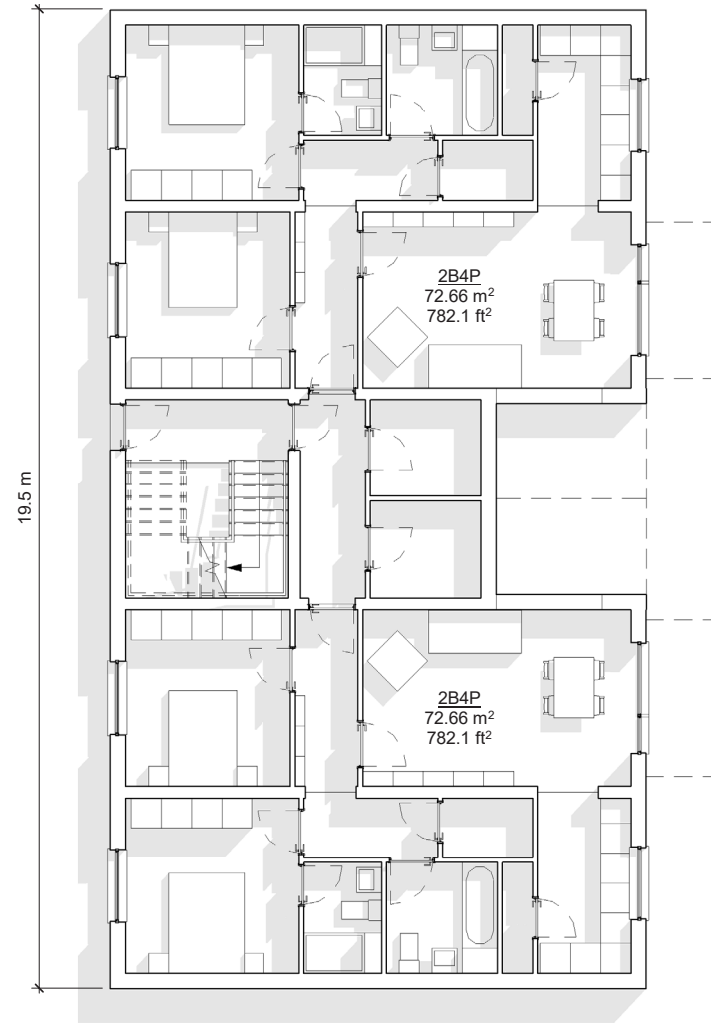
1Bedroom_2Person 2Bedroom_4Person



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THGA 2_72.66 sqm

2Bedroom_4Person



Tenure:

PRS

Standards:

- NDSS compliant as 1B_2P & 2B_4P
- Doors and windows are Secured by Design compliant
- Window positions shown on the plans above will vary depending on the elevation option selected
- Please refer to project specific specification for product's layout options, finishes and fittings



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*Images for illustrative purposes only

Cladding technology

A comprehensive range providing a total solution



Buff



Red - Multi



Charcoal



Red



Buff Roman Format



Slate Roman Format



Built examples

TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
1.0 Roof Form	1.1 Front to back pitch (F/B)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.2 Side to side pitch (S/S)				

Page 142	2.0 Energy	2.1 Compliant with Part L				
		2.1.1. Fabric air tightness 5m3/m2h @ 5Pa or better	✓		✓	
		2.1.2 Vaillant Eco-Tec or similar gas boiler				
		2.2 35% reduction - ASHP				
		2.2.1 Electric air-source heat pump with hot water tank	✓	✓	✓	
		2.2.2 Standard radiators baseline	✓	✓	✓	
		2.2.3 Flat panel radiators upgrade				
		2.3 Net Zero Carbon				
		2.3.1 3m3/m2h @ 50Pa or better		✓		
		2.3.2 Daikin or similar electric air-source heat pump with hot water tank				
		2.3.3 MVHR system		✓		
		2.3.4 Roof-mounted PV panels		✓		
		2.3.5 Roof-mounted PV panels with battery storage				

2.2.1 Air source heat pump (electric)

Brand Vaillant

Model Unitower and Aerotherm-plus

Size External unit (mm) 765 high x 450 deep x 1100 wide
Internal unit (uniTOWER) 1866 high x 693 deep x 595 wide

Performance Excellent A+++ rated, SCOP of ~4.5

Description Monoblock Air Source Heat Pump with integrated high performance direct hot water cylinder

* Unit manufacturer may vary from this dependant on supply



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
3.0 External Finishes	3.1 Roof				
	3.1.1 Clay/ concrete tiles baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.1.2 Pressed metal				
	3.2 Cladding				
	3.2.1 Mauer printed brick system - A2 rated (see separate catalogue)	✓	✓	✓	
	3.2.2 Mauer brick slip system - A1 rated				
	3.3 Windows				
	3.3.1 PVCu Logik chamfered sash	✓	✓	✓	
	3.3.2 PVCu Logik flush sash				
	3.3.3 Alu/timber composite				✓
	3.3.4 Aluminium triple glazing				
	3.4 External Doors				
	3.4.1 GRP skinned solid door	✓	✓	✓	
	3.4.2 Alu/timber composite with fan light only				✓
	3.4.3 PVCu patio door 2035 x 2100	✓	✓	✓	
	3.4.4 Alu patio door 2035 x 2100				✓
	3.5 Porch				
	3.5.1 Canopy	✓	✓	✓	
	3.5.2 Surround				✓
	3.6 Rainwater goods				
	3.6.1 Plastic gutter down pipe	✓	✓	✓	
	3.6.2 Aluminium gutter and down pipe				✓

3.2.2 Standard radiator baseline

Brand Sterad or similar

Model K1 Classic Compact

Size Selection of radiator sizes based on room size and load requirements

Colour White

Description Standard profiled panel



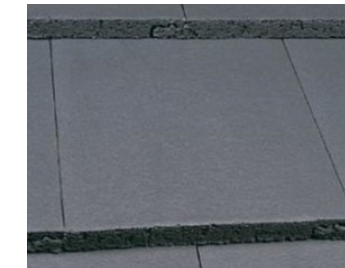
3.1.1 Clay/ Concrete tile baseline

Brand Marley or similar

Model Clay or Concrete

Colour Smooth grey or Mosborough red*

Size 400x400mm



3.6.1 Plastic gutter & downpipe

Brand Floplast or similar

Model Square line

Size 114mm gutter and 63mm square downpipe

Colour Anthracite grey



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
4.0 Internal Finishes	4.1 Bathroom wall and floors				
	4.1.1 Porcelain 300x600mm wall tile baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	4.1.2 Porcelain 600x600mm floor tile baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	4.1.3 Porcelain 300x600mm wall tile upgrade				✓
	4.1.4 Porcelain 600x600mm floor tile upgrade				✓
	4.1.5 Wood effect LVT tile baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	4.1.6 Multipanel single wall panel	✓	✓	✓	
	4.2 Floor coverings				
	4.2.1 Wood effect vinyl tiles (to all ground floor) baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	4.2.2 Engineered wooden flooring to all ground floor				✓
	4.2.3 Carpet (to stairs and FF landing and bedrooms) baseline			✓	✓
	4.2.4 Carpet (to stairs and FF landing and bedrooms) upgrade				

