

Cabinet Agenda

Monday, 4 July 2016 at 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Upper Ground Floor, Aquila House, Breeds Place, Hastings,
East Sussex, TN34 3UY

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		Page No.
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Notification of any additional items	
4.	Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2016	1 - 18
5.	Housing Strategy (Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment) (Council Decision)	19 - 70
6.	Customer First Communication Strategy and Action Plan (Jane Hartnell, Director of Corporate Services and Governance) (Cabinet Decision)	71 - 86
7.	Corporate Plan retrospective report on performance during 2015-16 and proposed Performance Indicator targets for 2016-17 (Jane Hartnell, Director of Corporate Services and Governance) (Cabinet Decision)	87 - 156
8.	Income Generation (Simon Hubbard, Director of Operational Services) (Cabinet Decision)	157 - 174
9.	Updates to the Council's Constitution (Christine Barkshire-Jones, Chief Legal Officer) (Council Decision)	175 - 210
10.	Additional Urgent Items (if any)	

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Agenda Item 4 Public Document Pack CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

Present: Councillors Chowney (Chair), Forward (until 6.49pm), Cartwright, Poole, Atkins, Davies, Fitzgerald and Lee

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2016 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record of the meeting

RESOLVED the Chair called over the items on the agenda, under rule 13.3 the recommendations set out in minute numbers 5, 6, 9 and 12 were agreed without being called for discussion. The Chair advised that the Street Trading and Highway Licensing Policy Review (minute number 5) was a matter for Council decision. A revised schedule of Cabinet appointments had been published, and this was also agreed without being called for discussion.

MATTERS FOR CABINET DECISION

2. CPO LONG TERM EMPTY STREET PROPERTIES

The Assistant Director for Housing and Built Environment presented a report for Cabinet to consider the compulsory purchase of twenty privately owned empty homes as part of the Empty Homes Strategy Enforcement Programme. An accompanying report had been submitted as a part II item, which provided further details about the properties.

Under Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 17 of the Housing Act 1995, local authorities have the powers to compulsorily purchase long term empty properties, when other options to bring them back into use have not been successful.

The council adopted an Empty Homes Strategy which also sought to maximise the use of existing housing stock. Considerable success has been achieved in the past in bringing empty properties back into use through a variety of enforcement methods. The twenty properties identified for compulsory purchase action were all in need of improvement.

The report detailed the timescale for completing CPO action, noting that this may vary depending on the complexity of each case. It also detailed the financial and legal implications of utilising these powers.

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendation to the Assistant Director for Housing and Built Environment's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that Cabinet approved the detailed recommendations set out in the report included in Part II of the agenda and approves the making of compulsory purchase orders of the twenty long term empty properties

The reason for this decision was:

The council's empty homes strategy sets out a number of enforcement powers available to the council, including compulsory purchase of long term empty homes. In addition to taking action to bring empty homes back in to use it is hoped that taking this action will demonstrate to the owners of empty homes that it is unacceptable to leave property empty for an unreasonable period of time. The action will demonstrate to owners of these empty homes that the council will take the necessary action to bring these homes back into use for the benefit of the community.

3. HASTINGS TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Assistant Director for Regeneration and Culture presented a report which updated Cabinet on progress towards setting up a Business Improvement District (BID) for Hastings Town Centre.

The report sought delegated authority for the Director of Operational Services and Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture to agree with the Bid Board the BID Business Plan and Bid Operating Agreement. A loan application of £31,400 was approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Consultants Revive and Thrive had been appointed in September 2015 to establish and develop the BID.

A successful BID is an opportunity to secure improvements to the town centre by providing additional projects and services, in addition to those already delivered by statutory providers, at limited risk to the local authority. The spending priorities will be determined by the businesses themselves, within the BID area. A ballot will open on 14 October 2016 for a period of 28 days to determine if a BID should be implemented. All businesses that would be liable to pay the BID levy (within the boundary) are eligible to vote. A vote in favour of introducing the BID will be decided by a dual key majority by both number and rateable value. In the event of a yes vote, the BID will be in place for a period of 5 years, with the first collection of the levy on April 2017.

Councillor Atkins requested copies of the business plan and operating agreement for the BID.

Councillor Poole proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director – Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED (unanimously) to:

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

1. **Continue to support the development and establishment of Business Improvement District in Hastings Town Centre**
2. **Delegate to the Director of Operational Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture, authority to formally approve casting the HBC vote on its own hereditaments that will attract the levy, and;**
3. **Give delegated authority to the Director of Operational Services and the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture to agree with the BID Board the BID Business Plan and BID Operating Agreement**

The reason for this decision was:

Members had previously agreed in early 2015 to support the establishment of a BID. Progression of this project now requires formal Council approval to support the ambitions of local town centre businesses.

4. CORPORATE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY REVIEW

The Chief Legal Officer presented a report which detailed the findings of a review of the council's corporate complaints policy. The report recommended that a refreshed corporate complaints policy be adopted.

The current corporate complaints policy was adopted by the council in 2014. Since then, the council has commissioned a bespoke software system, Firmstep, which will centrally record the complaints the council receives. It is intended to implement the complaints module of Firmstep in quarter 2 of 2016/17. The relevant pages of the council's website will also be refreshed when the new system is launched.

The purpose of the system is to ensure that complaints are handled efficiently and that sufficient information is gathered to help the council identify potential opportunities to improve services and prevent similar incidents reoccurring.

The policy also set out how the council would deal with persistent complainants. Following a request from Councillor Atkins, the Leader of the Council agreed to contact the Local Government Association to seek good practice on defining the role of members within this aspect of the complaints process.

The Chief Legal Officer amended the recommendation of the report to reflect that the new policy would come into effect from 7 June 2016, as set out in the resolution below.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the recommendations to the Chief Legal Officer's report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

RESOLVED that:

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

1. **The refreshed Corporate Complaints Policy (including an unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complaints policy) be approved and implemented with effect from 7 June 2016, and;**
2. **A programme of staff awareness and appropriate training is delivered to the support the roll out of the refreshed policy**

The reason for this decision was:

The existing corporate complaints system has been in operation since 2014. Since then there has been a rise in the level of persistent / vexatious complainants who are absorbing a significant amount of officer time in dealing with cases that the council feels have already been addressed. In order to protect individual officers and ensure that public resources are not used inappropriately, the council's unreasonable and unreasonably persistent complainants policy has been refreshed.

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

5. **THE STREET TRADING AND HIGHWAY LICENSING POLICY**

The Assistant Director – Environment and Place submitted a report which proposed an update to the policy in relation to the fees charged for markets.

The latest revision to the council's Street Trading and Highways Licensing Policy took place in October 2014. The policy makes provision for fees to be charged to market stall holders, and the amount of the fees is reviewed on an annual basis.

Following consultation with market organisers, the town centre management team and council officers; it was proposed to amend the policy to take a more flexible approach to discounting street trading fees. It is intended that this may allow the council to provide additional support where a new market is being piloted or where a market is struggling to become or remain financially viable.

RESOLVED to recommend that the council agrees to amend the Street Trading and Highway Licensing Policy to enable a more flexible approach to discounting the licensing fees for markets as set out in paragraph 9 of the Assistant Director –Environment and Place's report

The reason for this decision was:

To support the development of markets in Hastings and encourage a vibrant and high quality street trading environment.

MATTERS FOR CABINET DECISION

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

6. MOBILE PHONE INSTALLATIONS ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

The Assistant Director – Financial Services and Revenues submitted a report which sought to amend the council’s policy on new mobile phone installations on council owned land.

On 21 February 2001, the council passed a resolution which banned new mobile phone installations on council-owned land until more research findings were available confirming that there are no associated health risks. The council currently has two installations on its land, which were in place prior to the moratorium, and which generate annual revenue.

The council has since adopted a new Development Management Plan, which includes a policy in respect of telecommunications technology. The report proposed that the moratorium on new mobile phone installations on council owned land be lifted, provided that any new proposed installation meets the guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The amendment is in line with government policy and could potentially generate further revenue for the council.

