



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date and Time:	Tuesday 16 November 2021 7.00 pm
Place:	Council Chamber
Enquiries to:	Committee Services committeeservices@hart.gov.uk
Members:	Axam, Butcher, Clarke, Cockarill, Collins, Crookes, Davies, Dorn, Drage, Farmer, Forster, Harward, Neighbour, Oliver, Smith, Wildsmith and Worlock (Chairman)

Joint Chief Executive

CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY
FLEET, HAMPSHIRE GU51 4AE

AGENDA

This Agenda and associated appendices are provided in electronic form only and are published on the Hart District Council Website.

Please download all papers through the Modern.Gov app before the meeting.

- At the start of the meeting, the Lead Officer will confirm the Fire Evacuation Procedure.**
- The Chairman will announce that this meeting will be recorded and that anyone remaining at the meeting had provided their consent to any such recording.**

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 6 - 10)

The minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2021 are attached to be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence from Members*.

***Note:** Members are asked to email Committee Services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they will be absent.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare disclosable, pecuniary and any other interests*.

***Note:** Members are asked to email Committee Services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they may have an interest to declare.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

Anyone wishing to make a statement to the Committee should contact Committee Services at least two clear working days prior to the meeting. Further information can be found at:

[Public Participation leaflet 2021.pdf \(hart.gov.uk\)](#)

6 CORPORATE SERVICE PANEL UPDATE (Pages 11 - 20)

Feedback from Members of the Service Panel for Corporate Services.

7 MULTI AGENCY AND PARISH FLOOD FORUM (Pages 21 - 25)

Update from the twice-yearly meeting of multi-agencies. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2021 to be noted.

8 CAR PARKING CHARGES REVIEW - FEEDBACK

To receive an update on how the changes in car parking charges earlier this year have been received by the parishes.

9 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

An update on the progression of the client management function for the waste contract since the transfer back to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

10 DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 26 - 47)

To seek Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the proposed Communications and Engagement Strategy alongside the proposed Content Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to any comments received from the committee, that Overview and Scrutiny recommends to Cabinet for the adoption of the two strategies for the period of 2022 – 2026.

11 A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO REVIEW PROJECTS FOR HOUSING CAPITAL SPEND (Pages 48 - 50)

The Council is in the process of exploring how it can best allocate money set aside in the Housing Capital Fund, to specific projects. There are a number of potential ideas or initiatives which could be worked up and moved forward. As part of the process of assessing which projects to bring forward, officers are seeking nominations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 6 Members to be part of a Task and Finish Group, as well as the Portfolio Holder for Community.

The Task and Finish Group should be cross party, and nominations are sought from all political parties. The Portfolio Holder for Community, and relevant officers will also be part of the group.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominate 6 representatives to take part in a Task and Finish Group which will assist in the assessment and development of projects to be funded from the Housing Capital Fund.
2. It is anticipated that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group will take place on Wednesday 8th December at 5pm.

12 A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO UPDATE AND REFRESH THE CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY (Pages 51 - 53)

The council is in the process of updating and refreshing its Corporate Complaint Policy, as whilst the current policy has been reviewed regularly it would benefit from an update in light of experience. As part of the development process, officers are seeking nominations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for three Members to be part of a Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Group will be cross party and so a nomination is sought from each political party. The Joint Chief Executive, and relevant officers will also be part of the group.

RECOMMENDATION

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominate three representatives to take part in a Task and Finish group which will assist in the refresh and update of the Council's Corporate Complaint Policy.

It is anticipated that the Task and Finish Group will meet on Wednesday 1st December at 4.30pm.

13 HOUSING CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING (Pages 54 - 64)

The report in this item sets out a proposal to ringfence a proportion of the Council's housing capital funds to support registered provider's (housing associations) to provide energy efficiency measures in some new affordable homes.

RECOMMENDATION

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet the approval of the proposal to provide top-up funding to housing associations and registered providers to enable the provision of additional energy efficiency measures on new-build affordable homes.

14 HART INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT ON FIRST HOMES (Pages 65 - 75)

This report reflects the introduction of First Homes as an affordable housing product by the Government in May 2021 and sets out a suggested approach to be applied in Hart district, through the introduction of an Interim Planning Policy Statement.

RECOMMENDATION

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the content of this report; and
2. Highlight any comments for Cabinet to consider when they receive a report on 2 December 2021.

15 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 76 - 81)

To consider the Cabinet Work Programme.

16 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 82 - 86)

To consider and amend the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Date of Publication: Monday, 8 November 2021

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Axam, Collins, Crookes, Davies, Dorn, Drage, Farmer, Harward, Radley, Smith, Wildsmith and Worlock (Chairman)

In attendance: Cockarill, Radley

Officers:

Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Emma Foy	Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Mark Jaggard	Head of Place
Daniel Hawes	Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager
Jenny Humphreys	Committee Services Office

49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 21 September 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

52 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

53 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

54 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT FEEDBACK SURVEY - RESULTS

The Joint Chief Executive reported that 10 out of 33 members responded to the survey (less than a third).

Members questioned whether future surveys like these should be done as part of group meetings to get more engagement. It was concluded that this type of

feedback is individual, but the committee will remind colleagues of the importance of taking part in similar surveys going forward.

55 PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) CHARGING SCHEDULE

The Head of Place summarised the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (PDSC) and recommended to members that they approve it for public consultation.

He continued that the council is proposing two consultations; the first would be for six weeks, ending just before Christmas. The second would be a statutory consultation needed prior to examination.

The Head of Place explained that CIL is a tariff in the form of a standard charge on most new development which helps fund the infrastructure needed to support development across the district. The council has identified three different rates based on viability: £50, £80, and £270.

Members questions and discussions included:

- The three proposed CIL rates/m2 and how they were created.
- How the rates compared to neighbouring councils/areas.
- The funding gap and how it is estimated.
- How parishes will benefit from this scheme.
- Loft conversions/extensions and how this will affect CIL rates.
- There was no VAT rate on CIL.

The Head of Place reported that the proposed rates are in the mid-range compared to neighbouring authorities, but the rates must be informed and justified by local evidence, particularly on viability, which will be a key issue at examination.

He also confirmed that the council is required to identify an infrastructure funding gap which CIL receipts would contribute towards, and rates can be reviewed and altered once CIL is implemented.

DECISION

That Cabinet approve the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (PDSC) for public consultation with the following recommendations for the Cabinet report:

- Point 4.7 in the report – to cover the different charge rates, not just £50.
- To show how the proposed CIL rates compare with neighbouring authorities
- In respect of Appendix 2 of the report, to clarify how the CIL receipts per dwelling are calculated.

- More clarification/explanation on the infrastructure funding gap and the role of other funding sources.

The JCX proposed a future seminar on CIL after the first consultation and this is expected to be early 2022.

The Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager to send the committee members, the CIL Viability Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Infrastructure Funding Gap Assessment (IFG).

56 LOCAL PLAN ASSESSMENT

The JCX explained that all local planning authorities are required to review and, if necessary, update their local plan policies within five years of adoption, if not sooner. At this point it is simply an assessment of the current Local Plan to check that it is on track and if there have been any material changes in circumstances e.g. new government advice etc. The best time to carry out this initial assessment is Spring 2022 once the future 'Planning Bill' has passed through Parliament, and the Government has issued further guidance and advice to accompany the Bill. The assessment is expected therefore to be commence in Spring 2022.

Members discussions included:

- The possibility of the planning policy team doing a 'scoping' document in anticipation of government guidelines.
- The differences between Local Plan reviews (i.e. assessments as to whether the plan is up to date) and updates to the plan, if the review shows it is needed (which could be a partial update or a whole new plan).
- Timescales and any deadlines that need to be met regarding this assessment and any possible additional reviews later on.
- Housing delivery and the age of the council's evidence
- Why the Shapley Heath Garden Community surveys are continuing.
- What a 'policy off' approach means in the context of a study into the potential for settlements to accommodate future growth within existing settlement boundaries

The Head of Place explained the team has a Planning Advisory Service toolkit officers can use to undertake the review/assessment, but currently the council has an up-to-date plan adopted in April 2020 and is meeting its housing delivery targets.

The Portfolio Holder for Place and the JCX confirmed that the Shapley Heath studies have already been commissioned and will provide useful outcomes for future developments.

DECISION

The Committee recommends to Cabinet that work should begin on the assessment as soon as Government guidance is received.

57 2022/23 BUDGET & MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and that it had been updated to incorporate the Level One savings approved at September's Cabinet meeting.

She also reiterated that there is still a budget gap due to Central Government prioritising services like the NHS and schools after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Head of Corporate Services reported that business rates are at a safety net level but council tax collection rates in Hart have fallen due to Covid-19 (this is reflected nationally).

She confirmed the estimated budget gaps for 2022/23 are £825,000 and £1,180,000 in 2023/24.

There is currently no business case for the Senior Management restructure; this will be determined by an independent consultant-led review and reported to Cabinet in January.

Members asked if the revised MTFS reflects changes in the Leisure Centre income and the Head of Corporate Services confirmed it did not.

During the course of the discussion the Committee resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting any discussion relating to the Savings Business cases attached as Appendix 1 to the report on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.

DECISION

Committee noted the current position with regard to the proposed budget savings but recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet implement with immediate effect the recruitment management arrangements as detailed in paragraph 5.4 of the report.

58 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was noted.

Members highlighted that the Civic Quarter Regeneration meetings had restarted (18 October) and they would like to see updates at future O&S meetings.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, who is also Chairman of the Civic Quarter Regeneration working group reported that he expects updates to come before this committee from the new year.

The Chairman asked for a timeline of these future meetings

59 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme was noted.

Members questioned the KPI's for Place's five-year land supply document and the JCX confirmed that this will be published around Christmas time as part of a publicly available annual monitoring report.

The meeting closed at 10.06 pm



Service Board Meeting Monday 25 October 2021 – Corporate Services Quarter Two

1. Performance against Corporate Plan

	Service Priority	Link to corporate plan	Expected Outcomes	Update on 25 October 2021
1	Delivery of the council's response to Covid-19 pandemic	<p>Ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act.</p> <p>Support for our town and village centres</p> <p>Support the local economy</p> <p>Support our residents</p>	<p>Policy and payment of Business Rates Grants</p> <p>Corporate Impact Assessment</p> <p>Action plans arising from these</p> <p>Administration of Test and Trace Isolation payments</p> <p>Submission of grant funding applications</p> <p>Hardship payments to council taxpayers</p> <p>Effective communications to assist in duty to warn and inform.</p> <p>Deliver Revitalise Hart.</p>	<p>The Council has paid out c.£26m of Business Rates Grants across nine schemes since the onset of Covid. In 2021-22 the Council has paid out extended restrictions grant and main restart grants. All schemes must have payments completed by the 31st July. Any discretionary funding can then be used towards Business Recovery to be spent by 31st March 2022.</p> <p>The Council has been administering test and trace payments since December 2020. Hardship payments are administered by Community Services. Revitalise Hart for Corporate Services was around remote working capabilities which have been largely delivered. We continue to have additional temporary resource in communications until November 2021 funded by the Covid Outbreak Management Fund which enables us to provide our duties around warn and inform. Reconciliations of all payments made are now taking place for central Government.</p>

	Service Priority	Link to corporate plan	Expected Outcomes	Update on 25 October 2021
2	New Ways of Working – Policy Support	Updating HR policies to reflect new ways of working	Remote working policy Travel and Expenses Policy Car Allowance policy Flexible working policy	The Joint Chief Executive has led an agile working policy which picks up the remote working policy and flexible working policy. The Car Allowance policy and travel and expenses policy has been put forward as part of Level 2 savings to Cabinet.
3	Produce updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for Cabinet, predicated on the priorities within the Corporate Plan and reflecting current understanding of local government finance	Ensuring our Medium- Term Financial Strategy is focused on strategic priorities. Stable Financial Sustainability.	The Council's financial resources and commitments are aligned with its strategic priorities	The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy will be presented as follows: O&S August Cabinet September - DONE O&S October Cabinet November O&S December Cabinet January The strategy will also be updated to contain a 10-year outlook in addition to the current 3-5-year outlook. A Cabinet working group is in place to review strategic priorities. It has been agreed an all-member briefing will take place post -settlement being received. There are difficult decisions to be made.
4	Implementation and regular review of the Commercialisation Strategy	Maximising income opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for income generation	Investment in commercial property (£10m indicative budget in capital programme) Develop further stream of commercial property options.	The Commercial Strategy was updated, reviewed, and approved in July 2021. An additional purchase of investment property circa £12m was undertaken in June 2021. We continue to work with agents to find additional opportunities.