4.1.1 Ceramic tile

Brand Parkside or similar

Model Kirn

Colour Bianco White to family bathrooms
Beige to en-suites "

Size 600 x 600mm floor tiles and 300 x 600mm wall tile

Performance Suitable for exterior and interior use in wet areas

Description Matte finish

"*Includes full height tiling to walls around bath and shower and half height tiling to remaining walls apart from upstand behind the sink and toilet which is supplied as bathroom furniture (refer to 7.3 Bathroom Furniture)



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
5.0 Kitchen	5.1 Furniture				
	5.1.1 Slab panel doors baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.1.2 Shaker doors upgrade				
	5.1.3 Carcass baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	5.1.4 Wooden carcass				✓
	5.1.5 Laminate top baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	5.1.6 Quartz top upgrade				✓
	5.1.7 Silestone top upgrade				
	5.1.8 Handles baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	5.1.9 Handles/ handleless upgrade				✓
	5.2 Kitchen sink and tap				
	5.2.1 Surface mounted sink	✓	✓	✓	
	5.2.2 Undermounted sink				✓
	5.2.3 Bristan or similar kitchen tap baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5.2.4 Hansgrohe or similar kitchen tap upgrade				
	5.3 Appliances*				
	5.3.1 Hotpoint oven, hob & extract	✓	✓	✓	
	5.3.2 Bosch				✓
	5.3.3 Miele or similar				

- * Appliances included are hob, oven and extract
- * Client requested alternative specification items will be considered
- * Unticked items are client cost options

5.1.1 Doors

Manufacturer Woodlands, Symphony or Benchmark

Model Slab door - Egger laminate wrapped

Colour Cashmere grey in matt finish

Size Base units - Standard height and widths

Highlevel units Standard tall units in standard widths

*Door and plinth to be provided to allow purchasers to fit integrated dishwasher and washer dryer



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
6.0 WCs and bathrooms	6.1 W.C and family bathroom sanitaryware				
	6.1.1 Ideal Standard or similar WC sink baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.1.2 Ideal Standard or similar family bathroom sink baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.1.3 Ideal Standard or similar toilet baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.1.4 Ideal Standard or similar bath baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.1.5 Roca or similar WC sink upgrade				✓
	6.1.6 Roca or similar Family bathroom sink upgrade				✓
	6.1.7 Roca or similar Toilet upgrade				✓
	6.1.8 Bath pole and curtain baseline	✓	✓		
	6.1.9 Bath screen glass upgrade			✓	✓
	6.2 Brassware				
	6.2.1 Bristan or similar basin tap baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.2.2 Hansgrohe or similar basin tap upgrade				✓
	6.2.3 Bristan or similar bath filler baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.2.4 Hansgrohe or similar basin bath filler upgrade				✓
	6.2.5 Bristan or similar shower mixer baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	6.2.6 Hansgrohe or similar shower mixer upgrade				✓
	6.2.7 Waterworks or similar upgrade throughout				
	6.2.8 Toilet holder + door clothes hooks baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6.2.9 M4(3) grab rail pack				
	6.3 Vanity Furniture				
	6.3.1 No vanity furniture and mirror baseline	✓	✓		
	6.3.2 Vanity furniture, concealed cistern and mirror cabinet unit			✓	✓

6.1.4 Bath

Manufacturer Ideal Standard or similar

Model Tesi

Colour White

Size 700(W) x1700(L)

Description Acrylic bath with waste overflow in chrome. White acrylic side panel front to allow maintenance access

*lower overflow version required if 110 l/per person per day required



6.2.1 Basin tap baseline

Manufacturer Bristan or similar

Model Orta tap

Colour Chrome

*to WCs only



6.2.3 Bath and shower mixer upgrade

Manufacturer Bristan or similar

Model Clio Bath filler

Colour Chrome

*to family bathrooms



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
7.0 Electrical fixtures and fittings	7.1 Lighting				
	7.1.1 Pendant baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	7.1.2 Pendant upgrade				✓
	7.1.3 Recessed downlight baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.1.4 External porch light baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	7.1.5 External porch light upgrade				✓
	7.1.6 External patio light baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	7.1.7 External patio light upgrade				✓
Page 147	7.2 Sockets and switches				
	7.2.1 White PVC baseline	✓	✓	✓	
	7.2.2 White PVC USB sockets upgrade				✓
	7.2.3 Brush aluminium upgrade				
	7.2.4 Brush bronze or brass upgrade				
	7.2.5 Shaver socket in master bedroom ensuite	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.3 Media				
	7.3.1 TV and Wifi media plate	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.3.2 Sky+ connection in living room and master bedroom				
	7.4 Heating and H&S				
	7.4.1 Standard central thermostat	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7.4.2 Hive or similar thermostat				
	7.4.3 Heat and smoke detector	✓	✓	✓	✓

- * Appliances included are hob, oven and extract
- * Client requested alternative specification items will be considered
- * Unticked items are client cost options

7.1.1 Pendant baseline

Manufacturer Hager or similar

Model 624SEL212/9

Colour White

Size 700(W) x1700(L)

Description Safety pendant set 9" - short skirt



7.1.3 Recessed downlight baseline

Manufacturer Ovia or similar

Model Nano 5

Colour White

Diameter 90mm



7.1.4 External porch light baseline

Manufacturer Aurora or similar

Model EN-WL5BLK

Colour Satin chrome or Matt black

Description 240V GU10 IP44 aluminium fixed up/down wall light black(white)



TopHat specification

TopHat Specification item		Standard	Net Zero	PRS / Sale	Premium
8.0 Internal joinery	8.1 Internal doors				
	8.1.1 Plain flush door	✓	✓	✓	✓
	8.1.2 Thirsk grained door				
	8.1.3 Ironmongery baseline (zoo)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	8.1.4 Oversized internal doors				
	8.2 Skirtings and architraves				
	8.2.1 baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
	8.2.2 upgrade				
	8.3 Stairs				
	8.3.1 Baseline (painted handrail, mdf treads)	✓	✓	✓	
	8.3.2 Upgrade (timber handrail, mdf treads)				✓
	8.3.3 Upgrade (softwood handrail and stair)				