RESOLVED that the council’s existing policy “this council as landowner determines to ban new mobile phone installations on its own land until more research findings are available confirming that there are no associated health risks” be lifted

The reason for this decision was:

Since the policy was adopted there has been no proven risk to the health of people living near mobile phone installations.

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

7. BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Sustainability Policy Officer presented the report of the Director of Corporate Services and Governance on the boundary review. The report considered a draft response to a consultation by the Local Government Commission for England (LGBCE) on the new electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council.

The council had responded to a first stage consultation by the LGBCE in relation to proposed changes to the warding patterns of the borough ward boundaries. The LGBCE had now published its draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council, and the other districts and boroughs throughout East Sussex. The draft recommendations were subject to a public consultation until 16 June 2016.

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

It was noted that the LGBCE's draft recommendations in the main reflected the proposals for warding patterns previously submitted by Hastings Borough Council.

Cabinet thanked all members and officers who had contributed to the review process.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the recommendations to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance's report, which was seconded by Councillor Lee.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that Council recommend that the following response be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on the new electoral arrangements "Hastings Borough Council (HBC) welcomes the publication of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's draft recommendations in respect of Hastings Borough Councils' (HBC) electoral arrangements which, in the main reflect the submitted HBC proposals and accepts the suggested amendments to the warding pattern proposals in respect of the Borough"

The reason for this decision was:

The LGBCE draft recommendations largely reflect the proposals that the council submitted to the LGBCE in November 2015.

MATTERS FOR CABINET DECISION

8. **1066 ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY GRANTS**

The Assistant Director – Regeneration and Culture presented a report which sought approval to establish a 1066 Anniversary Community Grant scheme for 2016.

The purpose of the grant fund is to support community and resident groups living in the most disadvantaged wards of the borough to develop their own projects and events to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, in addition to the programme of events which will be taking place elsewhere in the town.

The report set out the grant application process. The maximum grant per application had been set at £3000. The applications received would be considered by a decision making panel consisting of two lead members, the Director of Hastings Voluntary Action and a senior council officer.

Councillor Lee proposed an amendment to delete the recommendation "to give priorities to applications from the most deprived wards of the borough". The proposed amendment was lost by 2 votes for with 5 against.

Councillor Poole proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director – Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Davies.

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. To establish a 1066 Anniversary Community Grant scheme with a maximum value of £30,000,
2. All projects to be delivered by end of December 2016,
3. To invite applications for grants based on the guidance attached at appendix 1 to the Assistant Director –Regeneration and Culture’s report;
4. To give priorities to applications from the most deprived wards of the borough, and;
5. To establish a grant decision making panel consisting of two lead members, the Director of Hastings Voluntary Action and a senior officer from the council

The reason for this decision was:

There is a major programme of cultural activities programmed this year across parts of the town to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, The 1066 Anniversary Community Grant scheme will i) enable residents and community groups in more isolated and disadvantaged areas of the town to participate in marking the anniversary of this historic event by organising and enjoying activities and events within their own communities; ii) promote social cohesion; and iii) raise awareness of the town’s cultural heritage within communities who face considerable barriers to social and economic inclusion.

9. **CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND PARTNERSHIPS ETC**

The Chief Legal Officer submitted a report regarding the appointment of Cabinet members to committees, working groups and partnerships. Nominations had been received from both group leaders to fill the places available.

A revised draft of the schedule of nominations had been published in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED

1. To appoint members to committees, working groups, partnerships and representative bodies as set out in Appendix A and B to the minutes
2. To appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Charity Committee and Museums Committee, as listed in Appendix A

The reason for this decision was:

Members are required to serve on the committees, working groups, partnerships and representative bodies to which Cabinet appoints. Chairs and Vice Chairs are required for the committees that report to Cabinet.

10. **MINUTES OF THE MUSEUMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2016**

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

The minutes of the Museums Committee meeting held on 14 March 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Museums Committee meeting held on 14 March 2016 be received

11. **MINUTES OF THE CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2016**

The minutes of the Charity Committee meeting held on 21 March 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Charity Committee meeting held on 21 March 2016 be received

12. **CPO LONG TERM EMPTY STREET PROPERTIES (PART II)**

The Assistant Director for Housing and Built Environment submitted a report which gave further information about the 20 properties identified for compulsory purchase.

RESOLVED that:

1. **The Cabinet resolve to take formal action, by means of making Compulsory Purchase Orders for twenty long term empty properties, being the addresses shown in the report, under Compulsory Purchase powers set out in Section 226 (1)(a) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 2004),**
2. **Cabinet give authority to the Director of Operational Services or his delegated nominee to execute all relevant documentation required for the Compulsory Purchase of the twenty homes set out in recommendation 1 of the report, and;**
3. **Cabinet gives authority to the Director of Operational Services or his delegated nominee to execute and complete the onward sale of the homes set out in recommendation 1 of this report, once they have been acquired**

The reason for this decision was:

These are long standing empty homes and without Compulsory Purchase (CPO) action, officers are of the view that these homes will continue to remain empty. Officers have spent time attempting to engage with the owners and assist them in bringing their empty homes back into use. These actions have not achieved the desired result and it is not believed that the homes will be returned to use without CPO action.

CABINET

6 JUNE 2016

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 6.55 pm)

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**CABINET
APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PARTNERSHIPS ETC. JUNE 2016**

COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUP / PARTNERSHIPS

COMMITTEES	SEATS TO BE FILLED	ALLOCATION TO POLITICAL GROUPS 2016/17		APPOINTMENTS for 2016/17		NOTES
		LAB	CON	LABOUR GROUP	CONSERVATIVE GROUP	
Museums Committee	Up to 10	6	2	Poole (Chair) T.Dowling (Vice-Chair) Bacon Howard Sinden Street	Edwards Patmore	A Chair and Vice Chair is required for this committee
Charity Committee	3	3		Fitzgerald (Chair) Cartwright Forward		Chair to be non-portfolio holder member of Cabinet for the majority group
Discretionary Rate Relief Appeal Panel	Up to 7	5	2	Forward Poole Cartwright Davies Fitzgerald	Atkins Lee	All Members of Cabinet, excluding the Leader, to be appointed to the Panel.

Minute Item 9

REVISED APPENDIX A

Licensing Committee (Scrap Metal Dealers)	Up to 7	5	2	Forward Poole Cartwright Davies Fitzgerald	Atkins Lee	All Members of Cabinet, excluding the Leader, to be appointed to the committee. Functions relating to the licensing of Scrap Metal Dealers as set out in the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 or by virtue of any amending or consolidating legislation and any regulations made under the Act as such amending or consolidating legislation.
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WORKING GROUPS ETC	SEATS TO BE FILLED	ALLOCATION TO POLITICAL GROUPS 2016/17		APPOINTMENTS for 2016/17		NOTES
		LAB	CON	LABOUR GROUP	CONSERVATIVE GROUP	
Working Arrangements Group	5	4	1	Street (Chair) Cartwright Rogers Scott	Cooke	
Member Training and Development Group	4	3	1	Cartwright (Chair) Sinden (Vice-Chair) Rogers	Cooke	
Hastings Country Park Management Forum	5	4	1	Davies (Chair) Street (Vice-Chair) Bacon Turner	Patmore	
Order of 1066	4	3	1	B.Dowling Rogers Sinden	Lee	To comprise Mayor, Deputy Mayor & 1 member from each Political Group
Joint Waste Committee	2	2		Chowney Davies		Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Env & Highways
Personnel Consultative Group	4	3	1	Cartwright Chowney Forward	Atkins	