	Service Priority	Link to corporate plan	Expected Outcomes	Update on 25 October 2021
5	Continue to work with local commercial agents in renting out spare office space	Maximising Council income through effective asset management and collection activities	Refurbish and let out third floor	A survey by Hurst Warne has been commissioned and due to the amount of investment required in the building and the saturation of office space in Fleet itself it is not cost effective to rent out that space. Instead, all tenants and officers have been moved out of the 3 rd floor so that no further costs are incurred. It is now very likely that the Citizens Advice Bureau will move to Civic and enable NHS to take on Yateley property. Leases are also to be reviewed and renegotiated with all existing tenants where required. Age Concern are moving into FDCC.
6	Manage changes within the 5 Councils Partnership arrangement	Continuing to work closely with partners to deliver joint services	Services within the contract are aligned to the requirements of the Council and delivered in the most effective way feasible	In April 2021, Exchequer Services moved from Capita to be internally delivered by the Council. The remaining services delivered by Capita for Corporate Services are revenues and benefits, financial system support and IT. Service quality has improved by both Insourced and outsourced services, but the IT situation remains expensive.
7	Implement the provision of Committee Services software	To realise our ambitions to deliver more for less	The Council makes full use of technology to improve the way it delivers Committee Services	Modern.Gov has been implemented for Member use. In addition, all historic reports and declarations of interest are accessible through Modern.Gov. Audit Committee in July 2021 was the first Committee to use Modern.Gov from end to end for the report writing as well as publication as a test Committee. There are improvements to be made to the report writing template before this is rolled out across other Committees.
8	Review and replacement of the telephony system	To realise our ambitions to deliver more for less	The Council controls its overhead costs for direct dial telephony whilst expanding the flexibility for staff via a non-desk-based solution	The authority is using the Mitel VOIP system. Firewall issues are largely resolved. Softphones are being implemented November 2021.

	Service Priority	Link to corporate plan	Expected Outcomes	Update on 25 October 2021
9	Delivery of Edenbrook apartments project	Maximising income opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for income generation	The Council delivers the project on time and within budget to maximise the investment potential	Edenbrook apartments successfully delivered.
10	Implementation of Housing Company	Maximising income opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for income generation	Business Plan approved, Company set up, run first full financial year	Housing Business Plan approved, and Company set up. All apartments except are let.
11	Review of expansion opportunities for Edenbrook Leisure Centre including the potential for Adventure Golf	Maximising income opportunities, and identifying new opportunities for income generation	The Council ensures the facilities offered to the public remain relevant and aligned with demands, whilst also delivering additional revenue in return	Cabinet paper October 2021. Contract has been renegotiated and extended.
12	Achievement of accreditation of both Bronze Armed Forces Covenant and the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme	Continuing to work closely with partners to deliver joint services	Become member of the AFERS and gain bronze stage in the Armed Forces Covenant	The Council is meeting the standard for the Bronze Armed Forces Covenant and needs to submit evidence in January 2022. Human Resources are working on the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme for implementation on the same date.
13	Upgrade the network and improve Wi-Fi access across the Council	An efficient and effective Council	Provide end user with more capacity and quicker speeds	Infrastructure installed and working.

	Service Priority	Link to corporate plan	Expected Outcomes	Update on 25 October 2021
14	Create data map for Hart, consider data maturity and define data strategy	An efficient and effective Council	To transform decision making and how we deliver services	This has a completion date of 31 December but has not yet been started, being carried out alongside implementation of new website.
15	Draft and consult on Communication and engagement strategy incorporating Hart News	An efficient and effective Council	To provide principles and direction around corporate communication, social media, and change programme	On track to be delivered December 2021
16	Website accessibility review and accreditation	An efficient and effective Council	Resolve technical and content issues	Delivered June 2021
17	Deliver Elections	An efficient and effective Council	Smooth, efficient, safe, and legal election	2021 Elections delivered, Lessons Learnt process currently being undertaken.
18	Create change programme including culture and behaviours	An efficient and effective Council	Staff survey. Create action plan	December 2021 – Not yet started
19	Garden Community	Healthy Communities and People	Progress the exploration of the opportunity	Final reports being pulled together for evidence base.
20	Update current website	An efficient and effective Council	To provide quality information and services to residents	New website out to procurement. A new intranet was launched in October 2021. The new website needs to be live by November 2022 as the platform from this date will no longer be supported.

2. Service risk register

A detailed service risk assessment has been completed and is reviewed at a minimum quarterly. This helps inform the Hart District Council Corporate Risk Register which is reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. Mitigated risks that have a score of 9 or above are included below.

Description	Impact	Source of Risk	Prior Assessment			Existing Controls	Effectiveness of Controls	Current Assessment			Further Mitigations
			Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating			Likelihood	Consequence	Residual Risk	
Changes to Local Government Funding. Awaiting results from Local Government Funding Review.	Reduction in overall income.	Local Government Funding Review has been delayed but is still almost certain to happen in the medium term. Further concern as to whether new homes bonus will be received. The deficit appears structural.	4 - Likely	4 - Critical	16	Medium Term Financial Strategy is in place. Commercialisation programme has continued to invest. Commercialisation strategy has been reviewed.	Satisfactory	4 - Likely	3 - Major	12	Review diversified, increased sources of income and cost reduction. MTFS updated and reported to Members. Lobby via LGA for clarity of funding review outcome and improvements via LGF outcomes. Lobby MCLG on funding review.

Loss of key income stream and subsequent budget implications. (For example, Leisure Concession and loss of recycling income)	Reduction in overall income.	Poor financial performance of key partners, resulting in either a reduction or loss of concession payment. A change of policy from Hampshire County Council on recycling credits. Future risk to green waste income.	5 - Almost Certain	3 - Major	15	Ongoing monitoring of financial performance of key contractors. Maintain good working relationships with partners. Early consideration of financial impact of the loss of recycling income. Revised budgets to consider Leisure Concession reduction.	Satisfactory	4 - Likely	3 - Major	12	Consideration of new income streams raised risk of income streams with members. Negotiations with Leisure provider.
Loss of New Homes Bonus from 22-23 onwards and subsequent budget implications as the council places reliance on the New Homes Bonus for its revenue budget. Changes to the calculation of New Homes Bonus.	Reduction in overall income.	The government has stated that there will be changes to the calculation of the New Homes Bonus.	4 - Likely	4 - Critical	16	Plan for reduced income, including service cost reductions. Use of commercial opportunities to reduce future budget gaps.	Satisfactory	4 - Likely	4 - Critical	16	Lobbying for improved arrangements Cost reduction options Working with LGA and MHCLG. Series of workshops has taken place and options for savings and income generation to be presented to members is being worked up by officers.

Financial Financial impact to the council due to COVID-19 could result in significant shortfalls in income and the ability of the council to effectively fund current services. In addition, reduced income to residents and businesses will affect Collection Fund recovery and surplus. Finally, an uncertain economy may result in volatility around our commercial income and treasury management income streams.	Reduced recovery of income, reduced levels of income, volatility of financial markets and delays in delivery of Commercial Strategy.	COVID-19	5 - Almost Certain	3 - Major	15	Revised Budget agreed Cashflow being monitored regular reporting of financial position to management and members	Satisfactory	5 - Almost Certain	3 - Major	15	Stress testing of MTFS and revised MTFS presented to Members. Revised budget built on lower income levels and cloth cut accordingly. Commercial Strategy being re-worked currently along with Treasury Management Strategy to maximise investment income.
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3. Performance indicators and targets 2020/21

Corporate Services is currently in transition across several the support services including HR, IT, Finance, Revenues and Benefits. Many of the performance indicators will change as a result and those where data is available, are reported through the 5 Councils governance structure. Those shown below reflect the key indicators currently available.

KPI	Description	Annual Target	Q1 Performance	Q2 Performance
IA01	Percentage of Audit Plan completed during the year	100%	33%	50%
IA04	% Of High-Risk Audit Recommendations Implemented by Department	100%	50%	TBC
CS01	Quality of Customer Service Call Handling - % score from monitoring sample	90%	96.3%	99%
F1	Implementation of savings schemes targets to meet MTFS requirements	90%	-	Level 1 30%
CS02a	% Of telephone calls answered by Contact Centre in 30 seconds	70%	73.6%	92%
RB05	Percentage of Non-domestic Rates Collected	98%	20.01%	44.18%
RB06	% Of Council Tax collected	98%	27.82%*	56.87%
IT05	% Uptime of key systems	99%	-	**
IT06	% Uptime of Hart DC website	98%	100%	100%

*Q1 figure now included, Q1 below previous years Q2 0.83% up on previous years

** all key systems remained up apart from 4 hours in September where Integra could not be accessed out of office
Business rates down 7.3% on prior year

4. Quarter One 2020/21 Key Challenges and Achievements

- Audit of Financial Statements largely complete except for conclusion on objection and revaluation of Fleet Leisure Centre
- Budget build papers received from Budget Holders for 2022/23
- Review of Council Tax Localisation policy procured
- Leisure contract negotiation complete
- Level 1 and Level 2 Business Cases – Level 1 approved for budget build, Level 2 – needs Cabinet approval for implementation
- Internal Audit Plan – lots of progress
- Significant procurement support for Fleet Pond
- Waste contract handover
- Capita contract feels much more stable – large change in personnel
- New website out to procurement
- Full quarterly accruals budget reporting
- Decisions being made on Mendip contract

5. Looking forward to Quarter Three: Key Deliverables

- Audit opinion on Financial Statements – Audit Committee 6th December 2021
- Review of Council Tax Localisation policy – evidence gathering started. Consultation Q1 2022-23.
- October 27 – Local Government Settlement – MTFS update
- Briefing session – Level Three savings
- Fees and Charges and Capital Budgets received
- Corporate Services Restructure next steps – now that principle is going to Cabinet for approval
- Update of Financial Regulations and other key policies
- Level 2 savings implementation

Minutes of the Meeting of Thames Water, Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council with Hart District Council Members

11 October 2021 at 2pm

Present:

Hart District Councillors (HDC)	Ambler; Axam, Butcher, Crampton, Dorn, Smith, Southern, Worlock (Chairman)
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	Cllrs. Collett, Davies, Glen, Parker Keith Thompson Susanna Hope
Environment Agency (EA)	Neil Landricombe
Hart District Council (HDC)	Alex Jones, Rebecca Borrett

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chairman introduced Alex Jones to the group. Alex has joined HDC as their Flood Risk Management Officer. Alex confirmed apologies had been received from:

Vicki Westall (HCC); Sarah Edmunds (Thames Water); Carley Mason (Thames Water); Philip Sheppard (HDC); Councillor Coburn (HDC); Councillor Crookes (HDC); Councillor Delaney (HDC); Councillor Kinnell (HDC); Councillor Quarterman (HDC)

Councillors Southern and Dorn expressed concern that the Project Work Programme, due from EA in the weeks following the last meeting, had not been received until the start of the current meeting.

2. Minutes of 22 March 2021 and Action Table

Councillor Collett proposed the minutes of the previous meeting were correct and this was seconded by Councillor Dorn.

Action Table

- 2) **Steering group for Fleet and Sandy Lane Ditch** – ongoing. Neil Landricombe felt this action required amending. The scheme is making good progress, but a steering group does not reflect where EA are now. A public meeting would be possible in the future as the scheme progresses. Councillors felt it important that the right community engagement was held, at the right time. Councillors also expressed concern at the apparent lack of action by EA, year on year. Neil explained the funding bidding process and the six-year rolling programme used by EA and confirmed for the areas of Crondall, Yateley and Frogmore a bid would be placed in May 2022.

Neil went on to explain in Hart progress has been directed to Fleet and for watercourses 9/10 were now modelling for flood risks, and EA are talking to key partners about options, costs benefits and analysis. Neil confirmed the EA are now in a place where a lot of funding is available and more government money now available, so they will eventually get to all the areas.

Neil confirmed if members had further questions from the work programme to contact him and he would provide them with a response this week.

