



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date and Time:	Thursday 2 December 2021 7.00 pm
Place:	Council Chamber
Enquiries to:	Committee Services Committeeservices@hart.gov.uk
Members:	Bailey, Clarke, Cockarill, Kinnell, Neighbour (Leader), Oliver, Quarterman and Radley

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 THE PREVIOUS MEETING 5 - 11

The minutes of the meeting of 4 November 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 disposable 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 https://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Council_meetings/Public%20Participation%20leaflet%202021.pdf

6 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 12 - 35

To seek Cabinet approval on the proposed Communications and Engagement Strategy alongside the proposed Content Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet approves the adoption of the two strategies for the period of 2022 – 2026. Both documents are living documents and will be reviewed regularly during their lifetime.

7 HART INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT ON FIRST HOMES 36 - 49

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

Cabinet is recommended to adopt the First Homes Interim Planning Policy Statement at Appendix A.

8 BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON OFFSETTING DELIVERY STRATEGY 50 - 54

To seek Cabinet approval to provide funding for the appointment of consultants to investigate the potential for Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon Sequestration and prepare a report which sets out projects that will form the basis of a biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That £29k of Section 106 Biodiversity offsetting funding, collected and earmarked for the purpose, be allocated for scoping exercises, identification of potential projects and the development of a potential biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy.

9 FUNDING FOR GREEN GRID SIGNAGE STRATEGY 55 - 58

To seek Cabinet approval to provide funding for the appointment of consultants to develop the branding and signage strategy to support the delivery of Harts Green Grid.

RECOMMENDATION

That £28k is allocated in the council 21/22 budget to fund the consultancy costs required to prepare a wider signage strategy.

10 FROGMORE DAY CARE CENTRE 59 - 105

To update Cabinet on Frogmore Day Centre (FDC) and ask approval to move a proportion of the Commercialisation funds that were placed in ear marked reserves, to support the delivery of a building in a condition suitable to accommodate a new lessee (Age Concern).

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet agree to invest in the maintenance of FDC so that the building can be leased to Age Concern in a safe and clean condition.
2. That Cabinet authorise the granting of a new full repairing lease to Age Concern for the building, for the period of 10 years, with break clause after 5 years, on a peppercorn rent.

Appendix 3 of this report is exempt from publication.

11 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

106 -
111

To consider and amend the Cabinet Work Programme.

Date of Publication: Wednesday, 24 November 2021

CABINET

Date and Time: Thursday 4 November 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Bailey, Clarke, Cockarill, Neighbour (Leader), Oliver, Quarterman and Radley

In attendance: Ambler, Axam, Butcher, Forster, Smith, Southern

Officers:

Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Mark Jaggard	Head of Place
John Elson	Head of Environment and Technical Services
Emma Foy	Head of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Daniel Hawes	Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager
Guy Clayton	Housing Projects Officer
Peter Summersell	Sustainability Officer
Helen Vincent	Committee Services Team Leader

65 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes for the meeting of 7 October 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Kinnell.

67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

68 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

69 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

70 FUNDING FOR HART'S CARBON PATHWAY

This report sought Cabinet approval to provide funding for the appointment of consultants to review Hart's Climate Change Action Plan and prepare a report which sets out the pathway that the council needs to follow to achieve the targets set in its Climate Emergency declaration.

Members were informed that the appointment of a consultant would be completed by the beginning of December, with the first draft report ready in the new year. Competitive bidding will be sourced outlining clear specifications and requirements for this very specific project.

The Chairman confirmed that an updated report on the Council's climate emergency action plan would be provided at Full Council in November.

DECISION

Cabinet agreed to allocate £30k in the council 21/22 budget to fund consultancy costs required to prepare a report.

71 RELEASE OF RESERVES SET ASIDE TO SUPPORT DELIVERY OF THE HERE FOR HART PROGRAMME

Members were presented with a report requesting approval to move a proportion of 'Trailblazer' grant funding, 'Workplace Wellbeing' funds and 'Healthy Eating' funds that were placed in ear marked reserves, to support the delivery of projects set out in the agreed Supporting Communities Plan, delivering the "Here for Hart" programme

It was requested to move the following amounts from capital to revenue budgets:

Ear Marked Reserves	Amount
Trailblazer	£51,000
Workplace Wellbeing (Health & wellbeing)	£3,160
Healthy Eating ((Health & wellbeing)	£2,300
Total	£56,460

Members requested clarity on the programme's delivery of projects and the possibility of the reallocation of funds. It was confirmed that these funds are not restricted to Hart's residents and can be reallocated but will be focused on Hart residents whilst working with multi agencies in neighbouring districts. It is to support the "Here for Hart" programme and will work with partners in the community.

DECISION

Cabinet approved the transfer of Trailblazer monies (51,000), Workplace Wellbeing monies (£3,160) & Healthy Eating monies (£2,300) from ear marked reserves into the revenue budget line and that the Social Inclusion & Partnerships Manager be authorised to use funds to support the delivery of projects set out in the agreed Supporting Communities Plan, delivering the "Here for Hart" programme.

72 PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) CHARGING SCHEDULE

This report required Cabinet approval of the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (PDCS) for public consultation. This information had been debated by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 October 2021.

Members were advised that the charges identified in the paper were based on the viability assessment and the amount each development can afford to contribute towards the infrastructure. The proposed rate is mid-way between charges made by neighbouring authorities which has been benchmarked following technical assessments and viability of the work for attainable value, but these can be changed at subsequent dates in the future. Setting the rate at a sensible level will aid setting the schemes delivery with full commitment to enable achieving a higher percentage of impact on the scheme as a whole.

