

Decision Number: 28 (2019/21)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Subject: Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (HDTAP) August 2020		
Details of Decision taken: To approve the publication of the HDTAP		
Reason for Decision: To publish a HDTAP in line with the requirements set out in paragraph 75 of the National Planning Policy Framework.		
All Documents Considered: Sevenoaks District Council Housing Delivery Test Action Plan		
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:		
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for the Council		
Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement: N/A		
Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The aim of this action plan is to increase the delivery of sites for housing in the District with a positive impact on different groups in the community.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity	Yes	The aim of this action plan is to increase the delivery of sites for housing in the District, this has the potential to promote equality of opportunity.

Decision Number:

c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?	[REDACTED]	Include steps that could be taken for all decision options being presented.
Local Member(s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted: <i>CHR. Peter Fleming</i>		
Details of any conflicts of interest a) Declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taken <i>N/A</i> b) And any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict <i>N/A</i>		
Decision taken by:	Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder [REDACTED]	
Signed by Portfolio Holder	[REDACTED]	
Date of Decision	<i>19th August 2020</i>	
Record made by:	Emilia Peters	
Date of record:	21/08/2020	

Sevenoaks District Council – Housing Delivery Test Action Plan
August 2020

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		improve delivery. Sets out the actions and monitoring.
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Executive Summary

- This action plan explores reasons for under delivery of housing in the District identified through the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) result for 2019. The result for Sevenoaks District is 71% which means an action plan must be produced and a 20% buffer included in the 5 year housing land supply requirement.
- Housing need will not be met without the adoption of the emerging Sevenoaks District Local Plan, which has been delayed at examination by the Planning Inspector. The Council has put in place actions that seek to clear the blockage and get the document back on track as soon as possible.
- It finds areas of improvement and aspects which are already working towards increasing delivery through root cause analysis of different aspects of the planning process.
- Actions in the Councils control are set out with an aim to improve delivery, headline actions include; adoption of a new Local Plan, increased training and discussion around HDT, development of additional guidance & research and upkeep/improvement of existing processes & procedures.
- The 5 year housing land supply calculation finds 2.6 years of supply of deliverable housing sites including a 20% buffer. The calculation can be found in Appendix 1.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This action plan has been prepared to investigate the reasons for the delivery of sites for housing in Sevenoaks, measured by the Housing Delivery Test (HDT), and sets out measures to boost delivery in the District.
- 1.2 National policy reflects the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply and delivery of new homes. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Feb 2019) sets out that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 1.3 Paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that to maintain the supply of housing, local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites that have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the local planning authority's housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.
- 1.4 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that action plans should identify reasons for under-delivery, explore ways to reduce the risk of further under-delivery and set out measures to improve levels of delivery.
- 1.5 The aims of this Action Plan are to:
 - Identify the current situation in terms of site delivery in the District
 - Ascertain the consequences of not delivering enough housing sites
 - Root cause analysis, looking at the factors that have the potential to affect delivery
 - Set key actions and responses to the findings as measures to improve delivery in the District
- 1.6 The Council recognises that an up to date Local Plan is essential to addressing development needs in the District. In addition to the above points, a key aspect of this action plan are the actions being taken by the Council to address the Inspectors conclusions regarding the duty to co-operate.

Current Situation

- 1.7 Sevenoaks District covers almost 143 square miles and is highly constrained with 93% Green Belt and 60% within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These constraints can have a significant impact on the amount of land that is suitable and available for housing development.

Paragraph 11d(i) of the NPPF is likely to be relevant for consideration in many applications in the District, and therefore, the bar for gaining planning permission for housing development can be relatively high.

- 1.8 Sevenoaks District Council has planned for the delivery of 3,300 homes over the period 2006 up to 2026, 165 per annum, in its Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015). The allocated sites are focused in and around the main urban areas of the District and are mainly on Brownfield land. The Council has performed well and exceeded this target consistently (with the exception of one year) since adoption of the Core Strategy and despite the constrained nature of the District.
- 1.9 Completions for the past 3 years are set out below against the annual Core Strategy target and annual Local Housing Need figure as set out by the HDT results.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Annual Core Strategy target	165	165	165
Annual Local Housing Need figure*	501	503	708
Net completions*	324	388	500

*As set out in the Housing Delivery Test: 2019 measurement published 13 February 2020.

- 1.10 The HDT result is calculated by dividing the total net homes delivered over the previous three year period by the total number of homes required over three year period. For this set of results the HDT is calculated using the transitional arrangements as set out in the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book. This means that the “minimum annual local housing need figure” is replaced by household projections for years 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Standard Method housing requirement is used for year 2018/19 as the adopted Local Plan is more than 5 years old.

Year	Number of homes required over previous 3 years	Number of homes delivered over past 3 years	Calculation	HDT result
2018	1,205	1,130	$(1,130 \div 1,205) \times 100$	94%
2019	1,712	1,212	$(1,212 \div 1,712) \times 100$	71%

- 1.11 The HDT measurement result for Sevenoaks District Council is 71%, in that 71% of the required housing has been delivered in the District. Therefore, the Council is required to produce an action plan and include a 20% buffer on the 5 year housing land supply in line with paragraph 73 of the NPPF.
- 1.12 The action plan set out below is considered proportionate to the level of delivery in the District. However, it should be noted that due to challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic it has been more difficult than usual to collate information and have significant contact with the development industry. It is noted that seven Councils in East Sussex have written to Secretary of State, including Wealden District a neighbouring authority, for changes to take account of the impacts of the pandemic on the planning system including the impact on the HDT results and ability to maintain a five year housing land supply. These changes include suspension and/or roll forward of five year land supply arrangements, to acknowledge lost supply during lockdown and avoid surge of speculative applications, and consequent changes to the HDT.