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8.1.1 Internal doors plain baseline

Manufacturer Ian Firth, Vicaima or similar

Model IFV.10 Paint grade plus

Colour White primed

Size Imperial Door Sizes, Thickness 35mm

Description Semi solid core, supplied and fitted with quicksemble hinges in a chrome finish



8.1.3 Door furniture baseline

Manufacturer Zoo or similar

Model ZCS050SS

Colour Satin stainless

Size 125mm x 19mm dia oval section handle

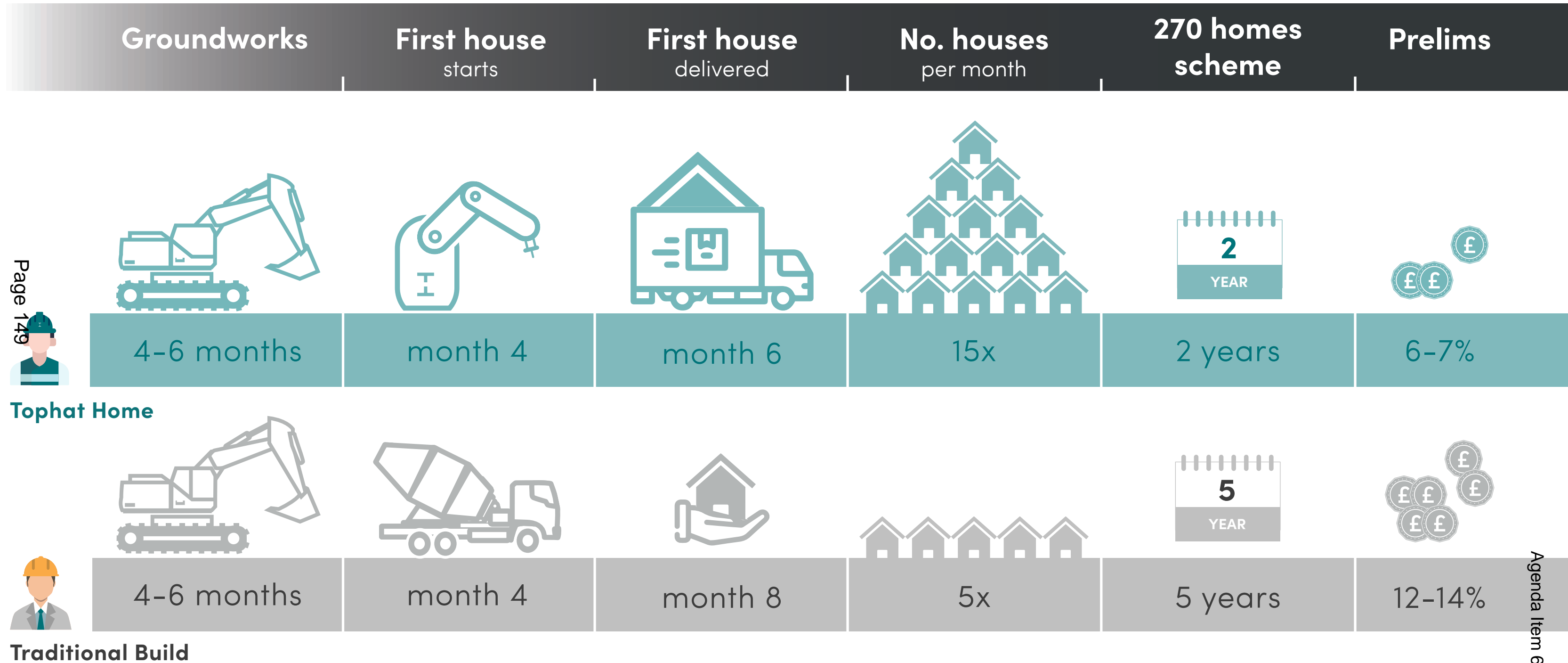
Description Associated hardware to match



Agenda Item 6c

Timescales

Methods of construction timescale comparison.



Tophat Home



Traditional Build

Sustainability

Our approach to delivering homes is highly sustainable. Not only in operation, but in delivery too.

A TopHat home has 82% less embodied carbon than a traditional home, as we use low carbon impact materials, such as timber, and reduce waste through precision manufacturing. TopHat homes are also significantly better to run, with our standard homes achieving over a 50% reduction in carbon emissions over a 60 year period. Our standard homes also exceed all current environmental legislation and performance requirements.

The homes we deliver have the environment and sustainability at their core, through both intelligent decision and smart manufacturing processes. In practical terms, we design so that all homes we manufacture use less energy and can be zero carbon.

We don't stop at the end user experience. Through every stage of design and manufacture we are seeking to build in high levels of environmental and sustainability performance. This is achieved through less waste in the construction process and a significant reduction in transportation to and from sites.

Through the reduction of drafts and heat leakage, to the addition of features such as solar panels and the use of proprietary cladding systems, the costs of heating and running a TopHat home are reduced. Our homes minimise their the day-to-day impact on the environment.

Our choice of materials and where we source them also improves sustainability as we've in-creased the life expectancy of our homes, ensuring that they perform for the long term.



Impeccable environmental and social standards

Ultra low embodied carbon, lower energy in use, affordable homes at scale, and jobs created where they are needed.

The greenest new homes being built at scale in the UK today:

Ultra low embodied carbon	Future Homes Standard ready	Lower carbon in-use	Lower lifetime energy costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Timber frame all sustainably sourced ✓ Low carbon cladding ✓ 82% less embodied carbon than the average new build home ✓ Already 65% lower than the RIBA 2030 target for whole life embodied carbon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Structure designed ready to take enhanced levels of insulation ✓ All TopHat homes have air source heat pumps as standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A TopHat home will save a significant amount of the CO₂ compared to a traditional house ✓ 50% reduction in carbon in use compared to a traditional house ✓ Air source heat pumps as standard can deliver net zero carbon with the use of PVs ✓ TopHat will deliver net zero carbon as the grid becomes green 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Substantially less energy consumption than the average home in England (~30% lower than a traditional house¹) ✓ Zero bill option can be delivered, with potential to leverage the offering between zero bills for customers (100% capital contribution) and no capital contribution, but 100% revenue opportunity for TopHat (which could be securitised)

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Addressing the significant shortage of affordable social housing and creating jobs where they are needed:



Sources: Statista, WSP Analysis (1) Refers to a 3 bed house which is not a new build.