Members requested details on the communication plan for the public consultation and were informed that there is a local plan database comprising of developers, agencies, statutory bodies and members of the public. Social media channels and a press release would be targeted to engage further with the development industry.

Further clarification was sought over charging a rate range or a flat rate across the district and on evaluation during the consultation period, the flat rate level deemed more feasibly justified as a district.

DECISION

That Cabinet:

- 1 Approved the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (attached as Appendix 5) for public consultation; and
- 2 Authorised the Head of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place to make any necessary minor corrections prior to consultation.

73 ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR A LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Cabinet were presented with a report setting out the intent in Spring 2022 to progress with a factual assessment of the current Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 (the Local Plan) which was adopted in April 2020. The assessment will decide at what point it would be right to consider a review of the Local Plan in line with the latest government guidance on local plan reviews.

The report also addressed the future of the current work associated with the Shapley Heath Garden Community (SHGC) and the conclusion of the Project.

Finally, the report recommended that a comprehensive evidence-based study be commissioned to review the potential capacity within the district's settlements to accommodate future growth. The study will seek to identify regeneration

opportunities, the potential for intensification of development, as well as review the scale of brownfield land available to meet any future need for new homes.

Assessment of the current local plan will enable checking that the current plan is still on track to be delivered with updates on clearer guidelines for our climate change requirements.

Members challenged the costs involved in the studies of the assessment of the local plan and were assured the figures will be brought back to Cabinet in a report for further review.

Members questioned the timescale of the announcement of the Government Planning Bill and updated guidance available. This will assist regeneration opportunities from areas defined in our neighbourhood plans and availability of delivering these objectives. Our current local plan serves well and continues to offer protection to significant changes.

An adjusted to the recommendation was made, for the conclusion of the Shapley Heath Garden Community Project to reflect the obligation to give all parties 21 days' notice of the termination of the project.

DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. A Local Plan review assessment to be carried out once any 'Planning Bill' has passed through Parliament and the Government has issued any associated updated guidance.
2. That Notice of termination under the provisions of paragraph 13.5 of the Shapley Heath Collaboration Agreement be given to L&Q Estates Limited and Lightwood Land Limited and that following the expiry of the 21-day Notice period the Shapley Heath Garden Community Project is concluded with immediate effect but that existing baseline studies and surveys proceed to completion and be published early in the new year.
3. To the principle of seeking the commissioning of a 'Settlement Capacity and Intensification Study' to be funded through a draw down from the Local Plan reserve.

74 NEXT STEPS IN THE CIVIC QUARTER REGENERATION

Cabinet were updated on the work being undertaken by the Civic Quarter Regeneration Working Group and Cabinet's approval was requested for further funding to enable the next stages, as proposed, around public engagement.

Engagement would involve presenting the best ideas of what could be achieved in the Civic Quarter and will involve framing positive dialogue with residents in our community.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to reconsider live streaming the meetings of the civic regeneration working group and include more open forums for public discussions. The Chairman of the working group agreed this would be implemented further down the line subject to any elements of commercial sensitivities which may need to be considered.

Critical factors for the success of this project would focus on the civic quarter due to the amount of sizable assets and land holdings by the council to engage reinvigoration. Wider areas of fleet would benefit from the regeneration of the civic quarter.

DECISION

Members agreed that 24K be allocated in the council 21/22 budget, to fund consultancy costs, and other resource requirements (website, publications, media and analysis) to enable an effective public engagement with regard to the Civic Quarter.

75 COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME - PLATINUM JUBILEE

Members considered the approval for a pilot Councillor Community Grant which would support the Council's Corporate Plan priority, of supporting both healthy communities and people. This grant would enable the introduction of ward-based approach to funding projects, which in the pilot year, would support the coming together of our communities, after a long period of social separation, to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. It also supports our equality objectives through funding projects that encourages community cohesion.

The grant money available in this scheme is restricted and what isn't spent will be returned to the "Here for Hart" budget and used within the community in other ways. The publicity and funds allocated within this scheme would only be available and recognised at the time of the Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

Members were concerned about the use of these funds for more practical and strategic ideas and if the amount per ward set would be a significant amount. The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Jane Worlock, spoke in support of this community grant scheme and suggested Parishes use these funds joined with other Parish funds towards individual communities' celebrations across the wider demographic area.

DECISION

That Cabinet approved the policy for adopting a ward-based approach for awarding of Ward based community grants, as attached at appendix one, for the purpose of a one year trial specifically to bring communities together to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

76 2022/23 BUDGET & MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

Cabinet considered the emerging budget for 2022/23 and the draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in line with the timetable set out in the Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 17 August 2021.

The Government settlement promised had not yet been secured at this time and is expected by the end of the year. Spending power on average is increasing across local Government and it looks like we will have up to a 2% full referendum council tax cap on district councils. There is 3% indexation with a 3% increase for all contracts and salary increases have been factored into the figures.

Members asked what schemes were in place to enhance climate change, and were advised that policies and procedures were already in place to allow incentives to use sustainable travel with cycle to work schemes and the use of EVs as well as rates in place to encourage car share for working towards decreasing decarbonisation. Members considered the Member's IT allowance being replaced with IT equipment supplied and the advantages of this implementation.

DECISION

That Cabinet agreed to implement with immediate effect:

1. The revised MTFS including Level One savings as shown at paragraph 3.4 are noted.
2. The Level Two business cases contained in Appendix One were discussed and approved for implementation.
3. The MTFS including Level One and Two savings shown at paragraph 6.4 are noted.
4. The detailed timetable for 2022/23 budget setting approved.
5. Recruitment to vacant posts will only be made with relevant portfolio-holder consultation and be reported as part of the quarterly budget monitoring process.