Councillors requested a work programme be created, with each key project broken down into main phases, set out on a timeline. **Alex will speak with Councillor Dorn to create a template for this.**

- 39) **Crookham Park/Naishes Lane** (HCC lead with HDC) – (SH) – HCC have been trying to build a case of the impact on residents but there have only been two direct reports to HCC, the last in January 2020. HCC will still progress with enforcement, but their case will not be as strong without demonstrating a detrimental effect to residents.
 - 44) **Planning** - The Chairman to discuss with the Head of Place, the attendance of a planning representative at the next meeting of the forum.
 - 45) **Processes** - potential strengthening of Flood and Water Management Act powers (HCC) – Susie clarified they can enforce against works done without consent, things like culverts and filling in a ditch, but not on banks or floodplain. They can also enforce against lack of maintenance but are unable to make people provide a betterment. This only applies to work done after they received powers in 2012. Also, these powers relate to structure and not to volume or quality of water.
- Councillors questioned how many prosecutions had been made since 2014 when the team was established. **SH to find out the actual numbers year on year since 2014.**
- 51) **To make 101 aware of the Hart sandbag procedures** - Alex confirmed procedures were reviewed and issues were identified that as 101 is a nationwide scheme this may not work for all residents. However, police that work within the HDC building are aware. It was felt if there was a serious risk this would be a 999 issue, not 101. Alex also confirmed he had been working with the Communications Team around preparing for flooding in winter and the website and various communication platforms for the sandbag procedure would be updated in the next week.
 - 53) **Fleet FAS** - Alex and Phil met with Brian Roberts a couple of months ago and a lot of watercourses in Fleet area were surveyed. Progress is being made with the EA and is ongoing. Neil added a lot of work is happening in background and

this is a partnership project, and now looking at modeling options and will then resume engaging with partners.

3. Impact of Storms since last meeting

No update.

4. Status Updates

4.1 Environment Agency

Neil confirmed looking at total remodeling of the Blackwater catchment, from Aldershot to Swallowfield and all rivers that run through Blackwater, Frogmore, Yateley. This will take 1-2 years to complete, with the potential for slippage. This information will then be used to inform projects in the Blackwater catchments, including Yateley, Frogmore and Blackwater areas at that time. Mapping will then be used to update the flood map.

With regards to capital schemes, modeling is currently being done for Fleet with a view to future engagement towards the start of 2022, with feedback and options.

In relation to Griffin Stream in Hook and Mill Lane in North Wanborough funding has been secured for writing an initial assessment. An officer meeting will be set up in November to discuss the initial and there will be a clear recommendation about how we go forward on these two projects. We have also bid for funding for next year.

Councillor Davies asked if the River Whitewater was being remodeled. Neil explained EA are currently sorting consultant resource to write the initial assessments to draw all data and information they currently must look at high level. Councillor Davies declared a direct pecuniary interest in River Whitewater as holder of the fishing rights, but his reason for asking is that the bulk of Hart is River Whitewater, not Blackwater.

Councillors asked if for future meetings a slide presentation could be available to summarise the vast volume of information from the EA. **NL to produce a presentation for the next meeting in March.**

4.2 HDC projects

[a] Mill Corner, North Wanborough - Alex advised there had not had much progress since last meeting. Legal are rewriting the agreements to be signed by the landowners to progress this.

[b] Phoenix Green – Grant approval number and letter from EA received last week which enables further progressing in terms of starting the process to draw the funding needed to progress the project for Phoenix Green. Requirements will need to be put in place between Hart, the contractors and property owners.

Once in place we will work with the Communications Team to prepare documents for residents.

[c] Kingsway – Very similar to Phoenix Green, but still waiting grant approval number before can progress. As a general update, the scheme will not stop the flooding issue, but should help the residents with flooding. Problems highlighted by residents were investigated by Thames Water and no issues with the pipe condition or the foul sewer were found. They are unable to survey the surface water sewer at moment as levels very high throughout the network. The river level is too high meaning it is backing up into and causing a knock-on effect.

Working with EA and TW to look at other solutions such as holding water back in upstream areas. Funding application for Hawley Hill Pond to store water rejected so waiting for feedback from Surface Water Management Project Team at Thames Water.

Councillor Collett asked if Alex could brief him offline on how water is getting from the pipe under the railway line down to the river. Councillor Collett also raised concern regarding the pumping station and pipework. Alex advised misconnections had already been identified and were being investigated.

4.3 HCC projects

[a] Highway Authority - Webbs Corner – Susie updated waiting for outcome of a tender to appoint a contractor. The plan is for two culvert crossings and some minor ditch works. Waiting to hear back from Hart planning team as the ditch works are on the ground of a grade one listed building. Hoping to deliver late 2021 early 2022.

[b] Local Flood and Water Management Strategy - Susie advised an updated strategy was published in November 2020. Underneath are the catchment plans, an assessment of the flood risk across each of the 18 catchments in Hampshire. Susie hopes to send a link in the next couple of months so everyone will be able to access the catchment plans

4.4 TW projects: Thames Water were not in attendance to update the Group.

Updates provided by email: Funding for lining works in Crondall have been approved with date to be confirmed and subject to ground water levels.

Thames Water are investigating the foul water flooding issues at London Road/Holt Lane, Hook.

Councillor Collett had wished to raise two schemes with them to try to arrange site meetings, one being Foxley Close in Blackwater where a road is flooding and apparent sewage seeping into the road. Highways have checked the gullies and drains and found all ok and state their system is ok, but it keeps happening.

Councillor Dorn raised a local issue that had been pursued for some time in terms of lining sewer pipes along a street inundated with groundwater in later autumn to start of spring. Despite the promise to deal with it this was not happening.

Alex was asked if he could be able to provide the correct contact details for Thames Water. Councillor Dorn advised he did have a direct link to the CEO, who he could contact directly if absolutely necessary.

5. Update on Parish Flood Forum (HDC)

Alex advised the group this was meant to run last Monday, but no responses were received apart from Hook so meeting cancelled. The next session will run early next year, and same process will apply. Alex confirmed a meeting was held separately with representatives from Hook, and together with Susie, Neil and TW discussions and actions were taken forward regarding Holt Lane.

6. Forward Water Situation (EA)

Neil did not have information to hand in the absence of Thames Water, but presumed ground water levels are relatively dry at moment but moving into winter storms weather so looking at that for the coming months.

7. Any Other Business

Councillor Axam asked for the groups help regarding gardens flooding in The Verne and identifying which organisation would be responsible. Susie and Alex will visit the properties in a few weeks to try to identify where flooding issue originating.

Councillor Davies asked who was responsible for clearing a soak away where there is localised flooding between Phoenix Green to Odiham, where it goes under M3. **Keith Thompson to investigate, identify location and determine responsibility for clearing.**

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on Monday 7 March 2022 at 2pm.

As normal with the minutes, there will be a post-meeting note added for the responses of the various agency partners.

Meeting ended 16:11pm

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING:	16 NOVEMBER 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
Report of:	Communications and Engagement Manager
Cabinet Portfolio:	Digital and Communications
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the proposed Communications and Engagement Strategy alongside the proposed Content Strategy.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Subject to any comments received from the committee, that Overview and Scrutiny recommends to Cabinet for the adoption of the two strategies for the period of 2022 – 2026.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The council is committed to ensuring that the whole organisation communicates effectively and efficiently. This is critical to deliver quality services,
- to help and inform our residents about our services,
 - to help people how they can access our services
 - to ensure we comply with statutory obligations around public engagement
- 3.2 We also recognise it is important to establish a two-way conversation between the council and its communities to help us remain sighted in changes in the way they wish the Council to deliver services into the future and plan for any transformation.
- 3.3 To this end, a new Communications and Engagement Strategy had been developed which sets out the council's approach to delivering its communications activities and outlines the principles which will underpin this work.
- 3.4 The aims of the strategy are:
- We aim to build confidence in the council through effective communications and engagement with our residents, businesses, partners, councillors and staff.

- We will strive to build trust by communicating with integrity and providing consistent and accurate information in a timely fashion.
- We aim to provide accessible communications is a priority, reflecting our desire to make Hart a community that respects inclusion and diversity

3.5 Alongside this, a content strategy has been developed to set out how the council can get information to the right person at the right time, for the right reasons.

3.6 It aims to help in the planning, creation, delivery and governance of news, updates and information to our residents, councillors, businesses and other key partners as part of Hart District Council's goals and ambitions, set out within the Hart 2040 Vision and Corporate Plan.

3.7 Both strategies will enable the organisation to make a more joined up approach to communications and will help position effective communications at the core of the council.

4 MAIN ISSUES

4.1 Local authorities are facing financial challenges and this position is unlikely to change over the next four years so effective communication, along with community engagement will form a key part of managing this difficult process.

4.2 The way that people receive, digest and share information is changing, so it is important that we keep communication and engagement activities up-to-date and at the forefront to make sure we are engaging with all audiences whether through more traditional channels well know and used by some of our communities, or the new opportunities favoured by others.

5 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

5.1 This Strategy aims to help in the delivery of two key priorities in the Hart Vision 2040:

- Increasingly use digital solutions to provide the services that our residents both need and expect, helping them to get the services 24/7 and enabling the council to focus resources on the digitally excluded and most vulnerable or complex cases.
- Continuing to build a great sense of community, reducing social isolation, celebrating our diversity, and strengths and through this increasing community connectedness and resilience.

5.2 Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	Yes
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 All communication activity will comply with the authority's statutory duties.
- 6.2 The Communications and Engagement strategy compliments the Equality Objectives 2021 – 2023 which states;
To develop a communication and engagement strategy and guidance in order to enhance our approach to engagement across the Council and to ensure we hear from our diverse communities.

7 ACTION

- 7.1 It is requested that Overview and Scrutiny consider and provide comments on the Communications and Engagement strategy, and subject to any amendments, recommends these to Cabinet for adoption.
- 7.2 Once adopted, a communications and engagement action plan will be produced to support the delivery of the strategy.
- 7.3 It is requested that Overview and Scrutiny consider and provide comments on the Content strategy, and subject to any amendments, recommends these to Cabinet for adoption.

Contact Details: Amy Summers – amy.summers@hart.gov.uk – 01252 774460

Appendices

Appendix 1	Communications and Engagement Strategy
Appendix 2	Content Strategy

Hart District Council

Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022 - 2026

Contents:

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Introduction

This Communications and Engagement Strategy is driven by our strategic objectives as an organisation and will support the new corporate plan due to be implemented in 2022 – 2026. It's a living document that will be reviewed during its lifetime.

Through effective communications and engagement, we can support and deliver these objectives to our stakeholders.

This strategy has been informed by a range of corporate documents such as The Vision 2040, The Corporate Plan and Service Plans. It compliments other corporate objectives such as the Equality Objectives 2021 – 2023 which states;

To develop a communication and engagement strategy and guidance in order to enhance our approach to engagement across the Council and to ensure we hear from our diverse communities.

This document will inform the following documents:

- Content Strategy (written alongside this strategy)
- Consultation Strategy
- Corporate manual and guidelines
- Communication toolkit for staff

This strategy aims to provide an outline to the communications and engagement service delivered by Hart District Council.

Supporting the Council's 2040 Vision

The vision is for Hart to become the best place to live, work and enjoy.

This Communications and Engagement Strategy aims to help in the delivery of two of those key priorities namely;

- Increasingly use digital solutions to provide the services that our residents both need and expect, helping them to get the services 24/7 and enabling the council to focus resources on the digitally excluded and most vulnerable or complex cases.
- Continuing to build a great sense of community, reducing social isolation, celebrating our diversity, and strengths and through this increasing community connectedness and resilience.

Our aims

We aim to build confidence in the council through effective communications and engagement with our residents, businesses, partners, councillors and staff.

We will strive to build trust by communicating with integrity and providing consistent and accurate information in a timely fashion.

We aim to provide accessible communications is a priority, reflecting our desire to make Hart a community that respects inclusion and diversity.

Objectives

Continue day-to-day fundamentals: This includes

- Informing the public, businesses, visitors and the media about our work
- Continuing to manage and improve the Council's website
- Managing the council's social media platforms
- Producing high quality publications such as Hart News
- Providing strategic communications advice and support to councillors and council officers
- Providing support to teams across the council who are carrying out consultation and engagement activities
- Building effective relationships with external stakeholders (suppliers, partners, other local authorities, etc)
- Delivering a quality, pro-active media relations service
- Crisis communications

Corporate narrative: We will tell a clear story and explain what we are doing and what we aim to achieve

Positive and proactive: A key component of this strategy is to re-focus our efforts on delivering positive content. We want to celebrate our success and showcase the things we do well.

Engaging content: We will increase the use of images, video and infographics to tell our story in a simple way

Enhance our visual identity: We will develop the Hart District Council brand so that it has a clear identity

Digital technologies: We will utilise digital technologies to deliver our service and communicate with our audience

Connecting staff and councillors: We will continue to communicate organisational plans and strategies and encourage organisational engagement

Be inclusive: We will continue to try and reach diverse audiences and increase the diversity of people who engage with the council.

Principles

To achieve the objectives set out within this strategy communications need to be:

- **Consistent** – link back to the key strategic messages and strengthen our brand
- **Planned** – include a communications plan in every project, service change or initiative
- **Proactive** – consult and engage with residents early on and prepare communications in advance of important issues coming to Cabinet and Council
- **Authentic** – identify key officers as media spokespeople and use more people led videos
- **Accessible to all** – continue to develop our accessibility standards within the organisation
- **Transparent** – open and honest and inform local people when their views and opinions cannot be acted upon and the reasons for this

How we will increase our engagement with residents

Good engagement can create social connections between individuals and groups.