PARTNERSHIPS	SEATS TO BE FILLED	ALLOCATION TO POLITICAL GROUPS 2016/17		APPOINTMENTS for 2016/17		NOTES
		LAB	CON	LABOUR GROUP	CONSERVATIVE GROUP	
Stade Partnership	2	2		Bacon Poole		
Hastings Overseas Student Advisory Council	3	2	1	Roberts Sinden	Atkins	Known as HOSAC
Hastings Local Strategic Partnership	2	1	1	Chowney	Lee	
Safer Hastings Partnership	1	1		Davies		Relevant Lead Member
Jt. Advisory Cttee. the High Weald AONB	1	1		Street		
Combe Valley (formerly Pebsham) Countryside Park Management Forum	2	2		Howard Webb		
Hastings and Rother Task Force Steering Group	1	1		Chowney		Leader of the Council
Hastings Athletics Track Committee	2	1	1	Batsford	Rankin	
AmicusHorizon Hastings Area Panel	1	1		Forward		Relevant Lead Member

REVISED APPENDIX A

Joint Governing Body for the Hastings Academy and the St Leonards Academy	1	1		N/A		
Sussex Police & Crime Panel	1	1		Davies		
East Sussex Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1	1		Turner		Needs to be a non-executive Member.
East Sussex Community Safety Partnership	1	1		Davies		Needs to be either the Chair of the Safer Hastings Partnership or a member of the Sussex Police and Crime Panel.
Big Local North East Hastings	1	1		Charman		

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CABINET – JUNE 2016**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

ORGANISATION	SEATS TO BE FILLED	APPOINTMENTS FOR 2016/17
East Sussex Energy Infrastructure and Development Ltd (Sea Change) (This is a directorship)	1	Poole
Hastings & St Leonards Town Centre Management Group	1	Chowney
Hastings Health Improvement Network	1	Rogers
Health & Wellbeing Board	1 (not Health O & S Cttee member)	Beaney
Local Gov. Assoc. – National Body	1	Chowney
Local Gov. Assoc. – Urban Commission	1	Poole
Local Gov. Assoc. – Coastal Issues Group	1	Poole
South East England Councils	1 (The Leader of the Council)	Chowney

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Agenda Item 5

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4th July 2016

Report Title: Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016/19

Report By: Andrew Palmer

Head of Housing and Built Environment

Purpose of Report

To advise of the results of the 12 week public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy 2016-2019 and recommend that Cabinet adopts the strategy.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the Housing Strategy 2016-2019 is adopted by Cabinet.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Whilst it is no longer a legislative requirement to produce a housing strategy, it is important for the Council to outline plans for addressing local housing needs and to provide a framework for partners and interested parties operating in the local housing market.

The previous strategy covered the period from 2010 and is in need of renewal.

The draft Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016-2019, has been informed by a range of partnership work and has undergone a 12 week public consultation.

The new strategy takes account of new government policy and guidance and reflects a range of changes that have taken place over the life of the previous strategy.

Introduction

1. The Housing Strategy 2016-19 seeks to build on the success achieved through delivery of the previous strategy.
2. The draft strategy 2016-19 has been produced taking account of:
 - Current and future housing needs of the Borough
 - The existing housing stock profile
 - National and local housing policy
 - South East Local Enterprise Plan priorities
 - The Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - How partners will jointly commission new housing services
 - Previous successful housing and regeneration initiatives and strategies
 - Data on the housing market, housing conditions, social and economic data and deprivation statistics
 - Key housing related policy documents that have emerged over the life of the previous strategy
3. Three key strategic housing priorities have been identified for the period 2016-2019. These emerged from facilitated workshops with Council officers, Members and stakeholders during 2015. The three priorities are:
 - Priority 1 - Meet Housing Needs and Aspirations
 - Priority 2 – Improve Access and Opportunities
 - Priority 3 – Support Economic Regeneration:
4. The draft Housing Strategy 2016-19 is attached in Appendix 1. The document provides the context in which the housing plans have been formulated and sets out how the three strategic priorities will be achieved. An action plan is attached to the strategy.

Public Consultation and Final Strategy

5. The draft strategy and review document were made available for public consultation from the 4th November 2015 to the 28th January 2016 on the Council's website. Information on the consultation was also circulated to key partners, stakeholders and Council Officers.
6. Very few comments were received. However, the key issues raised by colleagues, partners and the public as part of the consultation were: the growing cost of private sector accommodation; the impact of future welfare reform changes and the need to provide additional housing solutions for rough sleepers.
7. In general those consulted were positive and supports the direction of the strategy. The strategy has identified a number of initiatives to be delivered in

partnership with key partner agencies which address the concerns which have been raised via the consultation process. These measures include initiatives to increase the provision of social housing, improve the quality and availability of private sector accommodation, raise standards of property management and harness the regeneration of the town to benefit all sections of the community.

8. The draft strategy has been amended slightly since last considered by members to reflect emerging government policy occurring over the consultation period.
9. Of concern to some respondents were the proposed changes in housing and planning legislation outlined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. In particular, the increasing emphasis on home ownership at the expense of other tenures.
10. The reductions in affordable accommodation for rent are of concern to some. Those on the lowest incomes or in receipt of benefits are likely to become increasingly dependent upon the private rented sector; this is happening at a time when access to the private sector is becoming more competitive and rents are rising. Key to the success of the strategy will be how the Council's and other partners respond successfully to the challenges this will pose.

Policy implications

11. Equalities and Community Cohesiveness - An equalities impact assessment has been carried out. The summary of the analysis is that the strategy would not have a negative impact on any group as defined in the Equalities Act.
12. Local People's Views – A public consultation has been undertaken to invite comments from local people on the direction of the attached Housing Strategy, the outcome of which is described in this report.
13. Anti-Poverty - A number of measures outlined in the attached Housing Strategy and action plan seek to address issues of poverty related to improving the quality, provision and access to affordable accommodation for lower income households in particular.
14. Economic/Financial Implications – the attached Housing Strategy is designed to coordinate a multi-agency response to improving the provision of affordable housing to meet the aspirations of all sections of the community. The Housing Strategy action plan outlines a number of measures which are designed to support the economic regeneration of the town.

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

Appendix 1 –Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2016/19

Officer to Contact

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HASTINGS & ST LEONARDS HOUSING STRATEGY 2016–2019

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Executive Summary	3
The Council’s vision	7
Key facts about Hastings and St Leonards.....	8
The people of Hastings.....	8
The Housing Stock in Hastings.....	9
Deprivation.....	10
The Policy Framework	11
The national housing policy agenda	11
Regional and Sub-Regional Policy	12
Priority 1 - Meeting Housing Needs and Aspirations	13
Housing Supply and Demand	13
Development of new housing	14
Delivering affordable housing	14
Social Housing Stock.....	15
Ensuring homes are suitable	16
Preventing Homelessness	16
Social Lettings Agency	17
Actions	17
Priority 2 - Improving Access and Opportunities.....	18
Health and housing.....	18
Health Inequalities in Hastings	18
Vulnerable households	19
Care and support in supported living developments.....	19
Meeting the needs of older people	19
Financial inclusion	20
Actions	20
Priority 3 - Supporting Economic Regeneration.....	22
The private rented sector.....	22
Social Housing Stock.....	22
Area Based Development and Regeneration	22
The Housing Renewal Area.....	23
The Coastal Space Project	23
Inward Migration	24
Community Led Regeneration	25
The South East LEP	25
Reducing Fuel Poverty	25
Empty Homes	26
Local Housing Company.....	26
Actions	27
Hastings & St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016-2019 Action Plan	28
Appendix 1	47

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016-19. It's so important that we plan for the future to ensure residents in the Borough have access to good quality accommodation at a price they can afford.

We are working hard to improve existing housing and to enable the delivery of new housing in Hastings and St Leonards. We are putting significant efforts into regenerating the most deprived areas of the town to improve the quality of life for local residents and the community as a whole; Hastings Borough Council is committed to there being a decent home for everyone.

Hastings has been acutely affected by the economic difficulties of the recession. Changes to government housing policy and legislation has had a significant impact on local residents and introduced new challenges for future housing policy locally.