Appendix One is exempt from publication

77 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered and amended as follows:

An additional paper was highlighted and would be added on the topic of the Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for January 2022.

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING:	2 DECEMBER 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 Cabinet approval on the proposed Communications and Engagement Strategy alongside the proposed Content Strategy.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the adoption of the two strategies for the period of 2022 – 2026. Both documents are living documents and will be reviewed regularly during their lifetime.

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 build trust by communicating with integrity and providing consistent and accurate information in a timely fashion.
 - We aim to provide accessible communications as 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.
- 3.8 This report was discussed at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2021. Members praised the team and the council for its transparency in producing this strategy. Members approved both strategies with the following comments:
1. Climate change implications to be included in the document.
This has been included as an objective in both strategies.
 2. Changing the length of the review – currently it is four years, could it be done annually.
Both documents are living documents and will be reviewed regularly during their lifetime.
 3. The inclusion of links to resident's items of interest, not just statutory obligations (3.1). Noted.
 4. Political implications need to be carefully managed and considered when planning, creating and delivering news (3.6). Noted.
 5. The inclusion of more links to parishes and parish councils (4.1).
While parishes and parish councils are mentioned in the strategy, this will go into more depth in the Communications and Engagement Action Plan.
 6. More description on how the council provides news to people who are not as digitally enabled.
This will be included in the Communications and Engagement Action Plan.
 7. How the team manages and archives historical content on the council's website.
The Content Strategy has been amended to include, 'in line with our data retention policies'.

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

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

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 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 These strategies will work alongside the council’s ambition to become a carbon neutral authority by 2035. No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

8 ACTION

8.1 It is requested that Cabinet approves the adoption of the Communications and Engagement Strategy and the Content Strategy.

8.2 Once adopted, a communications and engagement action plan will be produced to support the delivery of the strategy.

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 Communications and Engagement Strategy

Appendix 2 Content Strategy



Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022 - 2026

Last reviewed: 19 November 2021

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1. 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.

2. 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 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. 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

Sustainable: We will work alongside the council's ambition to become a carbon neutral authority by 2035.

4. 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

5. 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

6. 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 and 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

7. 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

8. Channels

- Face to face
- Telephone
- Contact Centre (IVR messaging)
- Website
- Letter
- Web chat
- Teams
- 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
- Printed materials – leaflets, posters, bin hangers
- 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

9. 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

10. 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

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Content Strategy 2022 – 2026

Last reviewed: 19 November 2021

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1. 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.

2. 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, in line with our data retention policies
- 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

3. 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

Sustainable: We will work alongside the council’s ambition to become a carbon neutral authority by 2035.

4. 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:

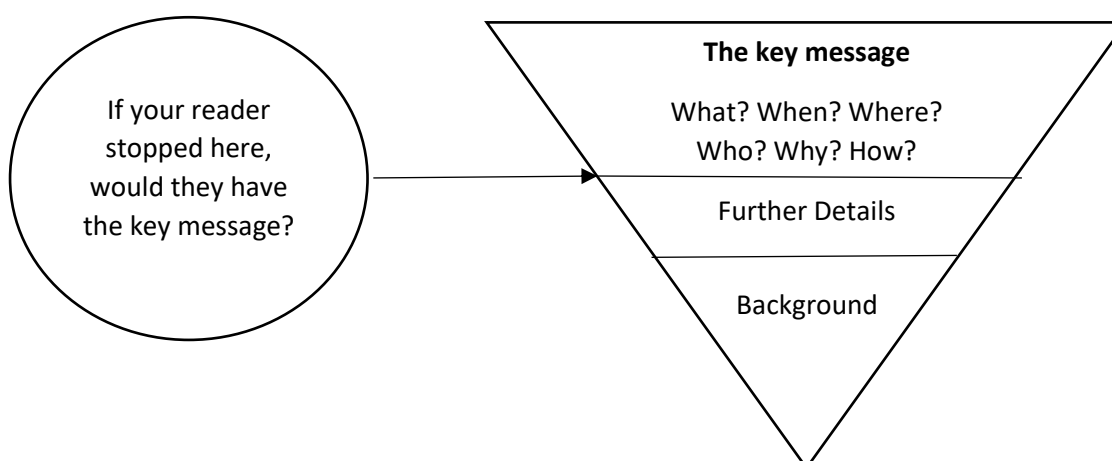
- Clear
- Consistent
- Authentic
- Positive
- Active (rather than passive language)
- Accessible

5. 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?



6. 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.

7. 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

8. 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 provide by the Communications team.

Strategy contact:

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Communications and Engagement Manager

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CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 2 December 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

Key Decision No

Confidentiality Non exempt

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 Cabinet is recommended to adopt the First Homes Interim Planning Policy Statement at Appendix A.