It can enhance the motivation and capacity to participate in decision-making, and it can bolster economic efficiency and resident choice. It fosters a more open relationship with residents, saving time that might otherwise have been spent fighting long-running battles. It generates capacity in the community, by building on assets, networks and local identity. It also helps residents to understand and access the system more easily.

As a council we will:

- We will set a clear distinction between engagement and consultation
- Use the Local Government Association (LGA) New Conversations 2.0 guide as best practice to develop engagement techniques within the council
- We will take steps to engage with hard-to-reach communities

Audiences

We communicate and engage with a wide range of audiences and key stakeholders. Below lists provides a snapshot of these audiences:

- Residents
- Customers
- Suppliers
- Businesses and investors
- Visitors
- Media (local, regional, national and trade) and hyperlocal news sites (community blogs, community social media pages, online forums, village newsletters)
- Partnerships eg Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council, NHS
- Voluntary sector
- Special interest groups (either permanent or established for a particular issue)
- Staff
- Councillors
- Parish Councils
- Town Councils
- Hampshire Local Authorities and other authorities adjacent to Hart
- County Council
- MPs
- National government
- Government agencies and/or regulatory bodies
- Other public sector partners such as Police, NHS and Schools

Key messages

The key messages below are informed from our Corporate Plan. They convey our priorities as an organisation and should be woven into the messaging provided by services.

- Hart is a resilient council providing value for money services
- Hart is positively responding to the climate change emergency and creating great environments
- Hart supports and encourages a thriving local economy
- Hart provides safe and connected communities
- Hart will facilitate decent affordable homes across the district

Channels

- Face to face
- Telephone
- Contact Centre (IVR messaging)
- Website
- Letter
- Web chat
- SMS
- Customer accounts
- Social media – Facebook, twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn
- Video – YouTube (including council meetings YouTube channel)
- Press
- Parish link
- Covid update
- Business enews update
- Hart News
- Consultations and surveys
- Customer feedback
- Staff newsletter
- SharePoint intranet

The graphic (on the page below) outlines the communication channels available and looks at the why, what, who, when and how for their use.

Communication channels

Why?

- Build confidence
- Engagement
- Build trust
- Provide consistent, accurate and timely comms
- Provide accessible comms

What?

- Hart Vision
- Hart Values
- Corporate Plan
- Service Plans
- Services
- Business support
- Community safety
- Council tax
- Business rates
- Elections
- Health, wellbeing and inclusion
- Housing
- Parking
- Waste & recycling
- Environment – climate change
- Planning
- Countryside inc. events
- Strategic projects
- Consultations
- Council meetings
- Councillors
- Press releases & statements
- News
- Policies & guidelines
- Crisis comms
- Community events

Who?

- Residents
- Customers
- Businesses
- Investors
- Visitors
- Media
- Partners
- Voluntary sector
- Special Interest Groups
- Employees
- Councillors
- Parish Councils
- County Council
- MPs
- Central government
- Government agencies/regulatory bodies
- Trade unions

When and how?

Hourly

- Face to face
- Website
- Intranet
- Social media
- Email
- Phone
- Letter
- Teams
- Posters
- Leaflets

Daily

Weekly

- Team meetings and cascades
- Inductions
- Covid update
- Business enews update
- Video

Fortnightly

- Parish Link
- Staff newsletter

Monthly

- All staff briefing
- Scheduled council meetings
- Photography
- Graphic design
- Scheduled consultations
- Scheduled media
- Infographics

Bi Annual

- Hart News
- Staff induction
- Countryside events

Annual

- Financial reports
- Staff survey
- Council Tax billing

Principles

Consistent

Authentic

Planned

Accessible to all

Proactive

Transparent

Planning, measurement and evaluation

Our campaigns will take a rigorous and planned approach, following the OASIS model advocated by the Government Communications Service (GCS):

- Objectives (what is the communication activity trying to achieve)
- Audience insights (outline the audience and any insights on them)
- Strategy (where we set out the approach applied)
- Implementation (how will we deliver the campaign)
- Scoring and evaluation (how we measure the effectiveness and success of the campaign)

Measurement and evaluation

Measuring and evaluating communication and engagement activities is split into four main categories:

- *Inputs* (Defines the target audiences, looks at inputs necessary to inform and prepare communications.)
- *Outputs* (Communication and engagement activities. Analytics show digital reach.)
- *Outtakes* (Stakeholder experiences and what they took away or learned. Analytics show digital sharing and comments, etc.)
- *Outcomes* (Stakeholder behaviour and behaviour change. Analytics show survey completion linked to social media posts.)

An example might look as follows:

- Inputs (Social media analytics show low levels of young adults completing a consultation)
- Outputs (The team runs pop-up events at local leisure centres to target young adults, in addition to paid social media targeting young adults.)
- Outtakes (Young adults express an interest in learning more. Analytics show young people discussing or sharing content.)
- Outcomes (An increase in survey completions and meeting attendance in this demographic. Some volunteer for focus groups.)

KPI's

- Website – 98% uptime of website
- Social media - 10% increase in engagement (year on year)
- Produce a monthly dashboard showing communication and engagement increases across a range of platforms
- Pulse surveys launched to track engagement among employees, and 10% improvement during the plan period led by HR

- Pulse surveys run to track website navigation and content (move from 57% score in Sept 21 to 77% by 2026)
- 100% of large-scale council projects (the corporate project list) to be supported by a communication strategy by 2026
- 100% of communication campaigns using OASIS framework by 2026
- 25% of press releases/statements issued by video by 2026

Resources and professional development

Communications and engagement doesn't solely sit within the communications and engagement team. It should be demonstrated across the whole organisation and all officers and councillors should embody the strategy to deliver effective communications to our audience.

Professional development and regular training will be provided to officers and councillors by the communications team and external organisations.

Strategy contact:

Amy Summers

Communications and Engagement Manager

Amy.summers@hart.gov.uk

01252 774460

This document was last reviewed on: 8 November 2021

Hart District Council

Content strategy 2022 – 2026

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Introduction

This Content Strategy is written in conjunction with our Communications and Engagement Strategy.

It aims to help you in the planning, creation, delivery and governance of news, updates and information to our residents, councillors, businesses and other key partners as part of Hart District Council's goals and ambitions, set out within the Hart 2040 Vision and Corporate Plan.

It's a living document that will be reviewed during its lifetime.

Our aims

This content strategy helps you get the right information to the right person at the right time, and for the right reasons.

This content strategy aims to help you ensure:

- Your content is linked directly to the council's aims and objectives
- Only effective, high-quality and priority content is published and maintained – reducing reputational risk and reducing resource requirements
- Content is fresh and is relevant and audited frequently to ensure outdated, or trivial content is removed
- That people have the appropriate skills and training to create effective media messages and additional training is provided to content editors for our website
- The council has a unified approach to content, and in so doing ensuring that whilst there may be many authors of material, it remains clearly from Hart District Council
- You understand your roles and responsibilities and those of others for those involved in content (communications, leaders and managers, content editors and officers signing-off content)
- You understand our brand and style guidelines for any publications we may do

Objectives

Corporate narrative: We will develop the council narrative – the “why” of our organisation – is a fundamental element of a content strategy.

It defines an organisation’s purpose. It brings people together around that purpose. It directs action, and in a democracy, it gives people a marker against which a public body can be held to account. As part of our overall content strategy, the narrative:

- articulates where the organisation has come from and where it wants to be
- translates our corporate aims and planned-for outcomes into compelling and emotional language that engages our stakeholders’ hearts, as well as minds
- provides direction for what the council wants to achieve and how it behaves corporately and as individuals
- focuses the efforts of staff around a shared understanding of where the organisation is going and how they can contribute

Connect with the audience: We will know the audience we are communicating to and write with the audience in mind, using clear plain English

Priority content: We will prioritise important information and key content

Quality not quantity: We will be clear and concise

Reduce avoidable contact via other channels: We will aim to make sure people can find the information they are looking for first time

Be inclusive: We will make our content accessible

Principles

One in five adults has a reading age of between nine and thirteen, so it is crucial that our communications are easy to understand.

That means being accurate and concise – but it also means being human. An open, authentic voice makes us much easier to connect with.

The council aims to have a consistent voice across the organisation. Our tone reflects the context of the communication, whether light hearted or serious.

Therefore, our principles are to be:

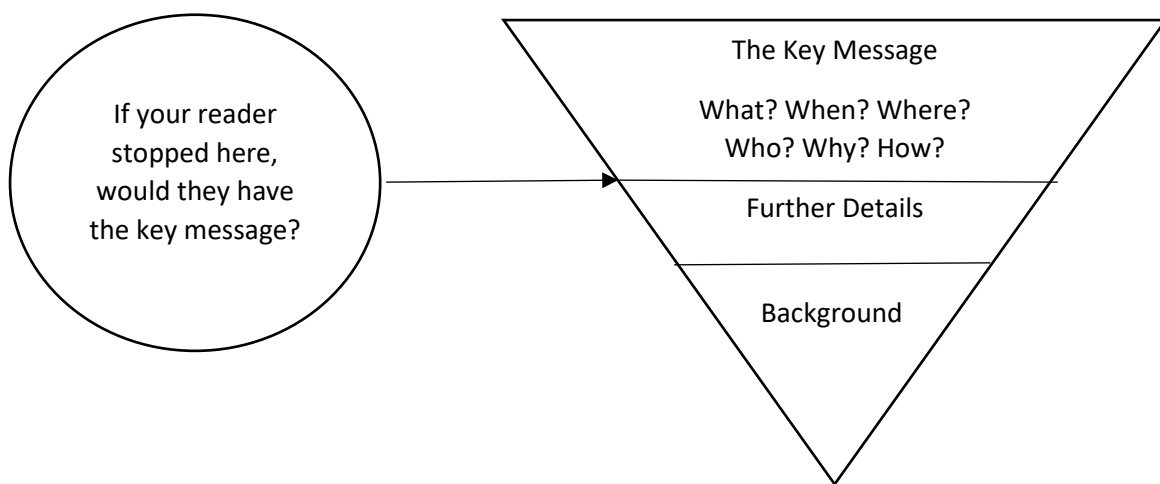
- Clear
- Consistent
- Authentic
- Positive
- Active (rather than passive language)
- Accessible

How we get the message across

Having structured content is crucial as we need to make sure that we get the most important and useful information across to the reader as quickly as possible. To do this we can use the inverted pyramid of content.

This helps structure content to ensure that the essential information is communicated in the first two sentences.

The diagram (below) shows the inverted pyramid of content. The other important question to ask yourself is, so what? What is the message you are trying to communicate, what relevance does that have to the reader, what can they take from reading the content?



How we will achieve this

The next section of the strategy breaks down our main channels of communication and provides guidance on how we can use content across our different platforms.

Writing for the website

People read differently on the web than they do on paper. This means that the best approach when writing for the web is different from writing for print. People rarely read website pages word by word. Instead, they scan the page, picking out individual words and sentences.

Writing should be:

- Start with the reader in mind
- Using headings and sub-heading and short paragraphs

- Short and to the point (aim for sentences between 10-20 words)
- Objective (rather than promotional)
- Add bullets or numbers where appropriate
- Use links to other pages where needed (don't duplicate wording on the website)

Here are some practical steps to ensure your content is clear and compelling.

1. **Start with the reader in mind.** Ask yourself why they're visiting a page and what they want to find. Also, ask what things they wouldn't be interested in.
2. **Use six questions to help you decide what to include.** Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
3. **Use plain English.** Imagine a typical resident. What terms would they use? Imagine that you are speaking to them when you write. Don't use technical language. Read the content out loud if it helps.
4. **Avoid over-long sentences.** The best way to do this is to limit yourself to one idea per sentence (this makes content much easier to write too). Aim for a sentence length between 10-20 words when writing for the web.
5. **Use the active voice, rather than the passive.** So rather than saying an area 'is being redeveloped', say, 'we are redeveloping' it.
6. **Structure your sentences logically, by putting the 'what' before the 'why'.** So don't write: 'If the council makes these changes now, it will immediately improve the service.' Instead, write: 'The council will immediately improve the service if it makes these changes now.'
7. **Use punctuation helpfully and accurately.** Punctuation may seem like a small thing, but it can make a world of difference.
8. **Be direct.** Use the word 'you' rather than 'residents' (e.g., you can recycle plastic bottles and cardboard in blue bins).
9. **Proofread.** Inaccuracies can easily be missed. Read the content out aloud, which makes it much easier to spot mistakes. Website content will be reviewed by a publisher before it goes live.
10. **Links.** Links can be extremely helpful if directing the site visitor to relevant information. But be careful not to splatter your web pages with links for the sake of it. This can alienate the site visitor from the content they require. We will only signpost to other Government websites, or approved organisations such as the NHS or Police.