Too many of our local residents are living in poverty. Poor housing conditions and increasing housing costs exacerbate this issue. We will continue to work in partnership to ensure people in Hastings and St Leonards can access and maintain accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

With increasing pressures on local services and declining resources it is even more important to develop strategies and joint initiatives with partners that will address the housing issues affecting people living and working in Hastings.

We will strive to secure the necessary resources to achieve our objectives and give active support to initiatives that will benefit the community and address housing issues for those in most need. This strategy will give us the platform on which to achieve our future housing ambitions.

Councillor Kim Forward, Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder

Executive Summary

Whilst the Council's revised Housing Strategy for the period 2016-19 has broadly similar aims to previous strategies it has been developed in the context of a quite different set of circumstances. Since the last strategy was implemented in 2009 we have experienced one of the most severe economic recessions of modern times and as a consequence of the resulting financial deficit, successive governments have sought to sharply reduce public spending in order help restore balance to the economy; this remains, from the current government's perspective, a work in progress and key to achieving its objectives are a continuing programme of welfare benefit reforms and reductions in spending on public services.

Whilst there has been a fragile recovery in terms of economic growth more recently and a marked recovery within the housing market, the economic and political landscape remains quite different now to that which informed the last strategy.

Despite the long recession there are reasons for optimism within Hastings. Whilst the town remains one of the most deprived in the region, regeneration continues apace. Recent openings of the Pier and the new skate-park complex are testament to the vitality of the town. As a consequence, Hastings is becoming a more favoured destination for inward investment and new home seekers. The Housing Strategy and Local Plan seek to continue to support this through ensuring that there is provision and access to new housing whilst also making best use of existing built assets, for example through the regeneration of existing stock and minimisation of empty homes.

Whilst this regeneration is positive and to be welcomed it brings with it greater challenges for those least able to compete in the market for housing. Those most economically disadvantaged in terms of poor health, education and skills find it increasingly difficult to secure housing that is adequate for their needs, at a price they can reasonably afford.

The Council's strategy is one that aims to support the local economy and promote continuing growth whilst making sure that as many local people as possible share in the prosperity created. Against a backdrop of continuing reductions to the resources of the local authority, police and other public sector partners – as well as the challenges faced by voluntary sector bodies – this will be difficult. Nevertheless the Council remains committed to closing the gap between both the most advantaged and disadvantaged households in the town and between the performance of the town compared with other areas of the South East.

The mix and tenure of housing in the town, whilst not unique amongst coastal areas, is very different from many other areas of the South East; this brings with it its own set of problems which are reflected in the strategy. Social housing and owner occupation remain comparatively low relative to the rest of the South East whilst rates of private renting are far higher. The Council aims for a more balanced housing market that provides for a range of individual needs and income levels.

The profile of the housing stock is also quite different from many other areas. There is a significantly higher proportion of older, higher density and terraced housing than is common in many other areas. This brings with it higher investment and maintenance costs, issues of disrepair and particular challenges with regards to energy efficiency and fuel poverty for occupiers. Associated with this is the concentration of many poorer and deprived households in the poorest quality stock. The council remains committed to driving up standards through programs of support and enforcement where necessary.

The strategy also recognises that outside the town centres and seafront the housing profile is quite different but can be equally challenging. Social housing tends to be concentrated in particular areas which also register some of the highest deprivation levels within the South East. The strategy therefore is to ensure that regeneration is not concentrated in the centres but reaches out to all areas of the borough. The council is committed to working with the main housing providers in order to help regenerate those areas with a high density of social housing.

The strategy stresses that bricks and mortar are only a part of the solution to an individual's housing needs and social wellbeing. The provision of effective support for the most disadvantaged groups in society, including those who may find themselves homeless or rough sleeping, is absolutely critical. The strategy aims to ensure that a partnership approach is adopted to helping vulnerable households retain their homes and their independence and, where possible, support them back into mainstream society.

The strategy seeks to build on the success achieved through the delivery of the previous strategy. Significant progress was made in achieving the objectives in the previous Housing Strategy through strong partnership working, joint commissioning and new housing and regeneration initiatives (a summary of the successful achievements during the life of the previous strategy can be found in appendix 1).

The purpose of the Housing Strategy 2016-19 is to inform local residents and partners about the housing needs in the Borough and set out plans to address key issues. Three key strategic housing priorities have been identified with partners for the period 2016-2019. These priorities have been agreed with the aim of achieving the maximum benefit to local residents and communities.

Priority 1 - Meet Housing Needs and Aspirations

This will be achieved through:

- Helping to ensure that 3,400 net new dwellings are delivered in the Borough between 2011 – 2028 in line with the Local Plan
- Ensuring that a minimum of 200 new homes are delivered annually
- Prioritising new housing on previously developed land to assist with regeneration where possible

- Ensuring an appropriate mix of housing is provided in terms of tenure, price, type, size and location, having regard to the accommodation needs of the town
- Making decent housing accessible to more people by increasing the provision of affordable housing
- Providing more opportunities for people to live in Hastings town centre through identifying opportunities for mixed use schemes and making best use of space above shops
- Widening the range of housing available in Central St Leonards, particularly through the provision of good quality affordable housing
- Considering the potential for the Council to invest directly in new housing
- Ensuring the delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations is maximised
- Identifying suitable sites (both local authority owned and in the private sector) for new development
- Maximising opportunities for securing capital investment to deliver new affordable homes
- Creating an online self-build register to ensure future planning policy can meet the demand for this type of development
- Regularly reviewing and assessing the housing needs of the residents in the Borough
- Working with East Sussex County Council to ensure housing related support is available for vulnerable people
- Continuing to work with Brighton Housing Trust to deliver the Big Lottery funded Fulfilling Lives programme
- Continuing to minimise and tackle rough sleeping in the Borough
- Regularly reviewing the progress of the Social Lettings Agency (Letstart Lettings)

Priority 2 – Improving Access and Opportunities

This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring that there is adequate supply of accommodation to meet the needs of older people and those with a disability
- Working with Hastings & Rother Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that housing and health needs of household in Hastings are considered and addressed
- Working with East Sussex Better Together partners to improve the links between Health and Housing in the planning of future services
- Maintaining support for vulnerable people through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), loans and housing solutions to ensure homes are adapted and improved
- Supporting measures that will help households manage the impact of welfare benefit reforms
- Continuing to work with partners to develop innovative ways of improving access to accommodation for young people
- Meeting our commitment to help resettle vulnerable Syrians refugees under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS)
- Mitigating the impact of rogue landlord behaviour
- Continuing to work with our partners to encourage social housing tenants to play an active role in governance structures, neighbourhood management and decision making

Priority 3 – Support for Economic Regeneration

This will be achieved through:

- Maintaining our focus on the regeneration of the St Leonards Housing Renewal Area
- Seeking further improvement of private rented housing through licencing and enforcement where required
- Encouraging and supporting responsible landlords
- Working to secure funding for targeted housing interventions within the Borough
- Monitoring the condition of the private housing stock
- Continuing to bring empty and derelict homes and land back into use, through CPO where necessary
- Working with Education providers to ensure the housing needs of any future student population are assessed and catered for
- Ensuring appropriate housing solutions are available for keyworkers where these are identified
- Considering the establishment of a Local Housing Company to aid with development and regeneration of the town
- Reducing fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency for local residents

The Council's vision

This strategy outlines a vision of how Hastings Borough Council will work with partners and the community to make Hastings a place that residents are proud to live and work. The ambition is to provide decent, high quality, affordable and secure homes to meet the aspirations of the people of Hastings and St Leonards.

This vision complements the Council's priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2016/17-2018/19, which include promoting a greener town, intervention where it's needed, economic and physical regeneration, and the creation of decent homes. The Corporate Plan can be viewed in full at:

http://www.hastings.gov.uk/content/decisions_democracy/pdfs/Corporate_Plan_2016-19

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Key facts about Hastings and St Leonards

Hastings is an entirely urban coastal town in East Sussex with a population of just over 90,000. In contrast to relatively more affluent and largely rural areas that typify much of East Sussex, opportunities for significant expansion and housing growth are limited.