Significance of delivering housing in the District

- 1.13 Delivering sufficient housing in the District is important to meet the needs of its residents, this includes:
- Increased prospects of people being able to own their own home
 - Availability of appropriate housing for an increasing ageing population
 - Avoid the out-migration of younger and economically active groups through delivery of suitable housing
 - Increase in adaptable housing stock to meet the changing needs of those who will live there
 - Availability of housing for local key workers
 - Increase in genuinely affordable homes

2. Root Cause Analysis

Neighbouring Authorities

- 2.1 The Council has signed statements of common ground with all of its' neighbouring authorities which sets out to address cross-boundary issues regarding housing and infrastructure. Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge share a Housing Market Area (HMA) with Sevenoaks known as the West Kent HMA. Of the 8 neighbouring authorities Tunbridge Wells has a requirement to publish an Action Plan and Tandridge, Wealden and Gravesham have an additional requirement to apply a 20% buffer.
- 2.2 Common issues regarding housing, identified in signed Statements of Common Ground, include:
- Constraints ie. Green Belt, AONB
 - Flood risk
 - Traffic congestion
 - Unable to meet housing need
 - Migration from London
 - High house prices
- 2.3 The Council meets regularly with its neighbours under the duty to co-operate to discuss, and work towards solutions to, cross-boundary issues. In meetings going forward the Council will continue to discuss matters relating to the Housing Delivery Test with neighbouring authorities.

Adopted Local Plan

Housing and Mixed-use Site Allocations

- 2.4 The ADMP allocates 16 residential sites and 5 mixed use sites, a total of 22 sites. Of these 22 sites, 12 have received planning permission since its adoption in 2015 and 10 have been carried forward to the new Submission Version of the Local Plan. Planning permission has been granted for the reserve land allocated in Edenbridge.
- 2.5 The sites below are allocations in the ADMP and have received planning permission:

Site Ref	Address	Status
H1a	Car Park, Hitchen Hatch Lane	Completed Hotel on site
H1f	Greatness Mill, Mill Lane	Completed 26 dwellings

Site Ref	Address	Status
H1i	Land West of Cherry Avenue	Under construction for 56 dwellings
H1k	Foxs Garage, London Road, Badgers Mount	Completed 4 dwellings and 60 bed care home
H1l	Land adjacent to London Road, Westerham	Completed 27 dwellings
H1n	Land at Croft Road, Westerham	Under construction 9 dwellings
H1o	Warren Court, Halstead	Permissioned for 29 dwellings
H1p	Land West of Enterprise Way, Edenbridge	Under construction for 196 dwellings
H2b	United House, Goldsel Road, Swanley	Under construction for 185 dwellings
H2c	Swanley Town Centre Regeneration Area	Permissioned for 303 dwellings
H2f	Powder Mills, Leigh	Completed 49 dwellings

2.6 The sites below are allocated in the ADMP and have not yet received planning permission:

Site Ref	Address	ADMP Phasing
H1b	Cramptons Road Water Works, Sevenoaks	Years 0-5 (2012-2016)
H1c	Sevenoaks Gasholders, Cramptons Road, Sevenoaks	Years 6-10 (2017-2021)
H1d	School House, Oak Lane and Hopgarden Lane, Sevenoaks	Years 6-10 (2017-2021)
H1e	Johnsons, Oak Lane and Hopgarden Lane, Sevenoaks	Years 6-10 (2017-2021)
H1g	Bevan Place, Swanley	Years 6-10 (2017-2021)
H1h	Bus Garage and Kingdom Hall, London Road, Swanley	Years 0-5 (2012-2016)
H1m	Currant Hill Allotments, Westerham	Years 10-15 (2022-2026)
H2a	Delivery and Post Office/BT Exchange, South Park, Sevenoaks	Years 10-15 (2022-2026)
H2d	Station Approach, Edenbridge	Years 0-5 (2012-2016)
H2e	New Ash Green Village Centre, New Ash Green	Years 10-15 (2022-2026)

- 2.7 A majority of sites allocated in the ADMP which have not received planning permission, were phased in the later years of the plan, which runs until 2026. All of these sites have been carried over as proposed site allocations to the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan (new Local Plan).
- 2.8 Where a site was phased in years 0-5 (2012-2016) within the ADMP, the Council has reviewed the expected delivery with the site promoter to understand why the site has not come forward as planned, and where there is clear evidence that the site will be delivered, the information has been reviewed and the site included in the new Local Plan. The same process has been followed for sites phased in years 6-10 and 10-15, although, as these sites were phased in later years they were expected to come forward later in the plan period anyway.

The New Local Plan

- 2.9 The Council has sought to bring forward its Local Plan as quickly as possible to meet development needs and protect designated areas in accordance with national planning guidance. Progress on this key document has stalled due to a perceived failure in the duty to co-operate at examination. The Council disagrees with the Inspector's findings and believes they will slow housing delivery in the District. Legal proceedings have commenced to ensure an up to date Local Plan that addresses housing needs can be put in place.