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 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:

Table 1

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 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 16 November 2021 and supported the Interim Policy Statement. The Committee understood that 'First Homes' has been imposed nationally by the Government.
- 5.2 Concerns were raised about the price cap of £250,000 and whether this would result in only 1 or 2 bedroomed homes being delivered. There is a risk of this, and once further work is completed on affordability and viability Hart may wish to adopt a greater level of discount (40% or 50%) to enable delivery of other sizes and types of First Homes. However, this would impact the viability of delivering affordable homes for rent and so would need to be looked at very carefully before such a step is taken. Work has started on gathering this evidence.
- 5.3 It was suggested that the use of decimal points, when showing numbers of homes to be provided of each tenure, needed further clarification, for example in terms of prioritising certain tenures (e.g., rounding some tenures up and others down).
- 5.4 It was asked whether parish councils would have a role in validating the local connections of people purchasing First Homes.
- 5.5 The relationship with Neighbourhood Plans was discussed. It does not affect those plans already made, but it is open to those preparing new Neighbourhood Plans to include a First Homes policy with specific requirements that would apply in that area, provided it is evidence based.
- 5.6 Exception sites were discussed. The Local Plan contains a Rural Exceptions Policy H3 which applies to villages in rural areas. These sites are justified on the grounds that they address a proven local need for affordable housing. It appears that First Homes could be justified on rural exception sites if there is a local need.
- 5.7 In addition, as part of the First Homes policy the Government has introduced First Homes Exceptions Sites. These are not limited to smaller settlements and mean that exception sites on the edge of any settlement, proportionate in size, could come forward, primarily for First Homes.
- 5.8 The question was also asked as to whether a First Homes policy statement is needed at all. This is dealt with in the section below on alternative options.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6.1 Option 1 – Do not publish a policy statement

6.2 One option is not to publish an interim policy statement on First Homes.

6.3 However, First Homes have entered national policy through a Ministerial Statement and Planning Practice Guidance. As a result, it is a material consideration when determining planning applications. A policy statement

provides clarity and certainty for those elements that are optional, such as a local connection test, or open to interpretation, such as the tenure mix when applying first homes in the context of the prevailing affordable housing policy in the local plan.

6.4 The Hart local plan pre-dates First Homes and so is silent on the issue. It is therefore recommended, in line with Planning Practice Guidance, to set out the Council's position for applicants, developers, Registered Providers, decision makers and other stakeholders.

6.5 **Option 2 – Do not apply First Homes**

6.6 This option is to ignore the Government policy and simply apply the Hart Local Plan Policy H2 as adopted. However, the Government's policy is a material consideration with significant weight and the Council would need strong justification to depart from it. If new evidence provides a justification to depart from the First Homes policy, then Members may wish to revisit the proposed approach.

6.7 **Option 3 – Treat the 25% First Homes requirement as part of the 35% Affordable Home Ownership element in local plan policy, and retain the 65% affordable homes for rent element in full.**

6.8 The current local plan requires 40% of homes on large sites to be affordable, with a tenure mix of:

- 35% Affordable Home Ownership
- 65% affordable homes for rent.

6.9 Applying First Homes under Option 3 would result in a mix as follows:

- 25% First Homes
- 10% Other Affordable Home Ownership (usually Shared Ownership)
- 65% Affordable Homes for Rent (either Affordable Rent or Social Rent)

6.10 Table 2 below illustrates the mix that would be applied under this option.

Table 2

Total Homes	40% affordable	35% affordable home ownership		65% affordable housing for rent
		25% First Homes	10% Other affordable home ownership usually shared ownership	
10	4	1	0.40	2.60
20	8	2	0.80	5.20
30	12	3	1.20	7.80
40	16	4	1.60	10.40
50	20	5	2.00	13.00
75	30	7.5	3.00	19.50
100	40	10	4.00	26.00

6.11 Legal advice confirms that this option would comply with national guidance, given the wording of Hart's Affordable Housing policy H2 in the adopted

local plan. Policy H2 requires 35% Affordable Home Ownership and 65% Affordable Homes for Rent. The advice confirms that First Homes can be seen as a form of Affordable Home Ownership within the terms of Policy H2 and could form part of the 35% requirement.

- 6.12 However, there are practical concerns regarding the very low numbers of shared ownership properties generated under this option, particularly for the sizes of site (less than 100 homes) likely to come forward under the current local plan (the strategic sites have permission already). The concerns are:
- a) This option increases the risk that Registered Providers will not take up the shared ownership units. Where only one or two shared ownership homes are provided, economies of scale diminish in terms of marketing the properties and ongoing management.
 - b) The reduction in shared ownership properties could undermine viability, ultimately resulting in fewer social rented homes in any event.
- 6.13 Given these concerns, and until there is further evidence that may point towards a different approach, the recommended Interim position is to simply top-slice the 25% then apply the local plan tenure split to the remaining 75% of affordable homes. Based on discussions with other authorities this appears to be the standard or default application of the guidance depending on local circumstances.

7 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Continue to collate evidence on affordability and viability in relation to the implementation of First Homes in Hart District, and engage with Registered Providers on the issues raised by First Homes.
- 7.2 Work with developers in preparing planning applications to achieve the best outcomes to meet local affordable housing needs.
- 7.3 Once agreed, to publish the Interim Planning Policy Statement on First Homes on the Council's website.
- 7.4 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.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.

9 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

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

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 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.

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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);

APPENDIX A

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:

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- 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.

APPENDIX A

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.

APPENDIX A

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.

APPENDIX A

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;**

APPENDIX A

- 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

DATE OF MEETING:	2 December 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON OFFSETTING DELIVERY STRATEGY
Report of:	Head of Environment & Technical
Cabinet Portfolio:	Leader and Strategic Direction and Partnerships
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to provide funding for the appointment of consultants to investigate the potential for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Carbon Sequestration and prepare a report which sets out projects that will form the basis of a biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That £29k of Section 106 Biodiversity offsetting funding, collected and earmarked for the purpose, be allocated for scoping exercises, identification of potential projects and the development of a potential biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The recent Environment Act will mandate the provision of a 10% BNG for Town and County Planning Act developments and major infrastructure projects, some, or all, of which, can be delivered off-site.
- 3.2 There is an opportunity for HDC to utilise Hart DC countryside sites, or to strategically acquire sites, to enable developments needing to deliver all or part of their 10% BNG off site. Developer funded biodiversity enhancement projects can be designed to also enhance visitor experience.
- 3.3 This, soon to be, legal requirement for BNG can also provide opportunities for carbon offsetting which will help mitigate the climate emergency, it is therefore prudent and cost effective to look at both aspects under one umbrella project.
- 3.4 Production of a biodiversity offsetting strategy is listed in the Corporate Plan and HDC declared a Climate Emergency in April 2021. This has now been accepted by Project Board as a Corporate Project and has been added to the Corporate Project List.