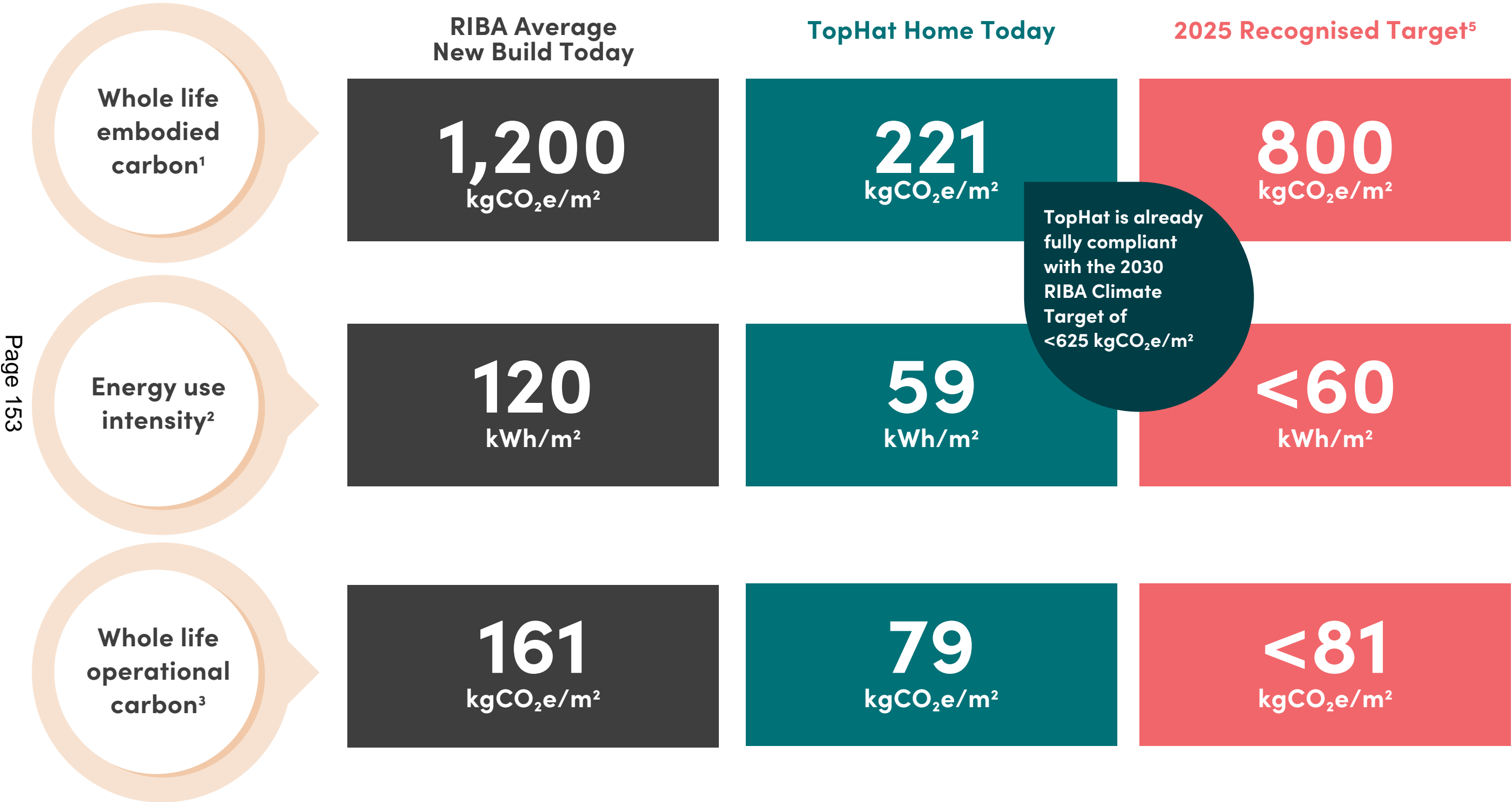
EU taxonomy

To meet Article 9 standards, TopHat needs to make a contribution to at least one environmental objective while doing no significant harm to any other environmental objectives, as well as comply with social safeguards and technical screening.

Specified environmental objectives	TopHat's contribution
Climate change mitigation	<p>Instead of using heavily polluting materials, such as concrete and bricks, TopHat uses materials that have a significantly reduced impact on the environment</p> <p>The use of sustainable timber for TopHat homes has a long term positive impact, as additional trees are planted, which over time will sequester CO₂ out of the environment. Based on Class A1 A3 embodied carbon, when factoring in carbon sequestration, the TopHat product actually results in a reduction in CO₂</p> <p>The TopHat home already has significantly less whole life embodied carbon than the 2030 target set by RIBA (RIBA 625kgCO₂e/m² v TopHat 221kgCO₂e/m²)</p> <p>TopHat uses air source heat pumps to provide heat, which are all electric, eliminating the use of gas and reducing TopHat's environmental impact climate change adaption</p>
Climate change adaption	<p>TopHat's homes are designed to meet the UK Government's Future Homes Standard, which will come into force in 2025. This requires homes to be ready for future environmental changes, with better building performance</p> <p>TopHat homes are also all electric, meaning that as the grid continues to decarbonise, TopHat homes become lower carbon overtime</p> <p>TopHat homes are factory built, using automation driven from a 3D model, which means each home has a digital twin, enabling future adaptation and change much more easily than a traditionally built home</p>
Sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources	<p>TopHat's homes use no water in their manufacture, as opposed to traditionally built homes, which according to the NHBC use about 8,000 litres of water on average</p> <p>The elimination of water reduces the risk of contamination to existing water courses, whilst also reducing consumption pressures</p>
Transition to a circular economy	<p>TopHat's homes can be de constructed, and reused or rebuilt</p> <p>If a particular site became unviable or uninhabitable, it is feasible for a resident to move their home to another location</p> <p>The TopHat digital twin allows for adaptation in the future as well and changes can be made much more easily than a traditionally built home</p> <p>Pollution prevention and control</p>
Pollution prevention and control	<p>By building homes in a controlled, factory environment, we are reducing the risk of pollution into the environment</p>
Protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems	<p>Does no significant harm</p>

Embodied carbon lifecycle assessment

At present, TopHat meets and exceeds RIBA targets set for 2025.



(1) New build, compliance approach. (2) The amount of carbon emitted during the making of a building. (2) Indicator of the energy efficiency of a building’s design and/or operations. (3) The amount of carbon emitted during the operational or in use phase of a building. (4) Business as usual, standard house, from RIBA. (5) Based on RIBA 2025 target; RIBA 2025 target assumes a highly decarbonised grid, which will benefit TopHat too, as an all electric provider.