Writing for social media

We use the following social media channels to reach residents, businesses, partners and other stakeholders across the district and beyond.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- WhatsApp

This list is not fixed and we will review existing and explore new platforms during the lifetime of this strategy.

Basic principles of social media:

It may be the same authority but councillors, officers, and the organisation will often use social media in distinct ways. However, there are a set of ten principles that run as a golden thread.

1. **Be human.** Be approachable in your language and tone.
2. **Be engaging.** Respond to questions and talk back when you can move the conversation on or help.
3. **Be professional.** Remember that you are representing your authority.
4. **Be positive.** Use social media as a promotional tool. Shout about our successes, showcase the positive work we are doing on behalf of our community.
5. **Share and say where it came from.** You can share what others have posted but it is polite to acknowledge and attribute where this has come from.
6. **Go to where people engage.** If the section of the population you want to connect with are on a particular platform, join that platform. Go to the forum or group where they are likely to be. People don't need permission to use it and they are likely to organise themselves into groups without asking permission.
7. **You can't control, only contribute.** You cannot stop conversation amongst residents. You can only contribute to it.
8. **Content is king.** By creating sharable and engaging content you can contribute to the conversation and be heard. Make sure you use engaging imagery and videos alongside the message.
9. **Be authentic.** Don't try and pretend to be something you are not, and don't use social media as a tool for propaganda.

10. **Be strategic.** Plan ahead – who do you want to engage with, why and how? What do you want to achieve? This should be a simple plan, it may just even be in your head, but have a plan for what you want to achieve.

Writing a press release

Writing press releases is arguably more important in today's online world than in the days where they were just sent to the press. We're no longer solely interested in winning over journalists. We can now tell our story to a range of audiences through the website and social media using press releases.

Why write a press release?

- **We set the tone** – if there is more than one side to a story – and there usually is – whoever tells the story first has the advantage as others are forced to respond to that version.
- **The format encourages clarity and brevity** – press releases follow a formula with the most important information at the top, a paragraph or two of explanation (the who, what, when, where, why, how), and a quote or two from key players in the story. As a writer, you are encouraged to do that in under 400 words.
- **The media amplify our story** – winning coverage for our news stories allows them to be amplified to a much larger audience than we can reach ourselves, which is why the communications team keep an up-to-date media contact list to send the releases to.

The five essential ingredients to a press release:

1. **News** – is it new or surprising (otherwise, why are you writing it)?
2. **Date** – news, like bread, needs to be consumed while fresh
3. **Objectivity** – write like a journalist on the outside (e.g., 'Council leads the way on new...')
4. **Opinion** – objective, adjective-free news can seem dull and lacking in colour and personality. Inject these by allowing a human to express an opinion about the news. But do try to retain the 'outside in' perspective, otherwise all your PR quotations will begin, 'We are delighted to announce...'. Rather than thinking about what the council thinks about the announcement, ask yourself what the announcement means to the groups affected (e.g., the food pantry will support families struggling to manage budgets by providing food at affordable prices'). Always include at least one quotation and say who it's from (name and title). Journalists may not lift your quotation, but they may ask to speak to the spokesperson. Remember that the purpose of a news release is not to appear word-for-word in the media, but to help a journalist to do their job.
5. **Contact details** – you want a journalist to follow up on your release. So always provide contact details of a member of the communications team who can answer questions and provide access to spokespeople, photographs etc.

Writing for Hart News

Hart News is a publication that is sent to all households twice a year. It's an opportunity to tell our story, promote the work of the council and provide updates on a range of services we are delivering to meet the needs of our community.

We want to adopt a new tone, one focussing on great community stories, celebrating the work of the council, and promoting the services we deliver.

To do this we need to follow these guidelines:

What is the story? Don't write an article for the sake of it. What are you trying to communicate?

Be positive. Hart News provides the council with an opportunity to say what we are doing bigger, bolder, brighter and better than we have done before.

Speak directly to your reader. We know that the audience is our residents, so break it down. Who are you trying to connect with? A parent, child, older person, someone who may need mental health support, someone struggling to pay their bills? Get into the mind of the reader.

Be concise. Keep sentences short and don't ramble on. Remember to use the content pyramid to structure your content. Signpost the reader to more information on a website, or telephone number, if it's needed.

Writing letters

Use the right tone: Tone is important in all content, but especially in letters as it will project your attitude to the reader. Although you can't hear it, it has the same effect as it has when you speak to someone.

Keep it simple: Sometimes we have a statutory duty to write letter, such as planning application notification, however this doesn't mean that we have to use technical language. Keep the language you use simple.

Start with the main message: Start the letter with the main message that you need to get across.

Use pronouns: Refer to the reader as 'you' (but not if it sounds accusatory or insulting), instead use the wording 'we'.

Check your spelling and grammar: Read the content out aloud, which makes it much easier to spot mistakes. Have a colleague read the copy before you publish it, where possible.

Writing emails

Subject lines are important: Make sure the email subject is relevant to the email you are sending.

Get the point across: Keep it brief and make sure you cover the important information first.

Watch your tone: Yes, emails are seen to be more informal than letters, however this doesn't mean that you can go crazy with exclamation marks, emojis or inflammatory words.

Include a signature: Always sign off an email, please refer to the email signature

Use CC and BCC appropriately: If you're sending the same email to a group of people and they haven't given their consent for their email address to be shared always BCC them in.

Implementing the strategy – roles and responsibilities

We are all responsible for content that we produce, however we need to have some controls to manage it. The table below breaks responsibilities into four roles.

Role	Responsibility
Leaders (Cabinet and senior-level officers)	Provide the sign-off for communication plans, press releases, statements, etc.
Communications (led by the Communications & Engagement Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the Communication & Engagement strategy for the council (including a content strategy)• Write/film content for website, press releases and other publications• Provide good-practice advice to leaders, members, and officers• The primary contact for matters relating to website content• Managing relationships with content suppliers (e.g., web developers)• Develop and provide training for content editors• Approve and publish content provided by content editors
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide sign-off from content from officers

Content editors and officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and edit content related to their service area or project (often subject matter experts) • Ensure content is up-to-date and fit for purpose • Following good-practice advice provided by the communications team to ensure that the council's tone of voice and brand identity is adhered to
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Resources and professional development

Creating content happens across the whole of the council. With this in mind, all officers and councillors should embody the strategy to deliver effective communications to our audience.

Professional development and regular training will be provided to officers and councillors by the communications team and external organisations.

Website content editors will attend regular quarterly meetings where training will be provided by the Communications team.

Strategy contact:

Amy Summers

Communications and Engagement Manager

Amy.summers@hart.gov.uk

01252 774460

This document was last reviewed on: 8 November 2021

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING:	16 November 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	Seeking nominations to a Task and Finish Group for the Review of Project Options for Housing Capital Spend
Report of:	Head of Community
Cabinet Portfolio:	Community
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non-Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council is in the process of exploring how it can best allocate money set aside in the Housing Capital Fund, to specific projects. There are a number of potential ideas or initiatives which could be worked up and moved forward. As part of the process of assessing which projects to bring forward, officers are seeking nominations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 6 Members to be part of a Task and Finish Group, as well as the Portfolio Holder for Community.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group should be cross party and nominations are sought from all political parties. The Portfolio Holder for Community, and relevant officers will also be part of the group.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominate 6 representatives to take part in a Task and Finish Group which will assist in the assessment and development of projects to be funded from the Housing Capital Fund.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group will take place on Wednesday 8th December at 5pm

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Community Services has ringfenced capital funding to support the provision of affordable housing within the district. It is comprised of money from the sale of former Council housing through the Right to Buy, receipts from the sale of Green Lane carpark and 1 Green Lane and also S106 capital receipts received in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision.

This balance has remained relatively unchanged for the last few years, with a steady flow of capital contributions into the fund. The Council has funded a number of projects over the last 5 years ranging from top-up funding to reduce the rent levels for 4 bed affordable homes, funding to

provide affordable homes at social rents rather than affordable rent (Jean Orr Court) and most recently £325k to fund a joint project with VIVID to purchase a bungalow for a disabled resident. Amounts funded range from £57k to £360k.

The Team has identified the need to develop more projects to allocate spend to in their annual service plan. A Task and Finish Group will enable this work to be progressed.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 A long list of possible projects has been drawn up and the Task and Finish Group will be involved in assessing and prioritising the projects that will be brought forward to Overview and Scrutiny for further discussion and recommendation to implement.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 The alternative option to seeking nominations for a Task and Finish Group, is that Members are less actively involved in the assessment and development of projects that are funded from the Housing Capital Fund. Officers can shortlist the projects in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Community. Member expertise will not be used as effectively in identifying, assessing and prioritising projects.
- 5.2 Both the officer team and the Portfolio Holder for Community are keen to involve members in open, honest and detailed discussions around the options.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

The projects will support several of the priorities set out in Hart's Corporate Plan 2017-22. These include "A Clean, Green and Safe Environment" and "Healthy Communities and People" – ensure access to affordable housing.

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	Yes
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

There are no legal or constitutional issues arising from this report, at this stage.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no direct or immediate financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

There are no risks arising from this report.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 There are no equalities issues relating to this report. The Task and Finish Group will consider equalities impact assessments as part of their work.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

9 ACTION

- 9.1 Overview and Scrutiny are invited to nominate 6 Members to be part of the Task and Finish Group.

Contact Details: Kirsty Jenkins – Kirsty.Jenkins@Hart.gov.uk
Nicola Harpham - Nicola.Harpham@Hart.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING: 16 NOVEMBER 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: SEEKING NOMINATIONS TO A TASK AND FINISH GROUP TO UPDATE AND REFRESH THE CORPORATE COMPLAINT POLICY

Report of: [Joint Chief Executive](#)

Cabinet Portfolio: [Leader and Strategic Direction and Partnerships](#)

Key Decision No

Confidentiality Non-Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The council is in the process of updating and refreshing its Corporate Complaint Policy, as whilst the current policy has been reviewed regularly it would benefit from an update in light of experience. As part of the development process, officers are seeking nominations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee for three Members to be part of a Task and Finish Group.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group will be cross party and so a nomination is sought from each political party. The Joint Chief Executive, and relevant officers will also be part of the group.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominate three representatives to take part in a Task and Finish group which will assist in the refresh and update of the Council's Corporate Complaint Policy.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that the Task and Finish Group will meet on Wednesday 1st December at 4.30pm.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed Customer Care Standards and Unreasonable Behaviour Policies in July 2021 and were advised that next steps would include revision of the Council's Corporate Complaint Policy. The Council's current Corporate Complaints Policy was agreed by Cabinet in 2013 and has been revised in line with advice from the Local Government Ombudsman, every two years since that time.
- 3.2 However, we are leading on developing a refreshed and updated Corporate Complaints Policy in line with current guidance and experience of the management and monitoring of existing complaint processes.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 Work is underway to review the Council's approach to the management of complaints, this will include further training for staff and systems that allow for greater consistency in complaint handing, monitoring and reporting. However, fundamental to the Council's approach will be a Complaints Policy itself and ensuring that is accessible and easily understandable by our residents and can be implemented effectively by our staff.
- 4.2 Members of Overview and Scrutiny will be invited to review the draft policy at the meeting on 18th January 2022.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 There is no alternative to updating the Council's Complaint Policy, our role as a Council is to have clear and transparent mechanisms for making a complaint about our services.
- 5.2 An alternative option to seeking nominations for a Task and Finish Group is that Members are less actively involved in the development of the policy. The officer team including the Joint Chief Executive are keen to involve members in the shaping of this policy at an early stage.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

This policy is relevant to the priority within the Corporate Plan to deliver an effective and efficient Council and is reflected in the operating model highlighted within the Hart Vision 2040, of a Council that delivers welcoming services that are inclusive and engaging

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

Councils must provide a clear and transparent opportunity for residents to express concerns regarding the services they receive, this policy will meet that obligation

Financial and Resource Implications

The research, engagement with Members and production of the draft policy will be met within existing staff resources.

Risk Management

There are no risks arising from this report.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 During the development of the policy, officers will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief.