- 3.5 The proposed project will deliver a list of potential projects and acquisitions that will form the basis of a biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy.
- 3.6 The project development stage will include a scoping exercise, define baseline values and give consideration as to the potential for increase (where appropriate), investigate strategic land acquisitions and consider the implications and criteria of offsetting schemes.
- 3.7 Further information on the BNG requirements of the Environment Act are provided in the briefing note attached at Appendix 1.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Hart does not have the inhouse resources or capability to undertake the work required to produce the strategy. This report therefore seeks approval that funding is allocated to commission consultants to undertake this work.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 The option of not producing a strategy was considered but rejected as this is a project listed in the Corporate Plan and has potential to offset carbon in line with 2040 Vision and the council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- 5.2 The option of producing the strategy in house was considered but rejected as the council does not have the in house resources to undertake this work.

6 RELEVANCE TO THE CORPORATE PLAN AND/OR THE HART VISION 2040

- 6.1 Production of a strategy for Hart will assist the council in achieving its:
 - climate emergency targets.
 - agreed 2040 vision of “Reducing the impact of climate change by building in sustainability to any new developments, encouraging re-wilding and using new technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change”.
 - strategic priority of “A Clean, Green and Safe Environment”

7 SERVICE PLAN

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

8 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is currently approximately £184k in reserves earmarked specifically for ‘biodiversity enhancement’. It is proposed that some of this funding be used for this project and will lead to effective and measurable delivery of BNG on Hart DC countryside sites.

- 8.2 Approval of this report's recommendations will require £29k to be funding allocated from Section 106 funding.
- 8.3 Delivery of this report's recommendations will require the following in house staff resources which have been accounted for in this proposal:
- Countryside Manager = 1 week
 Biodiversity Officer = 2 weeks
 Sustainability Officer = 2 weeks
- 8.4 This impact has been factored into the current project management system and will not compromise existing corporate priority projects.
- 8.5 Cost breakdown

Project works	Anticipated costs
1 Scoping phase	£4k
2 Define baselines	£10k
3 Investigate options	£5k
4 Delivery strategy development	£5k
5 Staff costs	£2k
6 Contingency	£3k
Total	£29k

9 EQUALITIES

- 9.1 No equality issues arising from approval of this report's recommendation have been identified.

10 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Approval of this report's recommendation will assist Hart in achieving its climate emergency targets.

11 ACTION

- 11.1 Subject to approval of this report's recommendation, following a competitive procurement process consultants will be appointed to prepare a report making recommendations on the potential for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Carbon Sequestration. The outcomes and recommendations from this report will be brought back to Cabinet in the Spring /Summer of 2022.

Contact Details: John Elson /e-mail: john.elson@hart.gov.uk

Background papers: BNG Project Initiation Document.

Appendices:

APPENDIX 1 [Biodiversity Net Gain and the Environment Act: Briefing Paper \(November 2021\)](#)

APPENDIX 1

Countryside Team – 15th November 2021

Briefing Note – Biodiversity Net Gain and the Environment Act

Background

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is ‘an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before’¹. Simplistically it encourages the integration of habitat retention, creation and restoration in a way that goes above the negative effects of a development. It still relies on the application of the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate or, as a last resort compensate) for biodiversity losses and should be in addition to this approach.

The need to consider and deliver BNG is already embedded in planning policy. For example, National Planning Policy² has the following relevant policies:

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

*...d) minimising impacts on and **providing net gains for biodiversity**, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.*

Habitats and Biodiversity

*d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while **opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.***

BNG is also referenced in Local Plan Policy³:

Policy NBE 4 Biodiversity ‘c)... All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible’.

A new British Standard ‘BS 8683 Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain’ is due for release soon.

Key Elements (Environment Act and Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain)

The new Environment Act⁴ has gone further by mandating BNG for developments and major infrastructure projects. It will amend the Town and County Planning Act and applies to all land down to mean low water.

A minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be required. This will be:

Calculated by a **biodiversity** metric.

Delivered by approval of a net gain plan.

¹ Biodiversity Net Gain – Principles and Guidance for UK Construction and Development (2021) CIEEM

² National Planning Policy Framework (2021) www.gov.uk/government/publications

³ Local Plan HART Local Plan (Strategy And Sites) 2032 Adopted April 2020

⁴ Link to press release: [World-leading Environment Act becomes law - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-leading-environment-act-becomes-law)

APPENDIX 1

The currently approved method of calculation is via the Defra Biodiversity Metric 3. This uses habitat features as a proxy measure of biodiversity value based on four bits of information:

- 1) Habitat size
- 2) Condition
- 3) Distinctiveness
- 4) Connectivity

The metric calculates a baseline and forecasts an outcome in terms of biodiversity units. The difference between the baseline and forecasted outcome is expressed as a percentage loss or gain of biodiversity units.