Updated density & Phasing for ADMP Allocations

- 2.10 As part of preparations for the new Local Plan the density and phasing of ADMP site allocations has been updated in response to more recent evidence and policy. This is set out in the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan and reflects national policy to make efficient use of land and will boost housing in the District. In light of this, the existing evidence behind the adopted ADMP allocations is out of date and requires adoption of the new Local Plan in order to bring these up to date.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 2.11 Paragraphs 73-74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provide that planning authorities should identify a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, including an appropriate buffer. The Housing Delivery Test result (2019) for Sevenoaks indicates that the District is currently delivering 71% of housing 'need', and therefore, as set out in paragraph 73c of the NPPF, the Council must apply a 20% buffer. In addition, as the Core Strategy (2011) policies are more than 5 years old, the Standard Method figure for housing need

must be used in place of adopted housing requirement for calculating the five-year housing supply. Taking consideration of that set out above, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. An assessment of the 5 Year Housing Land Supply is set out in Appendix 1.

Brownfield Register and Permission in Principle

2.12 The Brownfield Register is available on the Council's website and is also in the form of an interactive map to aid the public and potential developers in viewing brownfield sites across the District. Currently, the sites in part 1 of the Brownfield Register either benefit from planning permission or are proposed for allocation in the new Local Plan. The Brownfield Register will continue to be updated annually in line with government guidance and sites will be considered for Part 2 of the register (Permission in Principle or PiP) where appropriate. To date no applications for PiP have been determined and no sites have been moved to Part 2 of the Brownfield Register.

2.13 It is recognised that due to the position of the new Local Plan, brownfield sites in the Green Belt which are proposed for allocation in the new Local Plan are delayed. These sites will require status of a site allocation in order to gain planning permission and reach their full potential to deliver housing.

2.14 The Brownfield Register has a number of sites within urban confines that are not subject to Green Belt policy. Therefore, it is considered that additional support is provided for these sites to allow them to come forward and deliver housing. It is proposed to develop additional design guidance for brownfield register sites without planning permission, to give confidence to landowners and developers and encourage submission of a planning application for housing. This guidance will be developed with our Design Officer and published on our website. This guidance will be used to work with landowners to bring forward planning applications on these sites.

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

2.15 As part of preparations for the new Local Plan, the call for sites was open between 17 September 2015 and 31 October 2018 and received approximately 550 submissions of land for employment, housing and mixed use. These sites were assessed against the Councils agreed SHELAA methodology and form the most recent SHELAA document (December 2018) published on the Councils website.

2.16 Going forward the SHELAA will be hosted as an interactive map similar to the Brownfield Register. This will make the information more accessible and allow people and organisations to view sites in the context of the whole District. It is

proposed to upload an updated SHELAA as an interactive map by the end of 2020.

Size of Homes

2.17 The District has a high proportion of large homes with three, four and five bedrooms making up nearly 70% of the total housing stock. Evidence from the SHMA shows that a shift is needed towards smaller dwellings relative to the distribution of existing housing. In particular there is a greater need for 3 bedroom market homes and 1 and 2 bedroom affordable homes. This is reflected in the Housing Strategy (2017). Research into housing density across the District in recent years shows that on average 60dph has been achieved on average compared to the Core Strategy target of 40dph. Therefore, it is envisaged that residential schemes coming forward will contain a greater number of smaller dwellings at a higher density, in line with the identified needs within the District, in place of schemes of unnecessarily large detached dwellings.

Determination of planning applications

2.18 Sevenoaks is recognised as having one of the busiest planning departments in Kent. The national target for determination of major applications in time is 60% and for minor applications is 65%. The table below sets out the Council's performance over the previous 3 years:

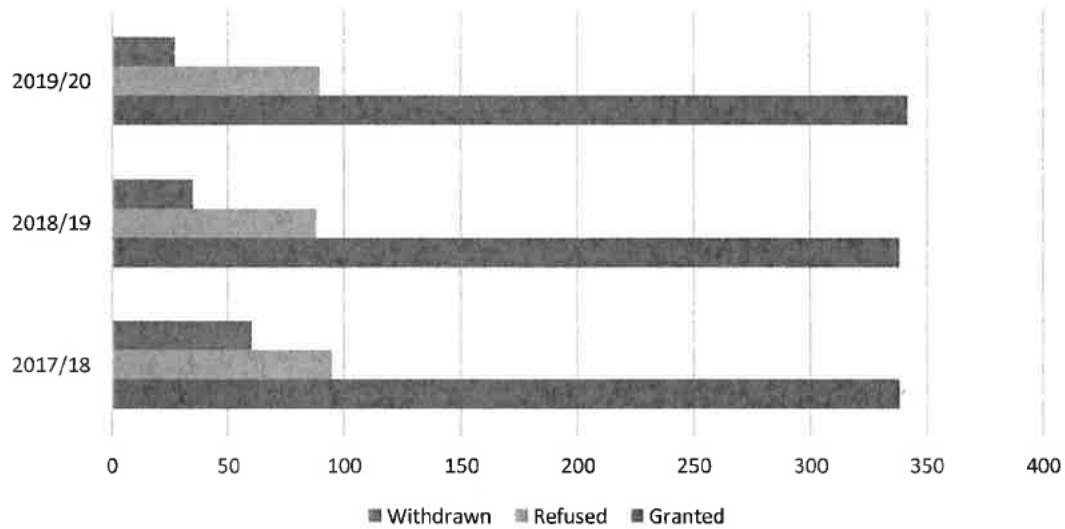
	Majors	Minors
National Target	60%	65%
2017/18	87.8%	86.11%
2018/19	85.71%	82.67%
2019/20	95.65%	76.83%

2.19 As shown in the table above, the Council has exceeded the national targets for determination of planning applications consistently over the previous 3 years. Therefore, in this respect the Council is working well towards increasing the delivery of suitable sites across the District. It is worth noting that despite impacts of Covid-19 the Council is consistently determining planning applications in a timely manner.