7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

9 ACTION

9.1 Overview and Scrutiny are invited to nominate three Members to be part of the Task and Finish Group.

Contact Details: **Kirsty Jenkins** – Kirsty.Jenkins@Hart.gov.uk
Nicola Harpham - Nicola.Harpham@Hart.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING: 16 NOVEMBER 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: HOUSING CAPITAL FUNDING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Report of: Head of Community

Cabinet Portfolio: Community

Key Decision No

Confidentiality Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This paper sets out a proposal to ringfence a proportion of the Council's housing capital funds to support Registered Provider's (housing associations) to provide energy efficiency measures in some new affordable homes.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet the approval of the proposal to provide top-up funding to housing associations and Registered Providers to enable the provision of additional energy efficiency measures on new- build affordable homes.
- 2.2 That £550k of housing capital funds are ring-fenced up to March 2025 for this purpose.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Community and the Head of Finance and Portfolio Holder for Finance are granted delegated responsibilities to approve schemes on a case-by-case basis as opportunities arise. This is to enable the Housing Development and Strategy Manager to move swiftly to negotiate these additional measures. Opportunities may be lost if a housing association is unable to secure funding at the required time in the planning and funding process.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Community Services has ringfenced capital funding to support the provision of affordable housing within the district. This includes money from the sale of former Council housing through the Right to Buy. Right to Buy receipts are not ring fenced for non-stock holding Council's and so can be used to fund this initiative.

- 3.2 The Council has funded a number of projects over the last 5 years ranging from top-up funding to reduce the rent levels for 4 bed affordable homes, funding to provide affordable homes at social rents rather than affordable rent (Jean Orr Court) and most recently £325k to fund a joint project with VIVID to purchase a bungalow for a disabled resident. Amounts funded range from £57k to £360k.
- 3.3 The Strategy and Development Team have been exploring how to bring forward suitable projects to be funded to enable the delivery of affordable housing projects in the district for the benefit of local residents. With the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency earlier in the year, it seemed timely to bring this proposal forward, working closely with the Council's Sustainability Officer and the Planning Service.
- 3.4 This paper outlines a proposal for the Council to provide top-up funding to new affordable housing schemes in order for additional energy efficiency standards and measures to be included in the new build. This will not only be a positive contribution to addressing climate change issues, but also creating homes where energy bills are reduced and more affordable for people on limited incomes.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 At full Council on 29th April 2021 councillors declared a Climate Emergency and committed to becoming a carbon neutral authority by 2035 and a carbon neutral district by 2040. This was following the adoption of Hart's Climate Change Action Plan in 2020.
- 4.2 It is vitally important that affordable homes should not be precluded from providing additional energy efficiency measures due to cost and as such local authorities can consider how it can enable affordable energy efficient homes in its area. This proposal will help the Council in working towards achieving this and its actions in the Climate Change Action Plan.
- 4.3 In terms of the national picture, in January 2021, the Government published the Future Homes Standard 2025 which gives targets for reducing carbon emissions in homes. At present Homes England funding supports the provision of a range of different affordable housing products, and whilst new lower carbon technologies and systems do exist, they continue to be harder to access and more expensive generally until they become more mainstream and more widely used. With limited funding available, this can make including these technologies in affordable housing difficult to achieve.
- 4.4 Housing Associations/ Registered Providers, who provide the majority of affordable housing in the district either directly, or on S106 sites with

developers, are looking at how they can improve the energy efficiency of their properties. This can often be a balancing act between ensuring the homes meet the highest housing need, are of good quality and design and utilise modern technologies. They can apply for Homes England grants to help deliver the affordable housing but there are limits to the levels that will be paid and this means that not all the desired features can be included.

- 4.5 The Council has a ringfenced capital fund to enable the delivery of affordable housing projects. By providing top-up funding to some of the new affordable homes the Council can enable the housing associations to provide additional energy efficiency measures on their properties and in some cases can look to provide passivhaus standard homes. These are highly insulated homes and use very little energy for heating.
- 4.6 As such, not only will the homes be more energy efficient and better for the environment, but the bills will also be less expensive for the people living there, making the affordable housing more affordable for families facing rising bills and limited income.
- 4.7 These homes will provide an excellent opportunity for the Council and the housing associations to monitor energy use, the impact on energy bills and overall affordability and use the lessons learned for future sites and opportunities.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 Officers will be bringing forward a number of other proposals for spending the Housing Capital Fund. There is a separate paper for Members to consider, asking for nominations to a Task and Finish Group which will explore these proposals in more detail.
- 5.2 In relation to this proposal, the Council could decide not to ringfence any funding for energy efficiency methods and use it to prioritise other projects. This could mean that a number of new affordable homes are developed without any additional energy efficiency measures, or with some features but not making the most of the opportunity available. This will be a missed opportunity to deliver a project focussed on energy efficiency.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

- 6.1 This proposal supports several of the priorities set out in Hart's Corporate Plan 2017-22. These include "A Clean, Green and Safe Environment" - to improve energy efficiency, and "Healthy Communities and People" - ensure access to affordable housing.
- 6.2 Also, Hart Vision 2040 - "Technological advances may be making even greater differences to the way we work and live as communities", and "Reducing the impact of climate change by building in sustainability and using new technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change"

6.3

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

6.4 Legal and Constitutional Issues

There are no legal or constitutional issues arising from this report. If the proposal is agreed by Cabinet, the Council will engage Legal Services to ensure there is a legal agreement in place between them and the relevant Registered Provider, for the delivery of energy efficiency measures in exchange for funding.

6.5 Financial and Resource Implications

In order to support the provision of additional energy efficiency measures in new affordable homes it is requested that £550k of housing capital receipts is ringfenced up to March 2025 for this purpose. This has been included in the draft capital housing budget for 2022-23, subject to the outcome of the committee's decision.

6.6 Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to recommend approval of this proposal to Cabinet.

6.7 The funding can be drawn from the Right to Buy receipts. There are no specific restrictions on the use of these funds.

6.8 On average, a passivhaus or affordable home with several additional energy efficiency measures can require in the region of £10k per unit more grant funding than a traditionally built property. Therefore, it is proposed that the requested amount should enable a small number of sites to be able to access the funding and this will provide the Council with the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the funding and the outcomes.

6.9 Each request for funding from a housing association will be made using an approved funding application form. The applications will be assessed by the Strategy and Development Manager, on their individual merits and circumstances including the design, type, suitability, and number of affordable homes as this will vary from site to site. The cost of building materials may also change from time to time. Recommendations will be made by Strategy and Development to Members and officers with delegated responsibilities to determine whether the funding request is approved.

6.10 There are no implications for additional resources or staffing to support this proposal.

6.11 Risk Management

The Council could choose not to agree to this proposal. The risks associated with this are that affordable housing providers will not be able to provide any (or many) additional energy efficiency measures in new affordable homes as they are too expensive and Homes England grant will not cover the full costs of including them.

6.12 There is the risk that future opportunities to support schemes are few and far between and the Council misses the opportunity to support innovative and forward-thinking designs to help reduce carbon emissions in new affordable homes.

6.13 There is a risk that residents living in the new affordable homes are faced with rising energy bills but limited incomes and problems with affordability of new homes arise.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 This funding will support the delivery of new, affordable housing which can be accessed by a wide range of people of different race, disability, gender, ages, sexual orientation, pregnancy, religion and belief, from the Council's housing register and the Help to Buy register.

7.2 It would also support the provision of affordable housing for people on low incomes who would benefit from more affordable energy bills in the long term.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This proposal has direct implications for reducing carbon emissions in the construction and occupation of new affordable homes arising from the recommendations.

8.2 The funding requested would be to enable the delivery of affordable homes with additional energy efficiency measures including, but not limited to, heat pumps, photo voltaic panels, improved airtightness measures with Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery, and some affordable homes built to passivhaus standards which significantly reduce the amount of carbon they use and generate. Furthermore, it contributes directly to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, adopted in 2020.

8.3 By building properties that will meet the requirement for Hart to be a net carbon neutral authority by 2040, now will ensure these properties will not need to be retrofitted later to meet this target.

9 ACTION

9.1 That Overview and Scrutiny committee recommend the approval of this proposal to Cabinet and that the Head of Community Services, Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Head of Corporate Services are granted delegated responsibilities to approve applications for the funding on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Details:

Nicola Harpham, Housing Strategy & Development Manager	Nicola.Harpham@Hart.gov.uk
Peter Summersell, Sustainability Officer	Peter.Summersell@Hart.gov.uk
Kirsty Jenkins, Head of Community	Kirsty.Jenkins@Hart.gov.uk

Appendices N/A

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Additional background information							
B	N/A							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

*Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.*

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
N/A							
N/A							

achieving its actions in the Climate Change Action Plan.

Appendix A – Additional Background Information

Introduction:

Over the past 18 months, the Strategy and Development Team have been working to identify several housing projects to utilise some of the capital funds. The idea being that the housing funds are used to progress projects to address specific housing issues that are unlikely to progress without some form of additional funding.

There is a paper also being presented at November Overview and Scrutiny committee requesting Members set up a Task and Finish Group to work with officers to identify projects and prioritise them to bring forward firm proposals.

Climate Change considerations:

Hart District Council recognises that climate change is a key issue and at full Council on 29th April 2021 councillors declared a Climate Emergency in Hart and committed to becoming a carbon neutral authority by 2035 and a carbon neutral district by 2040. This was following the adoption of Hart's Climate Change Action Plan in 2020.

The Action Plan has five key elements:

- Pledge to make Hart District carbon neutral by 2040, whilst bringing forward the current 2040 target to 2035, for areas under direct control of Hart District Council.
- Report to Full Council every six months setting out the current actions the Council is taking to address this emergency and the plan to measure annual District wide progress towards meeting the 2040 target.
- Meaningfully engage with the local community and to work with partners across the District and County to deliver these new goals through all relevant strategies and plans, drawing on local, national and global best practice.
- Actively work with the County Council and the Government to provide the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2040 target.
- Actively encourage and push for Hampshire County Council to reduce its target for net zero carbon to 2040, acknowledging that 2050 is too far away for such an emergency.

Planning considerations:

- In January 2021 the Government published the Future Homes Standard 2025 consultation which proposes a Future Building Standard for more efficient homes. It states that all new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes built under current regulations. No new home built under the Future Homes Standard will be reliant on fossil fuels.
- There is a legal duty on local authorities to ensure climate mitigation across all local planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated to include climate change specifically.
- Buildings must help reduce climate change emissions.

Design:

- Buildings can achieve zero carbon (or zero carbon ready) performance by eliminating fossil fuel use for heating, using on-site and/or off-site renewable energy, reducing the use of high global warming potential refrigerants and using low carbon, reused or recycled materials in construction.
- Design features can include external shutters, overhangs, shading on balconies and ways to remove excess heat like mechanical heat ventilation. It is important to look at the design of homes and specification especially as people work from home more.
- 80% of energy used in homes is used to heat the house and water.
- Need to be able to store the energy produced e.g., solar - generated during the day and higher generation during the summer months which will need to be stored.
- Modern Methods of Construction or MMC can also be utilised to deliver more energy efficient housing. MMC properties are estimated to use 20-30% less energy to heat.

What is Passivhaus?

Passivhaus literally means “passive house”. It is a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which includes highly energy efficient design which reduces the building’s ecological footprint and provides very low-energy buildings that need very little fuel. The design captures energy e.g., heat from the sun, and keeps this within the envelope, or fabric of the property itself.

- A passivhaus property has an airtight building envelope, and can include triple glazed windows, mechanical heat ventilation and overhangs for shading.
- The homes are highly insulated and use very little energy for heating.
- They are more expensive to build which can take them out of reach as affordable housing.
- Passivhaus principles and technology play a key role in achieving zero carbon for the future.
- This is a fabric first approach - the energy efficiency is built into the property itself not just features added on to the building - like PV panels on the roof.
- Homes can be passivhaus or partial passivhaus - depends on design and scheme.
- Larger, simple designs perform better than smaller or more complicated shapes.
- The buildings aim to use design to achieve the most energy efficient outcomes, for example, south facing windows, airtight building, can and should open windows, pre-heating in-coming fresh air, mechanical ventilation.
- There is a standard that is just below full passivhaus known as AECB standard. This is also providing additional energy efficiency measures.
- As technology and systems are more widely available costs will reduce over time.

Costs:

- It is vitally important that affordable homes should not be precluded from providing additional energy efficiency measures due to cost and as such local authorities can consider how it can enable affordable energy efficient homes in its area.
- Research suggests that the mean value in Hampshire for a standard build is approximately £1,300m². (This varies according to the type and number of homes provided and someone building a large site will be able to build more cheaply because of economies of scale). By comparison, costs to build to Passivhaus standards are in the region of £1,465m².
- Costs will reduce going forward as methods of construction, materials and technology improve and become more mainstream
- It is important to note that currently, due to shortages in materials and labour, development costs are higher than previously for all developments.