Guidance allows for BNG to be delivered:

- a. On site
- b. Off site
- c. Via Statutory Biodiversity Credits

Secondary legislation will follow The Environment Act. This is expected to give details of exceptions to the mandatory BNG, outline the BNG plan for developers, how BNG should be combined with other credits (for example carbon), and a national site register.

Additional relevant components of the Environment Act:

- 1) Local Nature Recovery Strategies

Around 50 are expected: these will be designed to enhance existing habitats and create additional habitats.

- 2) Conservation Covenants

Greater than 30 years

Note: The 25-year Environment Plan has a commitment to go beyond just BNG to also include Environmental Net Gain, this would expect developers to deliver a wider range of environmental benefits over and above the full environmental impact of the proposed development (e.g. air quality, flood risk management)⁵.

Anticipated Timetable:

The Environment Act received Royal Assent on 10th November 2021

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Rolled out Spring 2022

Biodiversity Net Gain 10% anticipated to be mandatory Spring 2023

⁵ Biodiversity Net Gain – Principles and Guidance for UK Construction and Development (2021) CIEEM

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING:	2 DECEMBER 2021
TITLE OF REPORT:	FUNDING FOR GREEN GRID SIGNAGE STRATEGY
Report of:	Head of Environment & Technical
Cabinet Portfolio:	Environment
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to provide funding for the appointment of consultants to develop the branding and signage strategy to support the delivery of Harts Green Grid.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That £28k is allocated in the council 21/22 budget to fund the consultancy costs required to prepare a wider Green Grid Signage Strategy.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Hart District Council Vision 2040 was adopted by the Council on the 26th September 2019. The first objective in Theme Three is:

- *Creation of green corridors between all settlements to encourage sustainable healthy transport and provide cycles for hire to enable movement.*

- 3.2 The second and third objectives are also relevant to the Green Grid project:

- *Enhancing our leisure provision e.g. new country parks delivering improved facilities, and through promotion of culture and heritage in the districts e.g. through events.*
- *Working with existing public sector sports facilities providers in the district to create an improved/coordinated health offer for our residents.*

- 3.3 Hart's Green Grid Strategy will create the framework to action the first objective and will complement workstreams in relation to the second and third objectives.

- 3.4 The Signage Strategy is part of the wider Green Grid Programme (see Appendix 1) and forms part of the Workstreams identified in the Pilot Green Grid East project linking Hartland Park to Fleet Train Station

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Hart does not have the in-house resources to undertake the work required to produce the Signage Strategy. This report therefore seeks approval that funding is allocated to commission consultants to undertake this work.
- 4.2 The scope of this project will include within the tender, the Countryside Service Signage Strategy as an existing fully funded project. This will offer us better value for money and make sure there are clear synergies between the two related areas.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 The option of not producing a Signage Strategy was considered but not chosen as it forms an important part in delivering the wider Green Grid project and will be necessary for any wider consultation work.
- 5.2 To option of producing the strategy in-house was considered but rejected as the council does not have the physical and technical resources to undertake this work.

6 RELEVANCE TO THE CORPORATE PLAN AND/OR THE HART VISION 2040

The production of a Signage Strategy will help facilitate the delivery of the Green Grid Strategy and achieve the following objectives:

- 6.1 Vision 2040:
- Creation of green corridors between all settlements to encourage sustainable healthy transport and provide cycles for hire to enable movement .
 - Enhancing our leisure provision e.g. new country parks delivering improved facilities, and through promotion of culture and heritage in the districts e.g. through events. .
 - Working with existing public sector sports facilities providers in the district to create an improved/coordinated health offer for our residents.
- 6.2 Corporate Objectives:
- Providing accessible green spaces, countryside, leisure and cultural facilities and opportunities including managing six existing and new Country Parks at Hawley Meadows, Edenbrook, Bramshot Farm, Poulter's Meadow, Whitewater Meadows, and at Hawley Park Farm
 - Working with local communities to deliver local biodiversity improvement projects. .
 - Supporting the transition to a low carbon future, making efficient use of resources, increasing levels of recycling, encouraging an increase in

journeys made by cycling, walking and public transport, and encouraging the use of renewable resources -

- Including the delivery of infrastructure that encourages people to walk, cycle and use buses -
- Supporting residents in taking control of their own health and wellbeing

7 SERVICE PLAN

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

8 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 £28,000 has been identified within the Green Grid Master Budget for developing the branding and signage strategy for the Green Grid Pilot, it is proposed that this will be drawn from Hartland Park S106 funding which was specifically allocated for this purpose.
- 8.2 Human resources have been identified and approved for this project in previous papers to Cabinet (Paper E, 2nd January 2020)

9 EQUALITIES

- 9.1 It is anticipated that this will need to be considerate to equalities as part of the development of the strategy and opportunities will be embedded as part of any proposal.

10 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Approval of this report's recommendation will assist Hart in achieving its climate emergency targets by promoting green transport.