Whilst the town remains a busy seaside tourist destination, it did, along with some other major Victorian seaside destinations, witness a significant decline in the traditional holiday market during the latter half of the 20th Century. In terms of the built environment, the legacy is often all too clear to see, a rich architectural heritage, but one which requires significant capital investment in order to realise a healthy return for investors.

The social costs are also apparent. Too often in the past the large Victorians buildings that dominate and add character to parts of the town were subject to poorly conceived and implemented conversions that created higher concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The higher levels of crime, poor health, educational failure and population churn in some areas of the town have created a barrier to inward investment and the attraction of economically active residents and visitors. This has been compounded by a lack of employment opportunities locally, particularly at levels that would allow residents to exercise real choice over their housing.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons to be optimistic. Whilst high levels of deprivation remain a defining characteristic of the town at present, the significant public and private investment that has been made in recent years is producing notable results. Town centre regeneration within Central Hastings, the Old Town and Central St Leonards has resulted in a noticeable change.

Concerted housing interventions such as those undertaken within the St Leonards Housing Renewal Area are slowly turning the town around. It will be important moving forward that other areas of the town are similarly benefited, including the estates at Ore and Hollington where social housing predominates.

Other notable developments include the rebuilding of the pier, the state of the art skate-park complex and the the Jerwood Gallery, which has brought an art gallery of national importance to the town. The work of Hastings & Bexhill Task Force and regeneration companies has also produced new office and commercial facilities, attracting new employers to the town.

The people of Hastings

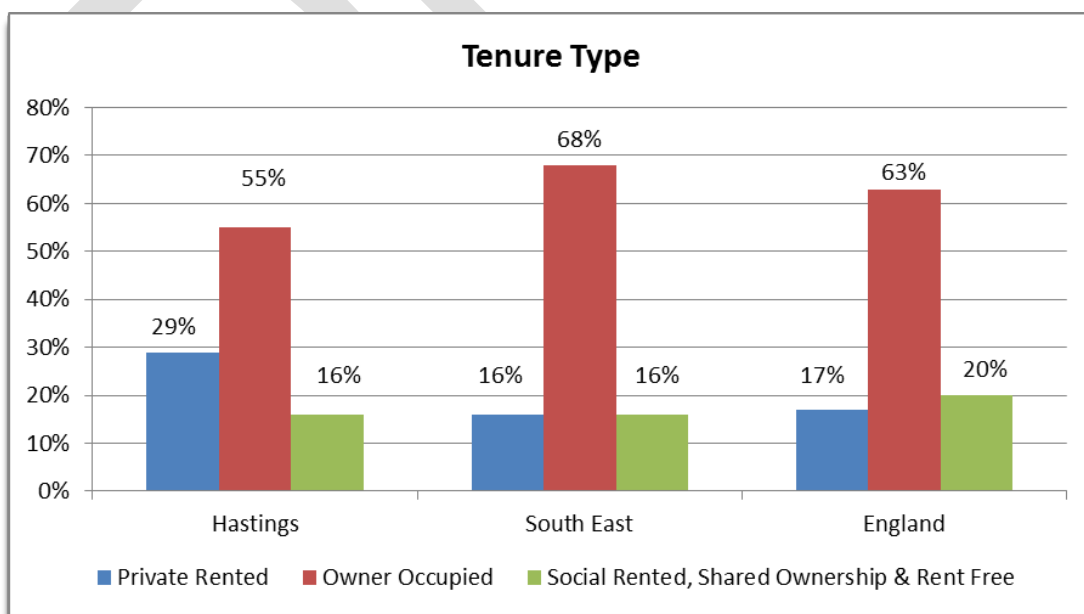
Hastings has a population of around 90,000 which to date has been younger than the rest of East Sussex. Currently, the age group profile is mirroring the national picture. Based on the housing growth proposed between 2011 and 2028, the population is forecast to grow by 3.2%.

At the same time a growth in the number of households is expected to increase from 41,100 in 2011 to 44,500 in 2028 (an increase of 8.2%). This is a reflection of changes in lifestyle, with more people living longer and more people living alone. The working age population is forecast to remain static between 2011 and 2028.

Hastings has a relatively diverse population in comparison to the rest of East Sussex with settled migrant communities and a comparatively high number of EU migrants and Roma households living in private rented accommodation, often in the most deprived areas. Hastings has been designated an asylum seeker dispersal area since 2000, and since 2006 has accommodated up to 110 individuals at one time. Those granted asylum sometimes choose to settle in Hastings which has contributed to the wide range of differing cultures and communities across the Borough.

The Housing Stock in Hastings

- The average house price is over 50% less than the regional average (East Sussex in Figures: Quarter 1 2015)
- The social sector housing numbers are slightly lower than the national average and supply is not sufficient to meet demand
- The Census 2011 confirmed the private rented sector was 50% larger than the national average and accounted for nearly 30% of the housing stock (It is known however that the private sector nationally has grown in recent years, however the rate of growth locally has not been measured)
- Owner occupation is lower than the rest of East Sussex; 55% compared with a national average of 63% (Census 2011)
- There are approximately 2,800 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), 85% of which are concentrated in 4 wards
- HMOs comprise 8% of the housing stock compared with an average of 2% across England
- There are significantly higher than average numbers of older buildings, often with poor internal layouts due to inadequate conversions in the 1960s and 70s
- There are issues with affordability, quality of accommodation and poor management standards in some parts of the private rented sector, particularly in areas of deprivation
- Proportionately, there are double the number of empty homes in comparison to the national average and the rest of Sussex



Census 2011

Deprivation

Deprivation is measured taking into account the proportion of households in a defined small geographical unit with a combination of circumstances indicating low living standards or a high need for services, or both. Factors such as health, housing, employment, benefit dependency, education and crime are considered when determining levels of deprivation. Not all households that are considered 'deprived' live in areas of deprivation and it is important to ensure housing and support services are available to all residents in need.

Despite progress to address issues of deprivation, in September 2015 Hastings was the 20th most deprived local authority in the country (from a total of 326) with 11,281 households (28%) living in poverty. Central St Leonards, Hollington and the Ore valley have significant levels of deprivation. The worst housing conditions and some of the highest levels of deprivation are concentrated within private sector housing in the town centres of Hastings and St Leonards.

Key deprivation information for Hastings:

- Hastings is the 20th most deprived Local Authority in the Country
- There are very high levels of economic inactivity
- Life expectancy is below the regional and national average
- Benefit dependency levels remain high and wage levels are lower than the regional average
- There are a high proportion of adults on working age benefits
- There are higher than average numbers in receipt of incapacity benefit
- A third of all households in Hastings claim housing or council tax benefits
- Educational attainment is persistently low
- Hastings is one of only three areas in the south east designated as a dispersal area for asylum seekers
- Hastings was the 11th most affected area in the Country by welfare reforms
- There are very high levels of deprivation and benefit dependency which are linked to patterns of inward migration of poorer households

The Council and partners will continue to concentrate on addressing the causes of deprivation which result in low skills, poor educational attainment, ill health, poverty, lack of job opportunities, poor quality housing and high crime rates, and will continue to ensure Hastings is an attractive place for future investment and for skilled workers to live and work.

The Policy Framework

The national housing policy agenda

The housing policy direction of the incumbent administration has extended and built upon the strategy direction outlined in the last Parliament. The publication of “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England” in November 2011 summarised a number of housing policies being implemented at that time and added new proposals aimed at unlocking the housing market and getting the building industry moving again. A number of these have been included in subsequent legislation and guidance.