Potential Site:

A site has been identified that will provide 14 affordable homes, all of which it is proposed could be constructed to passivhaus or AECB standard (both of which are very energy efficient and low-carbon homes).

There has been a pre-app application for the proposal, (Ref: 20/02938/PREAPP), but the full planning application has not yet been submitted.

Hastoe Housing Association is proposing to develop the 14 affordable homes which will comprise of 3 shared ownership homes and 11 for rent. They are intending to apply for Homes England funding to enable them to provide the lower-level social rents to ensure that the properties will be as affordable as possible in the longer-term. As such, if they also applied to Homes England for funding for passivhaus standard the grant rate will be very high, and Homes England is unlikely to fund the full costs.

Hastoe is a rural housing specialist, and they tailor each scheme to fit within its unique local setting and circumstances. They would like to apply to Hart Council for top-up funding to enable them to provide social rented homes (funded by Homes England) and passivhaus standard (to be funded by Hart District Council) on a bespoke site in the district.

No. units	Tenure	HDC funding required per unit (in addition to Homes England Funding)	Total Required from HDC
11	Rented	£10k	£110k
3	Shared ownership	£7k	£21k
Total: 14 homes			
Overall funding required			£131k

It is anticipated that Hastoe will complete the Council's funding application form for their scheme.

This site provides an exciting opportunity for Hart to be involved in the development of a passivhaus affordable housing development. Hastoe are aware that Hart would like to have the opportunity to learn from the energy efficiency features and the development of these homes. Going forward, there could be the opportunity to monitor the cost of bills, review how the residents find living with the passivhaus design features, and this information can be used to help inform planning policy and other Council policies going forward. This would help the Council in working towards achieving its actions in the Climate Change Action Plan.

Glossary of frequently used terms:

- **Carbon neutral** means that any CO₂ released into the atmosphere from a company's activities is balanced by an equivalent amount being removed.
- **Climate positive** means that activity goes beyond achieving net-zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- **Carbon negative** means the same thing as "climate positive."
- **Carbon positive** is how organisations describe climate positive and carbon negative. It's mainly a marketing term, and understandably confusing—we generally avoid it.
- **Climate Neutral** refers to reducing all GHG to the point of zero while eliminating all other negative environmental impacts that an organisation may cause.
- **Net-Zero carbon emissions** mean that an activity releases net-zero carbon emissions into the atmosphere.
- **Net-Zero emissions** balance the whole amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) released and the amount removed from the atmosphere.
- **Embodied carbon** is the carbon dioxide emissions associated with making a building that comes from extraction, transportation and manufacturing of raw building materials is a significant part of a building's life cycle. Embodied carbon will be responsible for almost half of total new construction emissions between now and 2050.
- **Zero carbon building** - built-into the building's construction and use.
- **Passivhaus** - a building with an airtight envelope. It literally means "passive house". It is a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which includes highly energy efficient design which reduces the building's ecological footprint and provides very low-energy buildings that need very little fuel.
- **The Future Buildings Standard** - a government consultation carried out from 18 Jan 2021 to 13 April 2021. The outcomes of the consultation are due to be published. It sets out proposals for a Future Buildings Standard, which

provides a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future.

- **AECB standard** - this standard is aimed at those wishing to create high-performance, low-carbon buildings using widely available technology.
- **NPPF** - National Planning Policy Framework.
- **PV panels** - also known as solar panels, capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity.
- **Mechanical ventilation** - is used to control indoor air quality, excess humidity and odours.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING: 16 November 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: HART INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT
ON FIRST HOMES

Report of: Head of Place/Community

Cabinet member: Cllr Graham Cockarill – Place
Cllr Stuart Bailey – Community

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report reflects the introduction of First Homes as an affordable housing product by the Government in May 2021 and sets out a suggested approach to be applied in Hart district, through the introduction of an Interim Planning Policy Statement.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- 2.2 1. Note the content of this report; and
- 2.3 2. Highlight any comments for Cabinet to consider when they receive a report on 2 December 2021.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 24 May 2021, the Government published a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) to set out the Government's plans for the delivery of First Homes defining the product and changes to [planning policy](#). These changes came into effect from 28 June 2021.
- 3.2 First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and fall under the 'affordable housing' definition for planning purposes. There is an existing requirement for all major developments to include provision for affordable housing.
- 3.3 Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 adopted in April 2020, includes Policy H2 which sets out the Council's requirement for affordable housing on new development in the district. In summary this requires:
- On major developments (i.e., developments where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more) the Council will require 40% of the new homes to be affordable housing
 - the tenure mix of the affordable housing will be 65% affordable housing for rent and 35% affordable home ownership

- 15% of the affordable units will be accessible and adaptable as defined by requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations
- 3.4 The requirements of Policy H2 are based on extensive evidence gathered through the Local Plan process and subsequently found sound at examination prior to adoption of the Local Plan in 2020.
- 3.5 The Council has sought legal advice on the matter of First Homes, given its Local Plan was only adopted in 2020. That advice concludes that *‘the Council is not obliged to implement the First Homes Policy as a matter of law. However, it should be given considerable weight and applied unless the Council has a justifiable basis for departing from it. The Council would be at risk of its decision being overturned if it does not provide proper reasoning for taking a different stance to that set out in the First Homes Policy.’*
- 3.6 The Local Plan and Policy H2 is silent on First Homes and given the above legal opinion it is considered prudent in accordance with National Planning Guidance to prepare and publish an interim policy statement. The alternative would be to update the relevant local plan policies, this however would not be a quick process and given previous commitments to undertake an assessment to inform a local plan review it is considered at this time, a policy statement is sufficient to set out how the Council will apply the First Homes policy.
- 3.7 The interim planning policy statement (attached at Appendix A) therefore sets out how the Council will apply the requirement introduced through changes to national planning policy in relation to First Homes.

4.0 DETAILS

- 4.1 First Homes are discounted market sale units which:
- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
 - b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below);
 - c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and
 - d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must not be at a price higher than £250,000 (outside Greater London).
- 4.2 To be eligible for a First Home Government guidance requires:
- First time buyers only - as defined in paragraph 6 of schedule 6ZA of the Finance Act 2003 for the purposes of Stamp Duty Relief for first-time buyers;
 - Household combined gross annual income up to £80,000;
 - All purchasers must use a mortgage or home purchase scheme for at least 50% of the discounted purchase value.

- 4.3 In addition to the above the Council would also wish to introduce a local connection test, which is allowed for in government guidance. This is to ensure that the provision of First Homes responds to the housing needs of the district. The local connection test is set out in the policy statement and a detailed occupation plan is being prepared.
- 4.4 First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations (i.e., S106 agreements).
- 4.5 The following table illustrates how Policy H2 would be apportioned to include 25% of First Homes on varying sized developments:

Total Homes	40% affordable	25% First Homes	75%	
			35% affordable home ownership	65% affordable housing for rent
		Provided by the developer	Provided and managed by a registered provider	
10	4	1	1.05	1.95
20	8	2	2.1	3.9
30	12	3	3.15	5.85
40	16	4	4.2	7.8
50	20	5	5.25	9.75
75	30	7.5	7.88	14.63
100	40	10	10.50	19.5

- 4.6 The small number of dwellings and partial dwellings raises issues of implementation, in particular the potential interest of registered providers to take on the affordable home ownership/affordable rented element.
- 4.7 First Homes are a market product albeit discounted so would be provided by the developer through S106 agreements with detailed restrictions to ensure that the property remains as a First Home through subsequent sales. This element introduces a role for the Council in ensuring that any properties delivered as First Homes, remain such.
- 4.8 The interim policy statement acknowledges that parts of a dwelling may be either rounded up/down or converted to a financial contribution and encourages applicants to discuss schemes at the early stages of preparation with the Council to enable a workable outcome.
- 4.9 Government guidance allows for local authorities to adjust the percentage discount (30%) to require a higher minimum discount of either 40% or 50%, if they can demonstrate a need for this. At present the Council does not have the evidence to be able to support an adjustment of the 30% specified in guidance and has therefore commissioned further work on both affordability and viability. This work is anticipated to be completed by early

2022 and will then inform any subsequent reviews of the interim policy statement.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Continue to collate evidence on affordability and viability in relation to the implementation of First Homes in Hart District.
- 5.2 Work with developers in preparing planning applications to achieve the best outcomes to meet local affordable housing needs.
- 5.3 Following consideration by Overview and Scrutiny on 16 November 2021, this matter will also be considered by Cabinet on 2 December 2021.
- 5.4 Once agreed, to publish the Interim Planning Policy Statement on First Homes on the Council's website.
- 5.5 Develop a First Homes Occupation Plan which will set out the eligibility criteria and Hart Council's processes for administering the delivery and sale of First Homes.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The commissions to examine affordability and viability are being sourced from existing budgets. The Council's role in the administration processes involved with First Homes, are being explored, this will involve both the Housing Strategy and Development Team and legal services.

7.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 An EqIA has been undertaken. This acknowledges that the introduction of First Homes will potentially reduce the other affordable housing products available and this could impact those on lower incomes, older people (non-first time buyers). Hence the need to encourage those proposing developments to engage with the Council in the early stages of scheme preparation to discuss their proposals.

Contact Details:

Daniel Hawes	Email: daniel.hawes@hart.gov.uk
Jenny Wood	Email: jenny.wood@hart.gov.uk
Nicola Harpham	Email: nicola.harpham@hart.gov.uk
Gemma Watts	Email: gemma.watts@hart.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A: First Homes – Interim Planning Policy Statement December 2021

First Homes – Interim Planning Policy Statement

December 2021



Introduction

1. This interim statement sets out key information relating to First Homes and how it will relate to the implementation of Policy H2 Affordable Housing in the Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 adopted April 2020. (Policy H2 is set out in full at Appendix A).

Background

2. On 24th May 2021, the Government published a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) to set out the Government's plans for the delivery of First Homes defining the product and changes to [planning policy](#). These changes came into effect from 28 June 2021.
3. The following provides details of the key elements of how First Homes are defined, eligibility criteria and how First Homes will be applied to development proposals within Hart District.

First Homes Criteria

4. First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and fall under the 'affordable housing' definition for planning purposes as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). There is an existing requirement for all major developments (development of 10 or more dwellings or site area of 0.5 ha or more) to include provision for affordable housing.
5. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:
 - a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
 - b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below);

- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
 - d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must not be at a price higher than £250,000 (outside Greater London).
6. First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations (i.e., S106 agreements) on qualifying sites. First Homes however, are not required to be provided on:
- Build to rent developments;
 - Specialist accommodation such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students;
 - Custom or self-build homes;
 - Developments exclusively for affordable housing, entry-level exception sites (which will become First Homes Exception Sites) or rural exception sites.

First Homes Eligibility Criteria

7. Government guidance requires:
- First time buyers only - as defined in paragraph 6 of schedule 6ZA of the Finance Act 2003 for the purposes of Stamp Duty Relief for first-time buyers;
 - Household combined gross annual income up to £80,000;
 - All purchasers must use a mortgage or home purchase scheme for at least 50% of the discounted purchase value.
8. For further details see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes> and Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: [001 Reference ID: 70-001-20210524](#)
9. In addition to the above, in Hart District Council we will apply a local connection test to ensure that the provision of First Homes responds to the housing needs of the district. A summary of the local connection criteria are set out below, further details including all processes for allocating and securing First Homes, including any exemptions to be applied, will be set out in the Council's First Homes Occupation Plan.
10. In order to meet the Local Connection eligibility criteria, at least one adult within the household must demonstrate that they meet one of the following criteria:

- Currently residing in or have previously resided within Hart district within the last 5 years;
 - Employed and working within Hart district;
 - Have a close family connection to Hart district, whereby a close family member currently lives within Hart district (family member to include - parents, grandparents, siblings and children);
 - A local connection can be demonstrated and evidenced through special circumstances, such as to meet caring responsibilities. Relevant applications will be assessed on a case by case basis and determined at the discretion of Hart District Council's Communities Team.
11. The new First Homes policy requirement does not apply to the following:
- sites with full or outline planning permissions already in place or determined (or where a right to appeal against non-determination has arisen) before 28 December 2021;
 - applications for full or outline planning permission where there has been significant pre-application engagement which are determined before 28 March 2022.
12. At present there is no indication that developers with live planning applications in the district are showing an interest to amend their proposals to include First Homes. However, Government Guidance states that - if an applicant wishes to amend a planning application to include First Homes which is already submitted and likely to be granted before these dates (28 December 2021 and 28 March 2022), the local planning authority should be flexible in accepting First Homes as an alternative type of tenure. Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 020 Reference [ID: 70-020-20210524](#), in this instance applicants and their agents are encouraged to get in touch with us.
13. Furthermore, the policy does not apply to applications made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to amend or vary an existing planning permission unless the amendment or variation in question relates to the proposed quantity or tenure mix of affordable housing for that development.