Proportion of planning applications approved

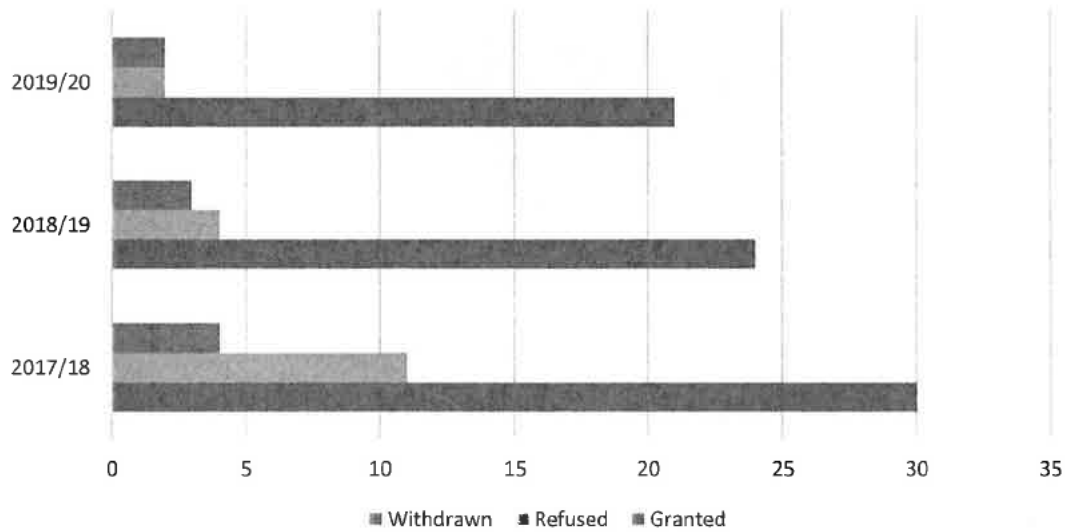
2.20 The number of major and minor planning applications granted, refused or withdrawn are set out in the bar charts below.

Minor



In 2019/20 2 minor planning applications were declined to be entertained (as set out in Section 70B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)

Major

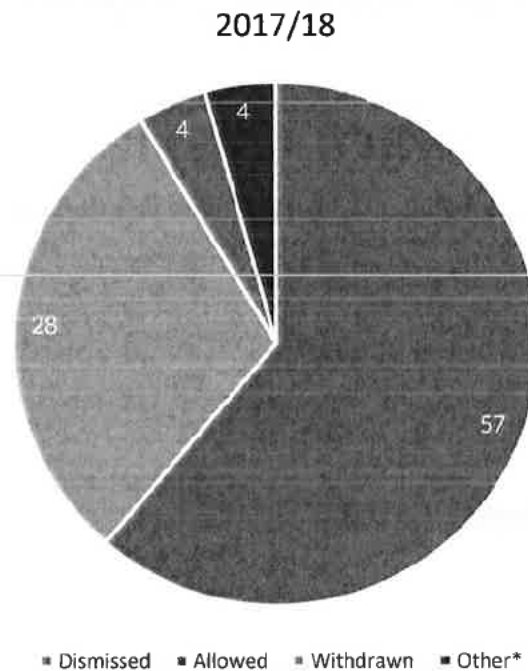


2.21 A majority of major and minor planning applications received have been granted planning permission. The figures above shows a trend towards an increase in granting major and minor planning applications over the past 3 years. This is likely because the Council has an established Pre-application service that is continually being reviewed and improved and better quality applications are

being received. In addition, Member training ensures that informed decisions are made with regard to planning applications. This shows that the Council is working well in this respect towards providing sites for housing.

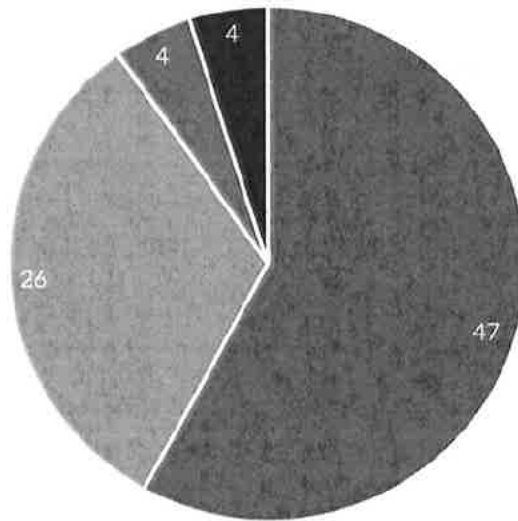
Planning Appeals

2.22 Overall, only a small proportion of planning applications go through to appeal. In every year a majority of appeals are dismissed and only a small number of appeals are allowed. The three pie charts below show the outcome of all appeals over the past three years. The number shown in the pie charts shows the number of appeals for each outcome.