The key aims of government housing policy include:

- Improving the number of available homes
- Improving the rented sector
- Providing housing support for older and vulnerable people
- Helping people to buy a home

Recent housing, planning and welfare legislation is consistent with a view that households should be encouraged to reduce their reliance on welfare and be supported to achieve a greater level of employment and economic independence.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 will have a significant impact on the nature of future development in the UK. The Act has a key objective of increasing home ownership, and consequently is likely to result in a shift away from traditional forms of affordable housing for rent. Key measures being introduced through the Act include:

- The Right to Buy (RTB) will be extended to housing association tenants on a voluntary (non-statutory) basis
- Higher value local authority properties will be sold to fund the extension of RTB
- Planning authorities will be expected to promote and increase the supply of Starter Homes
- The introduction of a ‘Pay to Stay’ scheme where tenants with incomes of £31,000 and over are charged market rent (discretionary for housing associations)
- The phasing out of lifetime tenancies for local authority tenants
- A commitment to tackling ‘rogue’ landlords
- A number of planning reforms aimed at increasing the supply and delivery of additional new housing

Under the Act, Planning authorities are required to promote and increase the supply of Starter Homes, which will be available for first-time buyers under the age of 40 and discounted by 20% of the market value. For the first time Starter Homes are included within a wider government definition of affordable housing. The government’s policy of prioritising access to home ownership will mean that it is likely that far fewer affordable rented homes will be built by Registered Providers. Development funding from the Homes and Communities Agency for the provision of general needs rented housing is also unlikely to be available during the current parliament.

In addition to the Act, recent changes have been introduced by central government to reduce social housing rents by 1% compared to the preceding year, every year, for the next four years. This reduction in Housing Association rents is likely to require them to convert a

substantial element of their vacant stock to higher affordable rents in order to balance their business plans and continue to develop new homes.

The extension of the RTB to Housing Association properties will also support the aspirations of those households who wish to own their own home. While this strategy and the other policies outlined in the Act will doubtless help to meet the housing aspirations of some sections of the community, it is likely that the longer-term provision of social housing for rent in Hastings will be reduced.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 has seen the introduction of a range of new reforms designed to encourage households into employment through a number of restrictions on the incomes of benefit dependent households. While the elderly and disabled have been largely protected from these restrictions, the incomes of working age benefit dependent and low income households are likely to be impacted significantly. The changes outlined are wide-ranging and detailed; however, it is clear that there will be a reduction in household incomes as a result of the reduction of the benefit cap to £20,000 a year from £26,000 (outside London) and a freeze on all benefits and the LHA rates until 2020. In addition these changes may result in an increase in the inward migration of benefit dependent households from more expensive areas of the South East.

Regional and Sub-Regional Policy

The government has introduced Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

Hastings forms part of the South East LEP which includes businesses, local authorities, Universities and other industry players across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. The federated South East LEP agrees priorities for investment in roads, buildings and facilities in the area as part of an integrated approach to growth and infrastructure delivery. This includes the delivery of new and improved homes, particularly in coastal areas with dysfunctional housing markets as outlined in the South East Local Enterprise Plan.

Priority 1 - Meeting Housing Needs and Aspirations

Meeting the housing needs and aspirations of local people is a key strategic priority for the Council and partners. This will be achieved through:

- The delivery of affordable and market homes
- Preventing homelessness

Housing Supply and Demand

Ensuring residents have access to a decent home and a suitable living environment is fundamental to people's wellbeing and is a key priority for the Council and its partners. It is crucial to increase the availability, affordability and quality of housing for all sections of the community to meet housing needs.

A Housing Needs Assessment carried out in 2013 confirmed that there is an insufficient housing supply to meet demand. Taking into account future population growth as well as likely fluctuations in the economy and changes to the housing market, the assessment concludes that over 400 new dwellings across all tenures should be provided annually to meet demands and aspirations.

The supply of new housing delivered also has an important role in the Borough's continued regeneration. The key features of the Hastings housing market which distinguishes it from other parts of the South East include:

- Comparatively low house prices; but declining affordability for local people
- Natural population growth with additional migration from households choosing to move to Hastings from other areas
- A comparatively large private rented sector and high levels of deprivation.

It is essential these issues are monitored and addressed as part of the ongoing economic development and regeneration taking place locally. Building new homes and having a variety of type and mix of housing to meet a range of households' needs is key to continued economic, social and physical regeneration in the Borough.

Through the Local Plan 2014 the Council has committed to:

- Delivering 3,400 net new dwellings between 2011 – 2028
- Prioritising new housing on previously developed land to assist regeneration where possible
- Ensuring an appropriate mix of housing is provided in terms of tenure, price, type, size and location, having regard to the accommodation needs of the town
- Making decent housing accessible to more people by increasing the provision of affordable housing, having regard to issues such as fuel poverty, improving/regulating the quality of existing accommodation in the town and bringing vacant dwellings back into use
- Providing more opportunities for people to live in Hastings town centre through identifying opportunities for mixed use schemes and making best use of space above

shops, and widening the range of housing available in Central St Leonards, particularly through the provision of good quality affordable housing.

Development of new housing

As well as identifying key overarching objectives for the sustainable growth of Hastings, the Council's Local Plan evidences a requirement for at least 3,400 net new homes over the period 2011 to 2028 to meet the needs and aspirations of a changing population. The Plan identifies a broad range of sites for housing which will assist in delivering a range of housing types, and contains specific planning policies which set out the Council's requirements in terms of quality, design and tenure of housing. In addition, it highlights the requirement to meet the needs of specific groups such as older people, those with mobility issues and specialist needs such as those presented by the Gypsy and Traveller community.

However, there are many constraints to development in the Borough, and these are acknowledged in the Plan. They include topography, the effect on the natural and historic environment, contamination, land instability and the present insufficiency of infrastructure. The housing site allocations take account of these constraints, any assets that could or should be retained and other potential land uses. It will be important to continue to work with the neighbouring local authority of Rother to consider shared ideas for meeting housing need.

The Council is keen to work with Registered Providers and private developers to deliver new affordable housing for rent and shared ownership either as part of open market housing schemes, or developing whole sites as affordable housing. In addition, the Council is committed to bringing forward stalled sites using any funding available and making best use of local authority owned land that could be brought forward for additional housing.

The Council will also be considering whether it should establish a Local Housing Company with the intention of directly intervening in the local market to increase the supply of new and refurbished homes for rent or sale.

Delivering affordable housing

Although house prices in Hastings are below the average for the South East, low wages and benefit dependency make accessing suitable, affordable accommodation a challenge for many residents.

Many households in Hastings lack sufficient finances to buy or rent accommodation suitable for their household needs. Housing available to buy on the open market in the lowest quartile (cheapest 25%) is priced at 6-7 times that of the lowest 25% average income. However, many of the new proposals within the Housing and Planning Act offer a range of additional measures, including financial incentives, aimed at improving access to home ownership for first time buyers.

Those households not able to purchase their own home rely on renting from the private rented sector or Registered Providers. There is insufficient social housing to meet demand and data on housing benefit recipients indicates the private rented sector is playing a significant role in meeting these housing needs. However, accommodation available in the private rented sector is, increasingly, far exceeding Local Housing Allowance rates for Hastings which, in turn, is making it harder for people on lower incomes to access or sustain

housing. It is therefore crucial that the Council and partners continue to work jointly to deliver new affordable housing to rent and buy. This will include:

- Identifying suitable development partners in the social sector
- Considering the potential for the council to invest directly in new affordable housing
- Ensuring the delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations is maximised
- Identifying suitable sites (both local authority owned and in the private sector) for development
- Maximising opportunities for securing capital investment to deliver new affordable homes
- Creating an online self-build register to ensure future planning policy can meet the demand for this type of development

The impact of the proposals outlined in the Housing and Planning Act look likely to impact on the future development of affordable housing for rent further. The Act includes a number of measures designed to stimulate an increase in the development of affordable housing for sale rather than rent. The government's commitment to delivering 200,000 'starter homes' by 2020, encouraging increased levels of self-build development and the extension of the Right to Buy Scheme is welcomed but will not meet the housing needs of lower income households. The impact of this policy could be a further decline in the availability of affordable accommodation for rent and an increase in housing insecurity for some.