11 ACTION

- 11.1 Subject to approval of this report's recommendation, quotations will be sort, and consultants appointed to produce the Green Grid Signage Strategy

Contact Details: John Elson /e-mail: john.elson@hart.gov.uk

Appendices: [Green Grid Programme](#)

Background papers: None

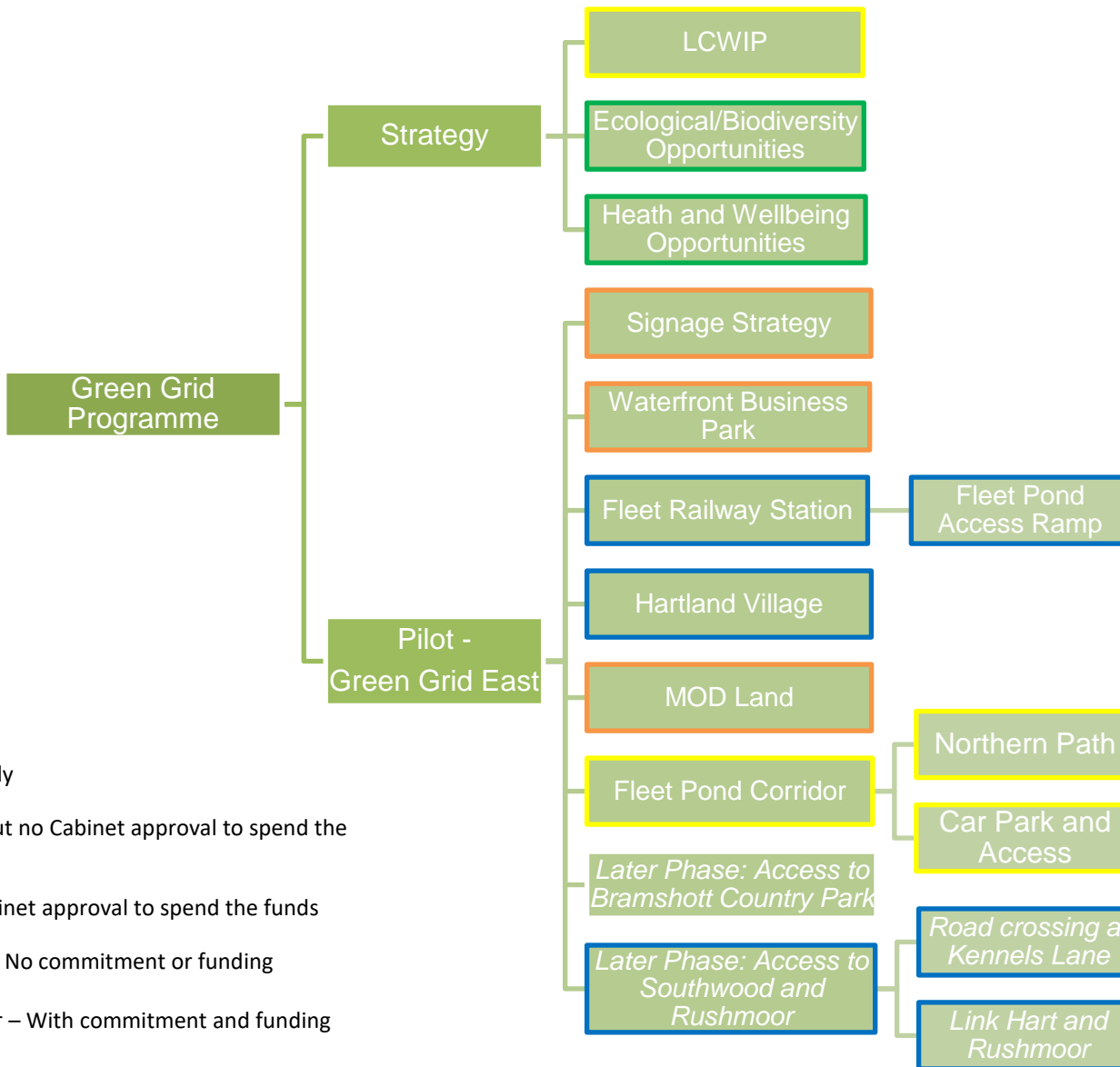
Green Grid Programme

Programme:

Project:

Workstream:

Task:



Key:

- In house/staffing costs only
- Funding secured (S106) but no Cabinet approval to spend the funds
- Funding secured with Cabinet approval to spend the funds
- External partner to fund – No commitment or funding
- External partner to deliver – With commitment and funding
- No funding secured and no Cabinet approval to spend the funds

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 2 December 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: FROGMORE DAY CARE CENTRE

Report of: Head of Corporate Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor James Radley, Deputy Leader and Finance

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on Frogmore Day Centre (FDC) and ask approval to move a proportion of the Commercialisation funds that were placed in ear marked reserves, to support the delivery of a building in a condition suitable to accommodate a new lessee (Age Concern).

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree to invest in the maintenance of FDC so that the building can be leased to Age Concern in a safe and clean condition.
- 2.2 That Cabinet authorise the granting of a new full repairing lease to Age Concern for the building, for the period of 10 years, with break clause after 5 years, on a peppercorn rent.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hart entered into a 99 year lease with Hampshire County Council (HCC) for land adjacent to Frogmore Comprehensive School for the provision of leisure facilities and a day care facility
- 3.2 A day care facility, known as Frogmore Day Care Centre was constructed in 2000. It was leased to Frogmore Day Care Centre Trust (FDCCT) between 21st September 2000 and 21st September 2021. The lease originally for 25 years was terminated early due to financial constraints of FDCCT.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 In July 2021 Hart invited bids from organisations to operate the Day Care Centre. The opportunity was published on Contracts Finder from the 1 July 2021 with a closing date of 30 July 2021 (Appendix 2).
- 4.2 Whilst informal expressions of interest were made during the period, these did not comply with the strict Use Class (provision of day care) requirements imposed upon Hart through the Lease with HCC.
- 4.3 Age Concern was the only organisation to formally respond with a valid submission that met the requirements of the lease. The submission demonstrated solid experience in providing adult care and strong relevant cases studies, resulting in a very high evaluation score.