**Other includes 1 split decision and 3 turned away by PINS as invalid appeals*

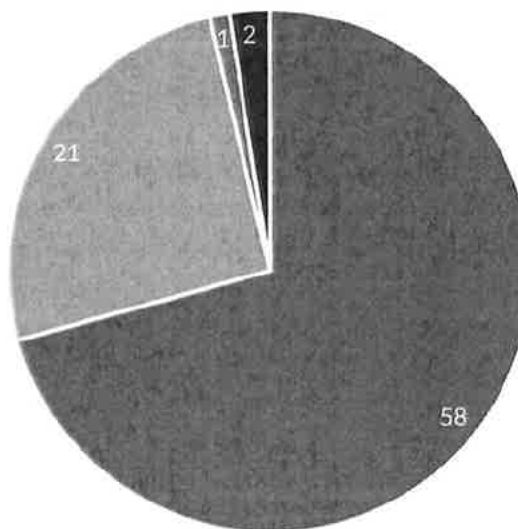
2018/19



■ Dismissed ■ Allowed ■ Withdrawn ■ Other*

**Other includes 4 turned away by PINS as invalid appeals*

2019/20



■ Dismissed ■ Allowed ■ Withdrawn ■ Other*

**Other includes 1 split decision and 1 decision overturned by High Court*

Planning Committee

2.23 The percentage of applications recommended for approval overturned at planning committee over the past three years is set out in the table below.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of applications that went to planning committee	41	31	35
Number of officer recommendations overturned	6	5	9
% officer recommendation overturned at planning committee	14.6%	16.1%	25.7%

2.24 The table above shows there is an increase in the percentage of officer recommendations overturned at planning committee between 2018/19 and 2019/20. It is possible that due to change in Members as a result of the last election that this has contributed to an increase in the number of officer recommendations overturned.

2.25 All Members are provided training on all aspects of planning by Planning Officers to help in their understanding of planning processes and to inform decisions regarding planning applications and at Planning Committee. It is proposed to include additional Member training on subjects such as the Housing Delivery Test and the implications of certain HDT results. This will allow Members to continue to make informed decisions at Planning Committee.

Validation and conditions attached to planning permissions

2.26 The Council's Validation Team is fast and effective at validating planning applications, and therefore, this part of the service is working well towards the delivery of housing in the District. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring all relevant information pertinent to an application is submitted at the time the application is made to reduce the number of conditions and prevent unnecessary delay. Therefore, the Validation Checklist is updated with support from development management and planning policy teams to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

2.27 Planning conditions are imposed on planning permissions in line with National policy and guidance. The Council uses a pool of planning conditions, drafted by officers which are applied on a case by case basis and tailored to fit the shape of the permission and to ensure they are enforceable. These conditions are under continuous review. The Council recognises the impact that overuse of planning conditions can have and seeks to improve the number of conditions used. It is recognised that when used properly conditions can enable a development to

proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

- 2.28 The Council will also use informatives attached to a decision so that the applicant is aware of issues that are not suitable to be resolved by condition. This ensures Members concerns are addressed when deciding an application at planning committee and prevents the application being overturned at appeal.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Agreements

- 2.29 The Council does not currently have an instalments policy and therefore full payment is expected within 60 days of commencement of development. Whilst a small number of developers have asked whether we have an instalments policy, currently there has been no evidence submitted by them to show non-viability as a result of this approach to date. However, it is considered that an instalments policy will be explored in the future to potentially ease financial burden on developers, particularly small and medium sized developers, due to the impacts of Covid-19.
- 2.30 A report was carried out for the Council (Local Plan and CIL Viability Study November 2018) this amongst other things considered the viability of CIL. The results of this report found that the current level that CIL was charged at was still appropriate, and therefore the current rate that CIL is charged at would not adversely impact on the viability of development.
- 2.31 The rate at which CIL is charged will continue to be monitored annually. In particular, this will be through the work and assessments we carry out to provide the Infrastructure Funding Statements. This looks at our priorities for CIL funding against the CIL receive. In addition, we will also continue to monitor CIL through our Infrastructure Delivery Plan as this is a working document which looks at our infrastructure needs and priorities. Monitoring by using both of these documents annually will ensure that we check that our CIL income and the amount we charge is regularly reviewed.
- 2.32 In terms of Section 106s, due to CIL being in place, we no longer require monetary payments towards infrastructure to be provided through this format. However, it is recognised that some of the requirements of our Legal Agreements will impact on the viability of the scheme. For some of the larger sites, we will require the onsite provision of infrastructure for example, educational facilities, green infrastructure or community facilities and we will also try to secure affordable housing or management plans which will have an impact on the viability of the scheme.

2.33 We will continue to ensure that our Section 106 follows the policies in the Local Plan, as well as maintaining the same CIL charge as this will ensure that developments remain viable. We will also continue to review our CIL and Section 106 process in line with any Government changes to ensure that it remains up to date. We have also introduced a new system which enables us to manage and monitor the 106 requirements more efficiently.

Housing Revenue Account, Joint Venture and Housing Company

2.34 The Council last had a Housing Revenue Account in 1989 before all social housing stock was transferred to West Kent Housing. Options for creating a new Housing Revenue Account as well as granting of funds to Registered Providers or forming a Joint Venture were considered by the Council. However, the Council opted for establishing a wholly owned, not for profit Affordable Housing Company named Quercus Housing Limited, agreed by Council at its meeting on 21 November 2017, funded by Section 106 monies. The date of incorporation of the company is 13 April 2018.

2.35 Quercus Housing and the Council's trading company Quercus 7 are both proactively looking to deliver sites for affordable housing.

Resourcing

2.36 It is an increasingly challenging environment to recruit and retain planners, in particular senior and principal planners. The issue links to the work of the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit on planning capacity which the Council is engaged with. The Implementation Unit is responsible for turning government commitments into tangible successes. Sevenoaks District Council is a Platinum Award winning Investors in People employer since 2016, the first council and public sector employer to be accredited with this award. The Council is proactive in its approach to recruiting and offers training opportunities, such as apprenticeships and university schemes, creation of specific recruitment video and supported internal movement.