Social Housing Stock

There are approximately 5,250 units of social housing stock in Hastings which are all owned and managed by Registered Providers following the transfer of ownership of 'Council Houses' in 1996. The social housing stock accounts for 15% of all the housing in the Borough which is slightly under the national average of 17%. However demand for social housing far outweighs the supply and the average 450 new vacancies per year does not meet the housing needs of all residents in the Borough.

To ensure the scarce supply of social housing is allocated to local people in most need, the Council's Allocations Scheme (which sets out who can apply for social housing) was amended in 2012. The amendments clarified that eligible applicants must have a housing need and a local connection to Hastings (with a few exceptions). The Scheme will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose for the Council and Registered Providers.

The 1% annual reduction in the rent levels Registered Providers are able to charge their tenants will reduce the ability of some Registered Providers to invest in the development of affordable housing in future. In addition, the ability to develop general needs social housing for rent is likely to be reduced further by the removal of all grant funding to develop social housing for rent between 2016 and 2018 from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Within the voluntary Right to Buy Scheme Registered Providers will be required to sell existing housing stock to eligible tenants at a reduced rate. It is proposed that all property sold will need to be replaced by new development. It is the government's intention to publish at a later date details of the type of accommodation they want to replace accommodation sold under the Right to Buy Scheme.

Ensuring homes are suitable

The Council has adopted planning policies to ensure new housing is developed to a high design standard. Lifetime Home standards are encouraged on all new developments and minimum space standards are required at a local and national level. On sites of over 50 new dwellings, 2% of the units must be wheelchair accessible accommodation.

The Council provides Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to help households meet some or all the cost of aids and adaptations to make a home a less disabling environment for a disabled person. The grant is available to low income families across all tenures.

Alongside DFGs, the Council manages a shared Housing Solutions Service, jointly funded by Hastings Borough Council, Wealden District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and East Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care Service. The objective of the Housing Solution Service is to assist disabled people to make informed choices about their housing needs when adapting their existing home via a DFG may not be the best solution.

Preventing Homelessness

Homelessness not only affects individual households, but also impacts upon the wider community. Homelessness is commonly linked to crime and fear of crime, health and developmental problems, substance misuse issues, poor educational attainment and unemployment. Homelessness is also intrinsically linked to poverty.

It is therefore not a surprise that Hastings, with significant levels of deprivation, has the highest rate of homelessness in East Sussex. Reasons for homelessness remain consistent year on year and are mainly due to relationship breakdowns with friends or family (including domestic violence). Given the high levels of private rented accommodation in Hastings it is also unsurprising that the other main reason for homelessness is a result of an assured shorthold tenancy being terminated.

The approach to tackling homelessness is not just about providing housing solutions. The Council and partners are committed to trying to prevent homelessness before a crisis, to prevent a household losing their home or stop them being placed into emergency accommodation.

Homelessness applications (and acceptances) have increased year on year since 2012: the increasing pressures on the local housing market, alongside the reform of the welfare system and changes to housing policy and legislation as a result of the Localism Act are making it harder to achieve successful homeless prevention outcomes and avoid a crisis. Rough sleeping has reached the highest level since recording started in 2002 when only 1 or 2 people were known to be rough sleeping. In 2015 outreach services verified up to 16 people as rough sleeping on a given night. Over 35 people are confirmed to be rough sleeping intermittently and the Council and partners are working jointly to develop new ways of working to tackle the escalating problem.

To date, the private rented sector has been an excellent housing solution for preventing homelessness and the Council has been fortunate to have access to funding from central government and from East Sussex County Council to assist with financial obstacles when accessing private accommodation. However, the housing market is changing as more and more households migrate to the area to take up affordable housing options and there is

uncertainty about the future of financial assistance to enable people to access private accommodation.

Social Lettings Agency

The Council established a Social Lettings Agency pilot in 2015/16, which has been extended in 2016/17. The service model involves working with local landlords to lease their accommodation and assist with housing management. This will ensure a supply of good quality housing and a high standard of housing management for local people at risk of homelessness. It will also assist local people to overcome the barriers (including financial barriers) that prevent them accessing accommodation locally.

If successful the Council will consider extending the scheme to offer a management only service to those owners who do not wish to lease property directly to the Council.

The Hastings and St Leonards Homelessness Strategy 2016-18 sets out further detail on how the Council and partners will tackle homelessness in Hastings.

Actions

- Regularly review and assess the housing needs of the residents in the Borough
- Work with East Sussex County Council to ensure housing related support is available for vulnerable people
- Continue to work with Brighton Housing Trust to deliver the Big Lottery funded Fulfilling Lives programme
- Continue to minimise and tackle rough sleeping in the Borough
- Regularly review the Social Lettings Agency
- Increase the supply of new housing in the Borough with a minimum of 200 new homes delivered annually
- Consider the disposal of council owned land and property for new housing development

Priority 2 - Improving Access and Opportunities

A key strategic priority is to ensure local people can access suitable accommodation that is appropriate for their needs. It is important to recognise that housing needs are often coupled with other support needs such as health problems. This priority will be achieved through:

- Delivering targeted interventions to improve health outcomes
- Addressing the housing and support needs of vulnerable people

Health and housing

It is nationally recognised that suitable housing is critical to maintaining health and wellbeing. Good housing helps people stay healthy and achieve a decent quality of life. Stable housing will aid people to recover from periods of ill health and can also enable them to effectively address their health and social care needs. Safe housing will help prevent trips, falls and injuries that can result in hospital admissions and lead to longer term health problems.

Health Inequalities in Hastings

Hastings has significantly worse health outcomes for residents when compared to the rest of England. There are a range of underlying reasons for poor health in Hastings, including the high level of deprivation, the percentage of children living in poverty, the high number of overcrowded households, households without central heating, poor housing conditions and the rate of long term unemployment.

Men in the most deprived areas of Hastings are expected to live 11.1 years less than those in the least deprived parts of the town which is the biggest gap in the South East. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Lifestyle factors also contribute to residents' poor health including high smoking rates, high levels of alcohol and substance misuse, risk of obesity related illnesses and poor sexual health.

Incidences of poor mental health are high in Hastings. For example, the prevalence of depression, psychoses and dementia are significantly higher than elsewhere in England. Hastings also has a significantly high rate of hospital admission for self-harm and for trips and falls that can be directly attributed to poor housing conditions.

East Sussex County Council and the NHS are working jointly with partners and the community to transform current ways of working and deliver integrated social care and health services. The programme of change is known locally as 'East Sussex Better Together'. The housing solutions for vulnerable people will be integral to this work and partners will continue to work jointly to identify current and emerging needs and to deliver new specialist housing with care and support where appropriate.

Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) launched a £5m annual investment plan to tackle health inequalities between 2014 and 2019. The Council has been commissioned to deliver a number of projects, including a group of services designed to

address health inequalities among the rough sleeper and street community to improve the health outcomes for this vulnerable group.

Vulnerable households

'Supporting People' is a government programme which provides vulnerable adults with housing related support to help them find, or stay in their own home. The support is aimed at helping people to achieve independence within their community.

The funding is administered by East Sussex County Council and provides accommodation based support services and floating support services that reach people where they are currently living as well as providing accommodation based services with support. The proposed level of budget reductions which the County Council are tasked with achieving in future years make it increasingly important that the Council and partners work jointly with the County Council to highlight the benefits of these services in meeting local housing need and ensure they are retained.

Care and support in supported living developments

The County Council will work with the Council and partners to plan for and develop a wider range of accommodation based services for people with a disability. Developers are not obliged to inform planning authorities as to whether they intend to develop accommodation services for people who have care and support needs; however a partnership approach to ensure a strategic and managed approach to developing the market is strongly encouraged.

Meeting the needs of older people

It is known that people are now living longer, partly as a result of changes in lifestyle and lifestyle choices as well as improved health care interventions. It is anticipated that there will be a greater proportion of older people in the Borough by 2028, with particular growth in the post retirement age group of over 60s (30% in 2028, compared to 24% in 2011).