Zero carbon houses specification

TopHat can deliver Zero Carbon Houses based on our standard modular fabric. We define these as having net zero CO₂ emissions over the course of a year resulting from regulated energy use. The below is based on energy use and CO₂ emission calculations performed in SAP 9.92 as required by ADLIA 2013 (amended 2016).

Roof	Modular timber frame ceiling cassette fully filled with mineral fibre insulation. A conventional trussed rafter roof is constructed on site following the placement of modules. A further layer of mineral fibre insulation is installed in the roof space. U value of 0.11 W/m ² .K
Walls	140mm structural timber frame, fully filled with mineral fibre insulation. An additional layer of mineral fibre insulation is applied to the outside of the structural frame. Finished externally with a highly realistic brick effect ventilated façade system, U value of 0.17 W/m ² .K
Floors	Suspended timber ground floor cassette fully filled with mineral fibre insulation, U value of 0.13W/m ² .KW/m ² .K
Windows	PVCu double glazed windows achieving a whole unit U value of 1.2 W/m ² .K Possible triple glazing dependant on location.
Air Permeability	Between 3 and 5 m ³ /m ² /hour @ 50Pa
Heat generator	Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), currently Vaillant AroTHERM
Heat emitter	55°C radiators
Water heating	From main ASHP system via 190 litre domestic hot water cylinder with immersion heater boost and disinfection function, currently Vaillant UniTOWER
Ventilation	MEV (centralised continuous extract ventilation) from wet rooms and kitchen, trickle vents to provide fresh air
Electrical installation	Conventional twin and earth system, with first floor distribution board to aid modularisation
Lighting	100% LED
Renewable energy	Solar photovoltaic system (PV). Minimum system capacity of approximately 3kWp, for example a THC 1 house type in ZCH guide would require 2.88kWp single south facing array. An example system from Viridian Solar, based on the Clearline Fusion product would comprise 9 portrait format PV panels 320W resulting in an array is 5.4m high and 3.3m wide
EV charging	Optional provision for 7kW EV charging point to front or side façade of house

This specification requires that a sufficient area of suitably orientated roof be available for PV installation. This is generally possible but does depend on the orientation and roof form, both of which should be considered at planning stage to ensure the cost of ZCH houses is minimised. Please see Impact of Orientation and Roof form on ZCH - RD Briefing Note for further explanation of specification and cost implications.

1 NO POVERTY



TopHat delivers energy efficient homes, which the poorest in society will be able to afford to heat, assisting in the reduction of fuel poverty

TopHat creates increased capacity in the housing market, enabling more people to access affordable, high-quality homes.

TopHat creates well paid jobs within areas of higher unemployment and away from areas of saturated employment. As a living wage employer, we create higher value jobs, in areas with more affordable housing.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



We use modern manufacturing techniques to reduce manual lifting, working at height and other dangerous activities typically associated with construction. The outcome is a lower risk of injury and poor health.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



TopHat supports its employees by providing access to further education, supporting people through apprenticeships and degrees.

TopHat works with those who have had limited educational opportunity, creates a supportive working environment and creates learning opportunities through apprenticeships.

All employees in TopHat have access to continued education and training, via a range of different means to suit their aspirations, aims and intentions.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



TopHat does not accept any form of discrimination and will publish its paygap on an annual basis. We will enable women to have a full and effective engagement in our decision making.

We use technology, intelligent work practices and modern manufacturing techniques to create greater access for women to the workforce.

TopHat will adopt policies that actively promote gender equality throughout the TopHat business.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



TopHat will develop manufacturing processes that eliminate the use of water to manufacture the homes in our advanced manufacturing facility.

We will design homes that minimise water usage, putting less pressure on a limited supply.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



TopHat does not build homes that consume fossil fuels at the point of ownership, with all homes powered by electric alone. This eliminates the use of fossil fuels by the owner, whilst also eliminating CO2 emissions on the development.

All TopHat houses will achieve a minimum EPC score of B - demonstrating the delivery of new homes that exceed minimum targets.

All TopHat homes will be adaptable to ensure PVs and other green and new technologies can be easily added to the home.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



TopHat will achieve higher productivity, through technological upgrades and innovation. We will create new jobs in highly-sustainable, low-carbon industry.

We will focus on growing our business, without environmental degradation, through the use of renewable, sustainable and alternative materials, wherever possible.

Create high value work opportunities for young people and people with disabilities, whilst ensuring equal pay for equal work.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



TopHat promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, by creating sustainable homes, in areas less economically well-off.

TopHat invests and promotes innovation through a dedicated research and development team, who develop, test and assess new, sustainable technologies and products.

TopHat develops a product that increases affordability of homes, by increasing

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

TopHat's homes are used in the regeneration of regions, where new, affordable and sustainable homes are needed.

TopHat delivers homes that cater for the needs of a wide range of people, providing accessible homes, that are affordable and safe places to live.

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15 LIFE ON LAND

TopHat actively purchases sustainable timber that results in reforestation.

TopHat actively develops homes that improve local biodiversity and encourage native tree planting.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

TopHat provides access to safe and affordable homes for the majority.

TopHat delivers new homes that don't cost the earth and can, in fact, be used to reduce carbon emissions.

TopHat delivers homes that support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban areas where we deliver homes, and more rural areas where we build them.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG

TopHat will act in an accountable and transparent manner at all levels.

TopHat will act in a non-discriminatory manner at all times, positively enforcing behaviours that encourage the same.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

TopHat will deliver homes that sustainably consume materials, resulting in no net increase of CO2 emissions from our activities.

TopHat develops new materials and products to reduce our environmental impact where existing materials are highly impactful.

TopHat generates no waste from the production of our homes.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

TopHat is committed to working in public-private and public partnerships to ensure better outcomes for the widest cross section of society.

We will continue to monitor our activities and provide data to our partners.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

TopHat designs and delivers homes that are fit for future climate change.

TopHat uses principles, such as biophilic design, to make our homes more resilient to climate action.

Agenda Item 6c

Commerical and contract structure

Payment structure

For elements of work associated with traditional site activities, such as groundworks and infrastructure, TopHat works on the basis of a monthly application process and 21-day payment terms.

For the module elements, TopHat has a slightly different process as follows (each percentage is off just the module value and payable within 21-days):

- 10% design fee on signing the contract
- 10% on the commencement of manufacture
- 50% on the completion of the modules and vesting of ownership in the customer. (In practice, this means the customer pays for the modules after they are installed on site, due to 21-day terms.)
- 20% upon completion of the module install
- 10% upon practical completion.