Setting developer contributions for First Homes

14. In accordance with paragraph 63 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#), affordable housing is expected to be delivered on-site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified, and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

15. It is expected that First Homes (and the mechanism securing the discount in perpetuity) will be secured through section 106 planning obligations.
16. Planning Practice Guidance [Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 70-012-20210524](#) requires:
 - On-site - a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes;
 - For financial contributions for affordable housing instead of on-site units, a minimum of 25% of the financial contribution should be used to secure First Homes;
 - Where a mix of cash contributions and on-site units are secured, 25% of the overall value of affordable housing contributions should be applied to First Homes. This will be set out in the Council's First Homes Contribution Policy currently being prepared, in the meantime contact the Strategy and Development Team, details are at the end of this document.

Application of the First Homes policy in Hart district

17. The introduction of First Homes means that a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units on a site should be First Homes, the question is how this is applied given the requirements for 40% of new homes to be affordable housing and of that of the 40%, 65% to be affordable housing for rent and 35% for affordable home ownership in accordance with the requirements of Policy H2 (see Appendix A).

Without first homes the application of Policy H2 would generate:

Total Homes	40% affordable	35% affordable home ownership	65% affordable housing for rent
10	4	1.4	2.6
20	8	2.8	5.2
30	12	4.2	7.8
40	16	5.6	10.4
50	20	7	13
75	30	10.5	19.5
100	40	14	26

18. The Council has commissioned more detailed evidence on affordability and viability, but in the meantime it is proposed that we will apply First Homes on the basis of taking the first home proportion first (25%) and then splitting the remainder of the affordable dwellings (75%) as per the adopted local plan policy so 65% affordable rent and then 35% affordable home ownership.

With First Homes the application of Policy H2 would generate:

Total Homes	40% affordable	25% First Homes	75%	
			35% affordable home ownership	65% affordable housing for rent
10	4	1	1.05	1.95
20	8	2	2.1	3.9
30	12	3	3.15	5.85
40	16	4	4.2	7.8
50	20	5	5.25	9.75
75	30	7.5	7.88	14.63
100	40	10	10.50	19.5

19. As the above table demonstrates, application of these proportions on smaller sites, generates small numbers of units (whole and partial). The Council recognises the challenges of providing a small number of dwellings, particularly given the split over three affordable typologies and therefore recommends that applicants considering making planning applications to get in touch with members of the Housing Strategy and Development Team in the early stages of scheme preparation to discuss their proposals. Furthermore, where the % proportion of affordable housing results in a partial dwelling this will be rounded up or down to create whole unit or converted to a financial contribution. The Strategy and Development Team will also be able to advise on the other elements of Policy H2 which require 15% of the affordable units to be accessible and adaptable as defined by requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations and for the provision of a wheelchair user dwelling when evidence by local need. Contact details are set out at the end of this document.
20. The Council updated its [Affordable Housing Informal Guidance](#) in July 2021, to include reference to First Homes exception sites.
21. First Homes are a discount market sale product which means that they are reduced from market value by at least 30%. Government guidance allows for local authorities to amend the 30% discount requirement based on local evidence of need. At present that information is not available for Hart District and accordingly the Council will apply the 30% discount until such time when there is robust evidence to support an alternative approach.
22. In addition, Government Guidance refers to Neighbourhood Plans having a role with First Homes, the Council would however, encourage any Neighbourhood Plan Groups to talk to the Planning Policy Team in the first instance to explore its options in relation to First Homes.

Review

23. It is therefore the intention that this Interim Planning Policy Statement will be reviewed in due course. Currently, the Council has commissioned further viability and affordability research to determine how it could apply First Homes in the most appropriate manner to enable the best outcomes for those in affordable housing need in the district. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in early 2022 and this statement will be updated accordingly at that time if deemed necessary. This will also allow for any further Government Guidance or ministerial statements and emerging best practice to be taken into consideration.

Contact Details

Housing Strategy & Development Team:
Tel: 01252 774078 or 01252 774110
Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Planning Policy Team:
Tel: 01252 774118
Email: planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk

Appendix A

Hart Local Plan 2020 Policy H2 Provision of Affordable Housing

On major developments (i.e developments where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more) the Council will require 40% of the new homes to be affordable housing, to be provided in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) the affordable housing will be provided on site, and interspersed and distributed throughout the development mixed with the market housing;**
- b) the affordable housing will be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need;**
- c) the tenure mix of the affordable housing will be 65% affordable housing for rent and 35% affordable home ownership unless superseded by the most up to date evidence concerning local housing need;**
- d) 15% of the affordable units will be accessible and adaptable as defined by requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations⁶;**

- e) where evidenced by local need, one or more of the affordable dwellings will be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet, or exceed where justified, the requirements of Building Regulations⁷ M4(3);
- f) in cases where the 40% calculation provides a part dwelling a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part dwelling;
- g) the affordable housing for rent should be used solely for that purpose and remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Where it is robustly justified and it is clearly demonstrated that the provision of affordable housing on site is impractical, the Council may accept off-site provision, or a financial contribution of equivalent value in lieu of on-site provision.

Only when fully justified, will the Council grant planning permission for schemes that fail to provide 40% affordable housing, or fail criteria a) to g) above. Any such proposals must be supported by evidence in the form of an open book viability assessment, demonstrating why the target cannot be met. In such cases the Council will commission an independent expert review of the viability assessment, for which the applicant will bear the cost. The Council will then negotiate with the applicant to secure the optimum quantity and mix of affordable housing that is viable and meets the identified housing need.

Developments which appear to artificially restrict the site area, or level of development proposed in order to avoid the provision of affordable housing will be refused.

CABINET

KEY DECISIONS/ WORK PROGRAMME, AND EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MADE

December 2021

Cabinet is required to publish its Key Decisions and forward work programme to inform the public of issues on which it intends to make policy or decisions. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also notes the Programme, which is subject to regular revision.

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Hart Interim Planning Policy Statement on First Homes	Prior to consider by Overview and Scrutiny, to agree the approach to First Homes in Hart.	Dec 21			GC / SB	P / H	
Improving Energy Efficiency Measures in Affordable Housing	Post consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to consider housing capital funding for additional energy efficiency measures in affordable housing on sites in Hart	Dec 21			SB	H	
Draft Communications and Engagement Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a new Communications and Engagement Strategy	Dec 21			TC	CS	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	To give an early consideration of the emerging budget for 2021/22 and the MTFS	Dec 21			JR	F	
Citizens Advice Bureau move to the Apex Building	To approve CAB the use of the Apex Building	Dec 21			JR	F	
A Task and Finish Group to Review Projects for Housing Capital Spend	Prior consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to consider a Task and Finish Group for the review of project options for Housing Capital Spend	Dec 21			SB	H	
Quarterly Budget Monitoring - Outturn	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a report on Quarterly Budget Monitoring	Jan 22 Apr 22 Jul 22 Oct 22			JR	F	
Quarterly Performance Plans	To seek Cabinet approval for reports on performance data	Jan 22 Apr 22 Jul 22 Oct 22			DN	ALL	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
2022/23 Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update	A further update for consideration of the emerging budget for 2022/23	Jan 22			JR	F	
Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny, to consider approval of the Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Jan 22			AO	TS	
The Harlington Lease	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to approve of a new lease of the Harlington Centre with Fleet Town Council	Oct 21	Jan 22		JR	F	
Treasury Management 2021/22 (Half Year Report)	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a Half Year review report on Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22	Jan 22			JR	F	
Homelessness Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a new Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027	Nov 21	Feb 22		SB	CSF	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Draft 2021/22 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Proposals	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to agree to recommend to Council the 2021/22 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Proposals	Feb 22			JR	F	
Draft 2021/22 Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to agree to recommend to Council the 2021/22 draft Capital Strategy, the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Feb 22			JR	F	
Phoenix Green Flooding Alleviation Scheme	To update Members on the Phoenix Green Flooding Alleviation Scheme and seek approval for the implementation plan	Feb 22			AO	TS	
Annual Car Parking Report	Post consideration by Overview and Scrutiny for Cabinet to review and endorse the Annual Car Parking Report	Feb 22			AO	TS	
Service Plans	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, agree the 2021/22 Service Plans	Apr 22			DN	ALL	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Odiham Common Management Plan	To update Members on the Odiham Common Management Plan	Apr 22			DN	P	
Outside Bodies	To approve representation from the Council on identified outside bodies	Jun 22			DN	JCX	
Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/2022	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Annual report on outturn	Jul 22			JR	F	

Note 1

A “key decision” means an executive decision which, is likely to -

- a) result in Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings which amount to £30,000 or 25% (whichever is the larger) of the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the area of the district of Hart.

Note 2**Cabinet Members**

DN	Leader	TC	Digital	RQ	Commercialisation (Cn)	SB	Community (Cy)
SK	Regulatory	AO	Environment	JR	Finance and Corporate Services	GC	Place

Note 3**Service:**

JCX	Joint Chief Executive	CS	Corporate Services	P	Place Services
CSF	Community Safety	PP	Planning Policy	TS	Environmental & Technical Services
F	Finance	H	Community Services		
SLS	Shared Legal Services	MO	Monitoring Officer		

Note 4

* **This item may contain Exempt Information** - Regulation 5 of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

21/10/21	Cllr Neighbour	Release of S106 funding towards the community orchard project at Cemetery Meadow, King Street, Odiham	No Call-In

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – November 2021

Issue and Description of Topic	Current Position Objective	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Resources Required	Contact	*This item may contain Exempt Information
Corporate Services Panel Update	Feedback from Members of the Service Panel for Corporate Services.	Nov 21		Oral	Head of Corporate Services	
Draft Communications and Engagement Strategy	To consider a new Communications and Engagement Strategy, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Nov 21		Report	Media & Communications Manager	
Multi Agency and Parish Flood Forum	Update from the twice-yearly meeting of multi-agencies.	Nov 21		Minutes Only	Chairman of Committee	
Car Parking Charges Review – Feedback	To receive an update on how the changes in car parking charges earlier this year have been received by the parishes.	Oct 21	Nov 21	Oral	Portfolio Holder for Environment (plus 2 Parish Councillors)	

Waste Management Update	An update on the progression of the Client Management function for the Waste Contract since the transfer back to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.	Nov 21		Oral	Portfolio Holder for Environment	
A Task and Finish Group to Review Projects for Housing Capital Spend	Seeking nominations to a Task and Finish Group for the review of project options for Housing Capital Spend.	Nov 21		Discussion	Head of Community	
A Task and Finish Group to update and refresh the Corporate Complaint Policy	Seeking nominations to a task and finish group to update and refresh the corporate complaint policy.	Nov 21		Discussion	JCX – Patricia Hughes	
Improving Energy Efficiency Measures in Affordable Housing	To consider housing capital funding for additional energy efficiency measures in affordable housing on sites in Hart, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Nov 21		Report	Head of Community Services	
Hart Interim Planning Policy Statement on First Homes	To consider and agree the approach to First Homes in Hart, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Nov 21		Report	Head of Place	

Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Outturn	Quarterly update on budget position, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Dec 21 Mar 22 Jun 22 Sep 22		Report	Head of Corporate Services	
Place Service Panel Update	Feedback from Members of the Service Panel for Place.	Dec 21		Oral	Head of Place	
Community Service Panel Update	Feedback from Members of the Service Panel for Community.	Dec 21		Oral	Head of Community	
Environment & Technical Service Panel Update	Feedback from Members of the Service Panel for Environment & Technical.	Dec 21		Oral	Head of Environment & Technical	
Treasury Management 2021/22 (Half Year Report)	To consider a Half Year review report on Treasury Management 2021/22 prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Dec 21		Report	Head of Corporate Services	
Car Parking Standards Update	To consider updates to the car parking standards project, to be implemented at new developments.	Dec 21		Report	Head of Place	Mark Jaggard

The Harlington Lease	To consider approval of a new lease of the Harlington Centre with Fleet Town Council, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Dec 21		Report	Head of Corporate Services	
Draft Budget	To make comments on the draft 2022/23 Budget prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Jan 22		Report	Head of Corporate Services	
Homelessness Strategy	To consider a new Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Jan 22		Report	Head of Community Services	
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	To comment on the annual reports setting out the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy position and future Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan, prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Aug 22		Report	Head of Corporate Services	
Annual Review Letter 2022/23	<p>This annual review from the Ombudsman covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the complaints and enquiries received in the period the decisions made in the period 	Aug 22		Report	JCX	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• compliance with the recommendations recorded during the period					
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