Council owned land

2.37 The Council's adopted Housing Strategy (2017) sets out five priorities towards providing a good mix of decent and affordable housing across tenures including consideration of the Council's remaining surplus land for housing. As part of preparation for the new Local Plan the Planning Policy team met with the Council's Property team to consider whether there is any Council owned land that could be suitable for housing development in the future. In the new Local Plan 4 sites have been proposed for allocation which are owned by the Council

for housing or mixed use for a total of 215 dwellings. Opportunities for Rural Exceptions sites are also put forward on Council Owned land in conjunction with the relevant Parish Council to deliver affordable local needs housing in the District.

Compulsory Purchase of sites

2.38 The Council has a pipeline of sites in the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan and so far the level of interest expressed for Compulsory Purchase of sites has not led to CPOs being made by the Council. The Council would consider Compulsory Purchase on a site by site basis, including consideration of the viability of purchasing a site.

Developers and landowners forums

2.39 In previous years the Council has held an annual developers' forum. Currently, the Council meets with individual developers on a periodic basis and is considering new and innovative ways to re-introduce the developer's forum, to cover both policy and development management issues. It is noted that the Council's Building Control team have good relationships with developers and landowners acting in the District. Overall, the Council is committed to having good working relationships with developers, agents and landowners.

2.40 The Council is actively seeking and working with the landowners for opportunities to make best use of the land. A significant proportion of land in the District is owned by a small number of estates. The Council holds a Rural Landowners Forum on a regular basis to explore opportunities to deliver housing in the District.

Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)

2.41 The Council currently has two PPAs in place with two large sites in the District where a planning application is expected to come forward following pre-application advice. The Council would consider the use of PPAs on other large sites which come forward, in particular those that are allocated in the new Local Plan.

2.42 It is envisaged that a procedure for using PPAs will be developed in order to make the process more accessible for larger sites and aid in the delivery of more homes in the District.

Development Management

2.43 The Planning Policy and Development Management teams meet frequently to discuss planning issues and discuss solutions, including matters relating to housing delivery. From these discussions some ideas have been put forward that the teams consider may positively impact delivery in the District. These ideas are:

- Follow up with larger sites following grant of planning permission to identify any issues holding up the site and offer assistance where needed.
- Develop a procedure for securing Planning Performance Agreements on larger major sites.
- Improvements to validation checklist to ensure required information is submitted upfront and avoid additional conditions attached to planning permissions.
- Development guidance for sites in the brownfield register to encourage submission of a planning application.
- Provide an informal developers forum to encourage good relationships between developers/agents and planning officers.

2.44 These ideas will be incorporated into this action plan and monitored to ensure they are implemented and to assess their impact on the delivery of housing in the District.

Covid-19

2.45 It is clear that the effects of Covid-19 will have a significant and far reaching impact for the house building industry across the nation, including in Sevenoaks. Research by Barton Willmore, using data from the 2008 recession, has estimated that new homes completed could drop from 241,000 completions in 2018/19, to 160,000 in 2020/21.

2.46 However, the impacts of Covid-19 will not be seen in the 2020 HDT result given that housing completions for this period will be used up until March 2020 when the effects of the pandemic on the delivery of housing were only just being felt. Therefore, the full impact of the pandemic will not be reflected in HDT results until 2021 results are released. The council understands that it is important that measures are put in place now to ensure that housing continues to be delivered in the District and these measures are set out in this action plan.

3. Key Findings, Measures to Improve Delivery and Monitoring

4.1 The root analysis highlights that there are some factors which could affect delivery in the District. Action on these issues could go towards increasing the delivery of sites for housing. These factors are identified as:

- Delay in adopting new Local Plan
- Skills gap – difficulty recruiting and retaining, in particular, senior/principal planners
- Complexities of developing brownfield sites
- Effects of Covid-19 pandemic on housing industry
- Update SHELAA to be more interactive and make use of technology to make more easily accessible
- Out of date density and phasing of ADMP site allocations due to unforeseen delay in adopting new Local Plan

4.2 Some of the issues identified above are directly within the Council's control and other elements are not. The Council has control over the delivery of its own sites and affordable housing through the Council owned companies Quercus 7 and Quercus Housing. The Council also has control in its ability to process and determine planning applications for housing developments. However, once planning permission has been granted the Council has less control over delivery on a site. Where elements are outside of the Council's control it will require involvement of other stakeholders and partnership working to move towards increasing delivery of housing.

4.3 Furthermore, the District is subject to areas and assets of particular importance including 93% Green Belt and 60% AONB as well as designated heritage assets, other heritage assets and areas of archaeological importance. Therefore, there are significant constraints which can impact the number of suitable sites for housing in the District. The emerging Local Plan identified significantly more land for sustainable development than would otherwise be available and would result in additional housing to be built in a constrained District.

Measures already in place

4.4 The Council has a number of measures already in place to boost the delivery of sites for housing including the following:

- Council owned companies Quercus 7 is actively seeking sites to provide housing in the District.
- Council Owned Company Quercus Housing is actively providing affordable housing in the District.

- The Council continuously reviews planning conditions imposed on planning permissions.
- The new Local Plan, once adopted, would provide a significant boost of housing and mixed use sites.
- The Council is engaging with the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit on planning capacity.
- **Effective Use of Planning Performance Agreements**
- Innovative recruitment schemes

The table below sets out measures to improve delivery which can be taken by the Council, how they will be implemented, by whom and when.