The payments are typically broken down into phases when looking at larger schemes.

The payment profile means that the customer typically has the benefit of the modules on their site, before 80% of the payment is made, significantly altering the risk profile.

This is only possible due to the financial backing enjoyed by TopHat.

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This favourable funding structure means that customers are not having to pay large sums of money for modules that are not in their ownership, greatly assisting in the financing of schemes.

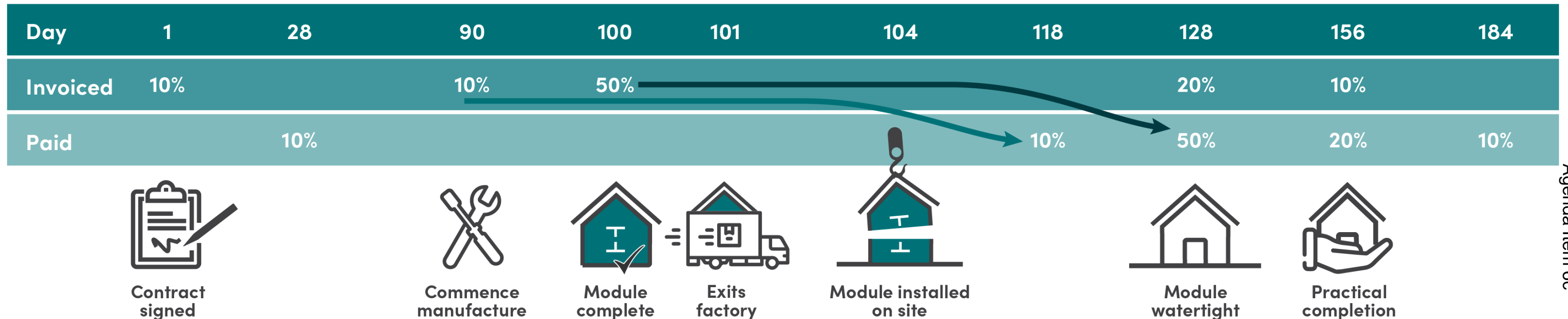
Different forms of contract

TopHat has experience of working with a wide range of different types of contract. The two most commonly used are the NEC and JCT.

Our strong preference is for a JCT design & build contract as it is typically best understood by the market and suppliers.

The NEC is a good contract for larger, complex projects. However, it requires a significant amount of managerial time, which would put costs up, for limited benefit in this environment.

TopHat have also used more bespoke contracts, such as the High Value D&B contract used by the Department for Education, which is easily adaptable. This is also a good, clear contract.



Agenda Item 6c

Accreditations, certifications and awards

Through repeated processes and designs, we are able to ensure quality much more easily than a traditional construction approach. Aligned with high-tech manufacturing, where quality is inspected several times prior to a home leaving the factory, the outcome is a better home, time after time.

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Mortgage providers on Kitchener Barracks



Insurances and warranties

All TopHat homes are Lloyds Register certified and BOPAS assured for a 75-year design life.

Our R&D team are currently working through the NHBC Accepts process to get an accredited version of our system. The time frame for this is clearly not a fixed one, but our aim is to have it done for Summer 2022. We are assuming c. May / June for having an approved product.

We have identified technical solutions to the challenges placed by NHBC and are working through a testing and approvals process as part of our TRL and MRL process.

We have various hold points within our manufacturing process and invite external parties including building control to participate in regular inspections.

We have used BLP, Checkmate and Buildzone to provide 12 year warranties on our Kitchener Barracks site as part of our proof of concept process and are typically using Checkmate and Buildzone on other projects.

Standard TopHat approach

All TopHat homes are made from a timber frame and come with a 3D printed brick façade as standard. The advantage of this approach is that our homes have a very low embedded carbon, typically 1/27th of a traditional masonry house (within appendices).

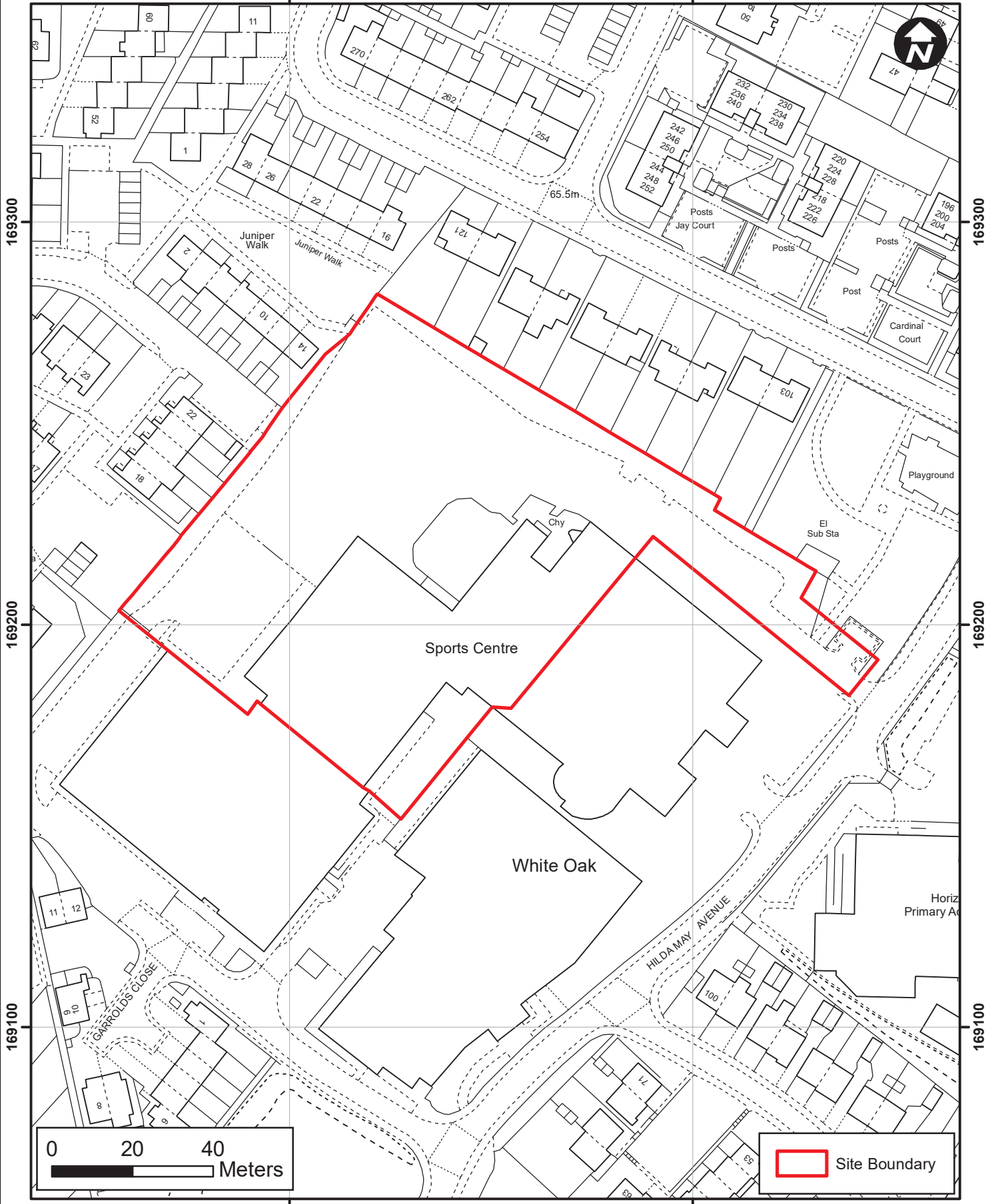
Standard performance includes the following:

- ASHP for hot water and heating that ensures compliance with Part L 2024.
- Airtightness of 5m³/hr/m²@50PA, although in practice this is typically c.3 m³/hr/m²@50PA.
- Wall u-value of 0.23.
- Window u-value of 1.4.

Enhanced options are available and have been delivered on various projects in the past, including airtightness of 1m³/hr/m²@50PA.



551000



551000 551100 169100 169300



White Oaks Residential Development Site

Scale: 1:1,250
Date: January 2023

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Cllr Fleming - Leader's Report

From: 6 February - 31 March 2023

Date	Event
6 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investors in People Interview - SDC
7 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Safety Day Play - The Stag, Sevenoaks
9 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Finance Interview - London • Cabinet - SDC
14 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent & Medway Business Fund Investment Advisory Board via Teams • DCN Executive Board via Zoom
15 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Improvement & Innovation Board via Teams • Kent Leaders' Meeting via Teams
16 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Biggin Hill Airport with Cllr Esler
17 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Programme Board via Zoom
20 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero 2030 Cabinet Working Group via Zoom
21 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council - SDC
23 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCN Conference - St Albans
24 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCN Conference - St Albans
28 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement & Innovation Advisory Committee - SDC
6 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCN Finance & Investment Workstream Meeting via Teams
8 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCN Executive Board via Zoom
13 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly the Flag - Commonwealth Day - SDC
14 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Behavioural Insights webinar via Zoom • Sevenoaks District Business Board via Teams
15 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour of Meeting Point - Swanley • Kent Council Leaders' Meeting via Teams • Making it Happen Community & Voluntary Awards 2023 - Sevenoaks
16 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quercus 7 Trading & Quercus Housing Guarantor Board Meetings - SDC • Cabinet - SDC
17 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC Radio Kent Interview re Sencio
20 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edenbridge Annual Town Meeting - Edenbridge
21 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent & Medway Economic Partnership Meeting via Zoom
23 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Induction - SDC • Special Cabinet - SDC

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REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

Council - 25 April 2023

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Peter Fleming

Contact Officer: Charlotte Sinclair, Ext. 7165

Recommendation: That the report be noted.

Reason for recommendation: To comply with the Council's governance arrangements.

Introduction

- 1 This report satisfies the requirement of quarterly reporting on Special Urgency Decisions as set out in Appendix A - Access to Information Procedure Rules, paragraph 18.3

'In any event the Leader will submit a quarterly report to the Council on the Cabinet decisions taken in the circumstances set out in Rule 17 (special urgency) or annually where there have been none. The report will include particulars of each decision made and a summary of the matters in respect of when each decision was made.'

Decisions

- 2 No urgent decision has been taken in the year 2022/23.

Key Implications

Financial

None directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

This report complies with the constitutional requirements to report quarterly or annually if no urgent decisions have been taken.

Agenda Item 10

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

In compliance with the Council's Constitution Members are asked to note this report.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Council's Constitution

Dr. Pav Ramewal

Chief Executive

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council - 25 April 2023

Report of: Cllr McGarvey, Chair of the Audit Committee

Status: For Consideration

Introduction and Background

- 1 This is our report to the Council on the work of the Audit Committee since February 2023.
- 2 The Audit Committee is responsible for discharging the functions conferred by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The key responsibilities include approving the Council’s Annual Statement of Accounts, approving the Annual Governance Statement, approving the Annual Internal Audit Plan and monitoring and reviewing the work of Internal Audit, and reviewing the arrangements for the management of business risks.
- 3 In line with its Terms of Reference, the Audit Committee meets four times per year and has met once since the last report to Council.
- 4 As Chair of the Committee, I have continued to hold monthly briefings with Officers.
- 5 Details of the range of issues considered by the Committee on 28 March are set out below:

Internal Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
28 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23 • Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 • Internal Audit Charter

Governance, Risk & Anti-Fraud

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
28 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Risk Register

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee - Independent Members Terms of Office

Accounts and External Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
28 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Accounts 2020/21 - External Audit Findings Report

Training of Audit Committee Members is important to ensure that they can add value to the discussions at the Committee. A Member Development Plan was agreed by the Committee and a number of training sessions have taken place over recent years. The outgoing Committee has reviewed its training received in the past 4 years and has given feedback to the Chief Officer - Finance and Trading, with recommendations on what should be included in future.

- 6 There remains an issue nationally with Statement of Accounts not being agreed by the deadline. This is largely due to the increased requirements and complexity of the accounts and the available resources of the external auditors. This is also true for Sevenoaks DC.
- 7 The Audit Committee maintains a constructive dialogue and effective working relationship with the Council’s external auditors, Grant Thornton who again attended our most recent Audit Committee meeting.
- 8 As mentioned previously, two independent members are now on the Committee, Lynda McMullan and Mr Mo Chughtai. Both attended the meeting on 28 March, and it was resolved that the terms of office of the Independent Members of the Audit Committee be staggered from May 2023 and;
 - a) Mo Chughtai serve as a non-voting, co-opted member for a further 2 year term until May 2025,
 - b) Lynda McMullan serve as a non-voting, co-opted member for a further 1 year Term, until May 2024.

In doing this, the outgoing Committee bequeathed to the next Audit Committee the ability to then renew the Independent Members’ contracts for 4 years thereafter, if they wished, and thus be able to continue to avoid their terms of office being coterminous with those of elected members.