- 4.4 The financial offer from Age Concern for the lease was a Peppercorn rent. This is in line with the value of the previous lease, and the financial information provided as part of the submission demonstrated it to be a reasonable offer.
- 4.5 HCC's Adult's Health and Care department were one of the organisations that acted as a reference in Age Concern's bid. Approval from HCC is needed before Hart can enter into a lease with Age Concern. This has been sought, and a formal letter is being provided by HCC to Hart, although a copy is not available at the time of writing the report.
- 4.6 In addition, Cabinet authorisation is required, to allow Officers to enter into the new lease. The draft lease details are included in Appendix 3.
- 4.7 Final agreement to the lease with Age Concern can only take place if the Main Issues as set out below are addressed, but authorisation is sought at this point, to ensure the community asset can be returned to use as quickly as feasible.

5 MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 A condition of the lease to be granted was to offer the building in a fair and reasonable state of repair and condition. In return the new tenant would maintain and repair the building for the duration of their tenancy.
- 5.2 In arranging for the lease to be awarded, it became clear that the building required further maintenance and repairs to make it clean and safe for elderly visitors. FDCCT paid Hart £6000 in full and final settlement of their obligation to maintain the building. This sum is insufficient to meet the requirements for a modern day care facility.
- 5.3 The maintenance and repairs and their estimated costs are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5.4 To mitigate the costs Hart are in discussions with Age Concern and FDCCT with a view to utilising existing retained funds from the outgoing charity, (this funding should be used to support charitable aims in the same area) or fund raising from Age Concern.
- 5.5 The risk of not accepting the recommendation is that the building is not fit for purpose as a day care centre, the lease with Age Concern would not be entered into, and this community asset would remain empty.

6 BUDGETARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 6.1 The maximum costs associated with this decision are approximately £25,000. A proportion of the electrical work is to update to current standards to reduce environmental impact and supports the Councils Climate Emergency Declaration.

- 6.2 The works will be funded from the Council's Commercialisation Reserve and any procurement of maintenance and repairs will be conducted in accordance with Contract Standing Orders.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 Approval of this report's recommendation will provide a safe environment for all visitors to FDC. There are no impacts to crime and disorder associated with this decision.

8 ACTION

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the request to move the funds from earmarked reserves to a current budget line.
- 8.2 Cabinet is also asked to authorise the granting of a new lease to Age Concern for FDC

Contact Details: Patricia Hughes patricia.hughes@hart.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of costs

Appendix 2 – Link to Contracts Finder opportunity:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/8797892a-9ced-4835-8402-ea9e933b510f>

This appendix is exempt from publication.

Appendix 3 – Draft Lease - Frogmore Day Centre

APPENDIX 1

Activity	Estimated Cost £	Notes	Status
Deep Clean	2,034		Complete
LED Lighting	4,000		
Boiler/Heating	1,900		
Replacement Flooring	2,000	Kitchen, 1 bathroom + medical room	
Garden - clearance	2,220	Complete	Complete
Gutters	750	Clean and repair	
Patio	1,000	Slabs to be made even and secure	Complete
Electrics testing	550	Complete	Complete
Electrics	4,200	Essential safety works	
Painting and Decorating	5,800	All areas	
Water	150	Legionnaire testing	
Alarm	100	Testing	
Other repairs	300		
Replacement kitchen	6,000		
Total	31,004		
<i>Less settlement from FDCCT</i>	<i>(6,000)</i>		
Revised Total	25,004		

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

Document is Exempt from Publication

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	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	
Draft Communications and Engagement Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a new Communications and Engagement Strategy	Dec 21		TC	CS	
Biodiversity and Carbon Offsetting Delivery Strategy	To consider and approve funding for a biodiversity and carbon offsetting delivery strategy	Dec 21		DN	TS	
Funding for Green Grid Signage Strategy	To seek Cabinet approval to provide funding for consultants to develop branding and signage for Harts Green Grid	Dec 21		AO	TS	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Frogmore Day Care Centre	To seek Cabinet approval to release funds for updating and maintenance.	Dec 21		JR	CS	
Budget Provision to fill an Establishment Post	To seek Cabinet approval to fill an establishment post	Jan 22	Y	GC	P	
Citizens Advice Bureau move to the Apex Building	To approve CAB the use of the Apex Building	Jan 22		JR	F	
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	
2022/23 Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update	A further update for consideration of the emerging budget for 2022/23	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	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
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	Feb 22		SB	H	
Homelessness Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider a new Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027	Feb 22		SB	CSF	
Draft 2022/23 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Proposals	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to agree to recommend to Council the 2022/23 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Proposals	Feb 22		JR	F	
Draft 2022/23 Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to agree to recommend to Council the 2022/23 draft Capital Strategy, the 2022/23 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	

Report Title	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Due Date	Key Decision Y? Note 1	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)	* This item may contain Exempt Information
Annual Car Parking Report	Post consideration by Overview and Scrutiny for Cabinet to review and endorse a summary of actions from the last 12 months, and proposals for the upcoming year. Including income, maintenance, and carbon emissions	Mar 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	Mar 22		JR	F	
Update and Refresh the Corporate Complaint Policy	Post nominations to a task and finish group at Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to update and refresh the Corporate Complaint Policy for Cabinet approval	Mar 22		JR	JCX	
Quarterly Performance Plans	To seek Cabinet approval for reports on performance data	Mar 22 Jun 22 Sep 22 Dec 22		DN	ALL	
Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny, to consider approval of the Project Integra Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Apr 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	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	ALL	
Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/2023	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Annual report on outturn	Jul 22		JR	F	
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Post consideration by Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to consider the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy position and future Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Asset Management Plan	Sep 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