Action	How	Who	When
Adoption of the new Local Plan	Challenge the Planning Inspector's conclusions regarding the duty to co-operate. Take the new Local Plan through examination and through to adoption	Planning Policy, PINS	Ongoing
Reintroduction of Developer Forums	Explore ways to re-introduce developer forums whilst maintaining service performance	Development Management, Planning Policy	Ongoing discussions
Council owned companies to deliver sites and affordable housing	Proactively look for suitable sites to deliver affordable housing	Property Management, Planning Policy, Development Management, Quercus 7, Quercus Housing	Ongoing, both companies are actively seeking sites
Incorporate HDT discussion in Duty to Co-operate meetings with neighbouring authorities	Include HDT discussion in regular meetings	Planning Policy	Ongoing, during regular meetings
Review of conditions attached to planning permissions	Where an issue arises with a condition it will be reviewed	Development Management, Planning Policy	Ongoing
Follow up with landowners/developers/agents	Develop procedure for contacting sites and implement	Planning Policy	Autumn/Winter 2020

Action	How	Who	When
following grant of planning permission			
Review sites on the Brownfield Register	Update and add sites. Consider moving sites onto Part 2	Planning Policy	Annually, December 2020
Develop Design Guidance for sites on the Brownfield Register	Assess appropriate sites for design guidance & publish on Council's website	Planning Policy, Conservation and Design	Summer 2021
New call for sites, update SHELAA and produce interactive map	Undertake SHELAA update and publish on Council's website	Planning Policy	Winter 2020
Member training	Officers conduct training for all, Members but specifically those sitting on planning committee	Planning Policy, Development Management	Ongoing
Introduce PPA procedure	Develop and implement procedure for PPA's on strategic sites	Planning Policy, Development Management	Summer 2021
Update validation checklist	Update existing checklist to meet requirements	Planning Policy, Development Management, Validation Team	As required
Review of CIL charging schedule	Review of CIL charging schedule and approach to larger sites, explore CIL instalments policy	Planning Policy	Ongoing

Action	How	Who	When
Annual review of Section 106	Annual review of Section 106	Planning policy	Ongoing annually

4.5 Monitoring of this action plan will be ongoing by the relevant teams at the Council. The Council will continue to work with relevant stakeholders throughout the delivery of sites for housing in the District. This action plan will run until the next results of the Housing Delivery Test are published and will be updated as necessary to reflect future HDT results.

Appendix 1 – Five Year Housing Land Supply

4.1 This report considers the supply of housing land in Sevenoaks District that is available and deliverable for future residential development over the next 5 years from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

The Requirement

4.2 In line with paragraph 003 of the National Planning Policy Guidance, Housing Supply and Delivery, where policies are more than 5 years old, local housing need calculated by the standard method should be used in place of the housing requirement. The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011 and is more than 5 years old, therefore, the standard method figure should be used.

The PPG states (Paragraph: 031)

“Where the standard method for assessing local housing need is used as the starting point in forming the planned requirement for housing, Step 2 of the standard method factors in past under-delivery as part of the affordability ratio, so there is no requirement to specifically address under-delivery separately when establishing the minimum annual local housing need figure.”

4.3 Where calculating the local housing need figure that will be established for the emerging Draft Sevenoaks District Local Plan, the standard methodology has been used and a base year of 2020 has been applied. In accordance with the PPG, any previous under delivery of housing is addressed as part of the standard method for assessing local housing need.

Determining the Buffer

4.4 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF has introduced a buffer requirement for the 5 year deliverable supply of housing land of either 5, 10 or 20% depending upon past performance. The Housing Delivery Test (February 2020) confirms that Sevenoaks District has delivered 71% of its housing requirement over the past three years, and therefore, a 20% buffer applies. This has changed from the requirement of a 5% buffer last year.

Calculating 5 Year Housing Requirement

Table 1 – Calculation of housing requirement and buffer

2020 Standard Method Housing Need	711
5 Year Land Supply Requirement	3,555
20% buffer	711
5 Year Requirement + 20%	4,266

Deliverable Land Supply

Table 2 - Elements of housing supply

	Site typology	Total number of net additional units	Number of units anticipated to be delivered in 5 years
i	Sites with outstanding planning permission	2,056	1,697
ii	ADMP Site allocations	344	232
iii	Windfall Sites	261	174
iv	SHELAA deliverable sites within urban confines without planning permission	107	107
	TOTAL	2,768	2,210

i) Sites with Outstanding Planning Permission

- 4.5 This element of supply includes planning permissions not started, under construction, prior approvals & outstanding C2 (older persons housing including care homes and nursing homes) permissions.
- 4.6 The NPPF defines deliverable sites as sites for housing which should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:
- a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).
 - b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years
- 4.7 Accordingly, all qualifying sites with unimplemented, under construction & outstanding prior approval planning permissions have been taken into account.