- 9 It is my opinion that the work of the Committee has a positive impact on the overall control environment within the Council and has developed good working relationships with officers and External Audit, and has offered constructive comments on a range of issues. The Committee continues to develop and improve its understanding of the many technical issues presented to it.
- 10 I thank committed members of the Audit Committee for their personal contribution to the work of the Committee. I also thank Officers, in particular Adrian Rowbotham, Jennifer Warrillow and Alan Mitchell for the help and support that they have given to the Committee.
- 11 The Chairman confirmed his imminent retirement from District Council after 20 years, and therefore from Audit Committee (having served as its Chairman for 4 years), and thanked officers and members present for their commitment & support for him as well as for the Audit function.

Cllr Philip McGarvey, Chairman, Audit Committee

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Scrutiny Committee Annual Report to Council – 2022/23

Remit of the Scrutiny Committee

1. As per Appendix C of the Council's constitution, "Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules":

1.1 The Council is required by Law to discharge certain overview and scrutiny functions. These functions are an essential component of local democracy. The Scrutiny Committee contribute to the Council's Performance and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions.

1.2 The Scrutiny Committee allows a wider involvement in Council business by involving non-councillors from the wider public section, voluntary groups and community groups to help them in their work. They may make reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

1.3 The Scrutiny Committee also monitors the decisions of the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee can "call-in" a decision of the Cabinet which has been made but not yet implemented. They may recommend that the Cabinet reconsider their decision. They may also be consulted by the Cabinet or the Council on forthcoming decisions.

1.4 Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. The Scrutiny Committee should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.

"The Scrutiny Committee will comprise a permanent Chairman and Vice Chairman, and 9 other elected Members that follow the political proportionality of the Council. No Members of the Committee may be members of the Cabinet, their deputies or members of any of the Cabinet Advisory Committees."

Approach

2. Throughout the course of 2022/23, the Scrutiny Committee has drawn up and followed a work plan that has focussed on four key areas. These are:

- **Inviting Cabinet Portfolio Holders** to each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee where possible to discuss particular areas of focus/challenge and concerns members may have;
- **Inviting a number of external representatives** to attend Scrutiny Committee to discuss particular areas of concern and their activities within the district;
- **Setting up In-Depth Scrutiny working groups** as task and finish groups to investigate particular areas in detail, reporting back to the Committee so that recommendations can be agreed and reported to Cabinet.

Agenda Item 11b

- **Reviewing performance of services** in relation to agreed performance indicators, in particular focusing on red flag indicators. These are discussed at meetings, with explanations being provided by Officers. Matters of serious concern are referred to the Portfolio Holder/ Cabinet as appropriate.

This approach has ensured that the Committee has scrutinised both the work of SDC and other public bodies across the district, per the Committee's above terms of reference.

Work Covered

3. Based on the above approach, the following is a summary of work carried out during 2022/23 by the Scrutiny Committee.

Portfolio Holders

4. Portfolio Holders were asked to provide an update on recent work and future challenges to the relevant meeting, and were subsequently asked a number of questions by Members of the Committee regarding specific challenges and their approach and views. Portfolio holders attended as follows:

Scrutiny Committee	Portfolio Holder	Area of Committee Focus
July 2022	Cllr Julia Thornton Development & Conservation	Emerging Local Plan National Planning Policy Framework
July 2022	Cllr Peter Fleming Improvement & Innovation	Levelling up and Regeneration Bill The Environment Bill Capital Projects
November 2022	Cllr Kevin Maskell Housing & Health	Framework for displacement of refugees through Homes for Ukraine Scheme across Kent The One You Programme Council's Housing Strategy
January 2023	Cllr Matthew Dickins Finance & Investment	Finances & 10 year budget Replacement of Council's Refuse fleet
January 2023	Cllr Margot McArthur Cleaner & Greener	Revision of waste collection rounds Bid to National Heritage Lottery Fund for improvement of Bradbourne Lakes

External Invitees

July 2022

Kent Police

Inspector Matt Atkinson, of Kent Police attended to give an overview of the levels of crime and approach of policing within the District.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

- The use of Town Centre Constables to combat shop thefts
- The Community Safety Unit and working in partnership with the Council
- Evening and weekend policing levels in the District
- The priority of tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG)

November 2022

Kent County Council

CLLr David Brazier, the Kent County Council (KCC) Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport attended and gave a verbal update on the work carried out by Kent Highways.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

- Levels of support to bus services within the District
- Specific areas of concern regarding parking
- Winter services provided by KCC Highways
- Support to voluntary and community transport schemes
- The quality of the KCC out of hours service

January 2023

Sencio

The Chairman welcomed Jane Parish, Chief Executive of Sencio Community Trust and the Asset Maintenance Engineer (Sencio) who were in attendance and gave a presentation to the Committee.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions relating to areas including:

- Preventative maintenance of plant and equipment
- Edenbridge all weather pitch
- Sencio's financial position
- Sencio's submission of accounts

Agenda Item 11b

provide assurances about the financial state of Sencio.

In-Depth Scrutiny

July 2022

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Working Group – Reconstitution

Members resolved to reconstitute the In-Depth Scrutiny working group that was formed in November 2021 to look at the Councils response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairman expressed the importance of the report being shared with the members of the Working Group in the first instance and ideally for a consensus to be reached, although it could be noted in the report if this was not the case. He also advised the report should then be shared with officers in good time in order they could check for matters of factual accuracy and advise as appropriate. The report could then be submitted as per the published report deadlines to be considered at the November meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

November 2022

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Working Group - Final Report

Members considered the final report of the Covid-19 Working Group which had looked at the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and assessed the Emergency Plan and District Emergency Centre (DEC).

Following debate at the Committee, a set of agreed recommendations were made to Cabinet which were considered at its meeting of 8 December 2022.

Final Word

In May this year I will stand down as a District Councillor, having first been elected back in the heady days of 2007 (with the slogan "Vote Blue, Go Green, Vote Cameron Brown" – seemingly to cover all bases at the time but admittedly rather colour intensive), a period of some 16 years. It has been a real privilege to represent the residents of Dunton Green and Riverhead during my terms in office.

At SDC I have spent much of that time sitting as a Chair or vice Chair of Scrutiny and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors and Officers for their assistance, hard work and support, but in particular James London, the vice chair, and Jim Carrington West.

I regard the role performed by the Scrutiny Committee at SDC as extremely important, acting when needing to do so as a check and counterbalance to both the Executive and Officers. A robust and lively Scrutiny Committee significantly contributes to the democratic health of SDC and it is vital that those who sit on that committee continue to hold to account those who exercise power on our behalf.

Councillor Cameron Brown KC
Chairman - Scrutiny Committee

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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