Outstanding C2 Planning Permissions

- 4.8 C2 units are expressed in terms of bedspaces, and therefore must be converted to the equivalent number of C3 (residential) units before they can be included as part of the housing supply. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides a method to calculate the equivalent number of C3 housing units in order to accurately account for them in the housing requirement and supply. Paragraph 16a of the PPG in relation to Housing for Older and Disabled People states:
- 4.9 *“Plan-making authorities will need to count housing provided for older people against their housing requirement. For residential institutions, to establish the amount of accommodation released in the housing market, authorities should base calculations on the average number of adults living in households, using the published Census data.”*
- 4.10 The guidance links to census data showing the number of households by number of adults which can be used to calculate the average number of adults living in households. For Sevenoaks the calculations show that on average each household has 1.87 adults which is higher than the national average of 1.84.
- 4.11 Therefore, in order for the housing supply to account for C2 accommodation a conversion rate of 1.87 has been applied.
- 4.12 Accordingly, all qualifying sites with unimplemented planning permissions have been taken into account. Using the C2 conversion rate a total of 47 C2 units are included in the supply.

ii) ADMP Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations

- 4.13 The site allocations consists adopted ADMP housing and mixed-use site allocations without planning permission. As part of the development of the new Local Plan a review of the ADMP allocations has been undertaken to update their density and phasing. This information is set out in the SHELAA and Site Appraisals documents available on the Council website. This updated phasing and density has been used for the housing supply.

iii) Windfall sites (including rural exceptions)

- 4.14 The NPPF (paragraph 70) and supporting guidance in the PPG states that local authorities can make an allowance for windfall sites in the five year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites provide a reliable source of supply. The most recent evidence indicates that an average of 77 units per annum have been delivered in Sevenoaks District from sites of 1-4 units in the past five years (see Table 3). The District Council therefore expects 154 units to be delivered from windfall sites in the next 5 years (allowance to be included in years 4 and 5 only to prevent double counting with planning permissions).

Table 3 - Past completions on sites of 1-4 units

Year	Housing completions	Housing completions on sites of 1-4 units
2015-16	414	69
2016-17	312	80
2017-18	378	82
2018-19	254	64
2019-20	426	93
TOTAL	1,784	388

4.15 In addition, the District Council is committed to delivering rural exception schemes and a rolling programme of rural housing needs surveys across the District has been agreed by Cabinet. Based on the level of need identified, the commitment of the parish councils and the new Local Plan policy on housing in rural areas, the District Council is able to demonstrate compelling evidence that such sites provide a reliable source of supply. The most recent evidence indicates that, to date, a total of 77 rural exception units have been delivered in Sevenoaks District on a number of sites. Recent rural housing needs surveys undertaken by eight parishes in the last 5 years identify a need for 130 units in those areas, and site searches are in progress. The Council has recently adopted (Cabinet 16th April 2020) a fully funded 5 year rolling schedule of Rural Housing Needs Surveys across all 31 Parishes. It is therefore expected that the need will increase. On that basis the District Council expects 20 units to be delivered from rural exception sites in the next 5 years (10 units per year for years 4 and 5 only to prevent double counting with planning permissions).

iv) SHELAA Sites

4.16 The latest version of the SHELAA published in December 2018 identifies deliverable sites of 5 or more units that are not allocated in the ADMP. These larger units are not included in the calculation of windfalls. Firstly, sites within urban confines (Category 1 sites) have been assessed to prevent double counting and those with planning permission have been removed. Furthermore, sites assessed under the stage 1 Site Appraisals and unable to accommodate 5 or more units. A total of 107 units on Category 1 sites have been identified as deliverable. These sites are set out in Appendix 2.

Conclusion

Table 4 - 5 Year Housing Land Supply Calculation August 2020

	Component	Calculation	Result (units)
A	Annual local housing need	N/A	711
B	5-year requirement	A x 5	3,555
C	20% buffer	20% of B	711
D	5-year requirement plus 20% buffer	B + C	4,266
E	Annual requirement plus 20% buffer	D/5	853
F	5-year housing land supply	Table 3 above	2,210
G	Years Supply	F/E	2.6

- 4.17 This five year supply of deliverable housing sites assessment identifies a supply of specific deliverable sites in Sevenoaks District that have the capacity to deliver 2,210 residential units in the next 5 years. This represents 2.6 years of the 5 year supply requirement of 4,266 units (including the 20% buffer). Accordingly, Sevenoaks District Council cannot demonstrate 5 years worth of deliverable housing supply. It should be noted that the Council demonstrated a 5YLS with the emerging Local Plan during the examination. This can be found on the Council's website.

Appendix 2 – SHELAA 2019 Deliverable Category 1 Sites

Site Ref (HO)	Address	Units	Site Appraisal	Planning Permission?	Include?
MX29	Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	75	Include in plan (1-5 years)	Not permitted	Y
MX56	White Oak Leisure Centre, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BT	80	Include in plan (1-5 years)	Planning permission for 35-40 units	N
5	5 Crownfields, Sevenoaks	20	Include in plan (1-5 years)	Not permitted	Y
44	51-59 Mount Pleasant Road and land to the rear, Sevenoaks Weald	14	Not assessed	Permission on part of site for 4 units	N
46	Land between Granville Road and Farleycroft, Westerham	10	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Not permitted	N
47	1-6 Gilchrist Cottages and land to the rear, Mount Pleasant Road, Sevenoaks Weald	13	Too small (less than 5 units)		N
78	Florence Farm Mobile Home Park, Main Road, West Kingsdown	16	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Not permitted	N
102	Otford Builders Merchants, High Street, Otford	7	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Not permitted	N
198	The Woodlands, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley	66	Include in plan (1-5 years)	Planning permission 75 bed care home	N
217	Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	32	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Not permitted	N

Site Ref (HO)	Address	Units	Site Appraisal	Planning Permission?	Include?
343	Magrose, Kingsingfield Road, West Kingsdown	4-6	Too small (less than 5 units)		N
380	The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green	35	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Permission for 53 units	N
381	15 St Botolphs Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3AQ	12	Include in plan (1-5 years)	Not permissioned	Y
384	The Forge, Ash, Nr Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 7HW	29	Include in plan (6-10 years)	Not permissioned	N
Total units to include: 107					