East Sussex County Council and partners have identified a need to develop further social care and housing options for older people. Marlborough House is the only Extra Care housing scheme in Hastings for older people with a housing, care and support need which does not meet demand for this type of housing locally.

Due to an accidental fire in July 2013, Marlborough House is currently not in operation. Partners are working jointly to bring this accommodation back into use by 2017.

With the removal of Supporting People funding to provide an element of support for residents of sheltered housing, the Council will continue to work with Registered Provider partners to bridge this funding gap.

Ethnic minority groups

The Council will seek to ensure that the housing needs of ethnic groups are met; including providing for the housing needs of Gypsy and Travellers should they emerge in the longer term.

The Council will work with partners in health, social care, education and housing, alongside community-based and other organisations, to deliver on its commitment to resettle up to 100 individual vulnerable Syrians by 2020 under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS).

Hastings Borough Council also recognises its responsibility as an asylum dispersal area to those granted asylum to remain in the UK. The Council will continue to work proactively with the Home Office to ensure that a comprehensive package of support, advice and assistance is available to enable those granted asylum to successfully integrate into the wider community.

Young People

The recent changes to Housing Benefit and welfare entitlement as a consequence of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, alongside the Housing and Planning Act 2016, have further restricted the ability of vulnerable people under 35 to access affordable accommodation.

It remains a priority of this strategy to develop new approaches to increasing the supply of accommodation based support services for vulnerable people in this group to prevent homelessness. Levels of accommodation based support provision in Hastings are significantly below what is available to young people in other areas of East Sussex and the Council will continue to work with partners to develop innovative ways of increasing the supply of this type of accommodation.

Financial inclusion

The Council, East Sussex County Council, the Department of Work and Pensions, the Clinical Commissioning Group and housing associations have invested significant amounts of funding to encourage financial inclusion, which will help to prevent homelessness and improve well-being. As public finances reduce going forward, all partners must work jointly to ensure efforts to address financial inclusion can continue, particularly with the roll out of Universal Credit and the £20,000 benefit cap.

Actions

- Ensure that there is adequate supply of accommodation to meet the needs of those with a disability and older people
- Work with the Hastings and Rother CCG to ensure that housing and health needs are considered and addressed
- Work with ESBT partners to improve the links between Health and Housing services in the planning of future services
- Maintain Support for vulnerable people through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), loans and housing solutions to ensure homes are adapted and improved.
- Resettle up to 100 individual vulnerable Syrians by 2020 under the government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS)
- Support measures that will help households manage the impact of welfare benefit reforms
- Continue to work with partners to develop innovative ways of improving access to accommodation for young people

- Mitigate the impact of rogue landlord behaviour
- Continue to work with our partners to encourage social housing tenants to play an active role in governance structures, neighbourhood management and decision making

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Priority 3 - Supporting Economic Regeneration

Addressing the housing needs of local residents is not simply about building new housing. The existing housing stock is a valuable asset for accommodating residents although the quality of housing has a direct impact on health and wellbeing. The Council and partners are committed to:

- Improving the quality of existing housing stock
- Planning for future housing needs

The private rented sector

The supply of social housing is not sufficient to meet housing demand locally. There is therefore a reliance on the private rented sector which makes up 30% of all the housing stock in the Borough; this is twice the national average.

However, a higher than average proportion of this privately rented accommodation, often in multiple occupation, is below minimum acceptable standards. Approximately 2,800 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are distributed throughout the town. Evidence shows that 64% of all HMOs fail to meet the government's Decent Homes Standard. Many suffer from low standards of fire safety, management and maintenance, and in some cases, tenants are treated very poorly and the buildings are a focus for crime and anti-social behaviour.

There is, therefore, a pressing need to add to existing housing led initiatives to help support the regeneration agenda in Hastings. There is a need to rebalance local housing markets dominated by rented accommodation concentrated in the areas most deprived areas with the poorest quality housing stock. Strategic initiatives that combine licensing, enforcement and acquisition will be important in the Council's aims of driving up housing standards and in turn improving the health and wellbeing of residents and neighbourhoods.

Social Housing Stock

It is important to ensure current social housing stock is safe and of a good standard. Not only does this improve a tenant's quality of life but also helps maintain a stable community where people are proud to live and settle.

Registered Providers in Hastings are committed to improving current housing stock by renewing doors, windows, kitchens, boilers, bathrooms and making external improvements to homes to improve the look of the area

Area Based Development and Regeneration

Area based regeneration seeks to tackle all aspects of regeneration (including housing) as part of wider strategic plans. A number of areas of land and different locations throughout the town have been identified as suitable for area based regeneration.

Some areas of the town have larger concentrations of one tenure. Central St Leonards for example has a higher concentration of poorer quality private rented sector accommodation which tends to encourage a higher turnover of tenancies and lead to a more transient

population in the area. Similarly, the Ore Valley has high concentrations of social rented housing which has contributed to similar issues associated with deprivation.

Addressing the imbalance in the housing stock in these areas will provide a mix of housing to improve housing choice and help to deliver long-term policy objectives relating to economic regeneration. The Council's aspirations are still to regenerate the former power station site, working with the local community and existing developers to explore viable options for future development.

The Housing Renewal Area

Central St Leonards is the most deprived area in the Borough and was designated as a Renewal Area in 2003. The aim was to improve unsatisfactory housing conditions, employment prospects, social facilities and health to make Central St Leonards an area where people want to live, work and visit. The Renewal Area covers the whole of Central St Leonards ward and also some parts of Gensing ward to the North East and North West of Warrior Square station which have a high concentration of poor quality private rented housing.

A report on the work carried out in the Renewal Area in 2013 concluded that even though nearly 1,000 homes had been improved through enforcement, there were still an estimated 800 that failed basic housing standards and the area still has the highest number of empty homes in the town. As a result, the Renewal Area status has been extended until 2018.

Although much has been achieved since 2003 there is still more to do. Overall, Central St Leonards still compares poorly with other parts of the borough and the rest of the South East in respect of key indicators of deprivation; partners remain committed to continuing the social, economic and physical regeneration of the area.

The Coastal Space Project

The level of capital funding now available for regeneration and renewal projects is much reduced as a result of the government's deficit reduction plans. However, the Council and [AmicusHorizon](#) have pursued an innovative approach to combining the purchase and improvement of empty and privately owned property for rent with social and economic regeneration. The initiative was launched in 2013 and is known as the Coastal Space Project.

The project is currently in its second phase, which runs from 2016-18. The previous phase attracted support from the Homes and Communities Agency and there is an expectation that phase three will be supported financially by the Council and the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP) as well as AmicusHorizon.

Licensing Schemes

The Council introduced a Selective Licensing Scheme in October 2015. The scheme covers seven wards in Hastings where there are above average levels of private renting and evidence of significant and persistent anti-social behaviour linked to privately rented homes. The aim of the scheme is to improve conditions, management standards and tenancy practices in the private rented sector to ensure that properties have a positive impact on the area.

The Council has also been operating an Additional HMO Licensing Scheme in 4 wards with the highest concentration of HMOs in the Borough. Since the scheme was introduced in 2011 nearly 800 HMOs have been licensed leading to improvements in housing conditions and management standards in HMOs. The existing scheme is due to end in September 2016 and the Council is proposing to consult on the extension of the scheme for a further period to ensure the protection it affords to HMO tenants is continued.

Inward Migration

The relatively affordable accommodation across all tenures in Hastings (compared to other areas in the South East) makes it an attractive option for households outside the area to relocate to find more affordable housing solutions.

Households are actively choosing to relocate to Hastings: successful efforts to regenerate Central St Leonards have encouraged a range of households to relocate to this up and coming area. This has made the housing market increasingly competitive.

However, other Authorities also continue to use private sector units in Hastings to meet their statutory housing duties. Between July 2013 and October 2015 the council were informed of 46 placements. Although this is relatively modest, anecdotal evidence suggests other households may also be actively encouraged to move to areas like Hastings in order to find affordable housing.

In the past Hastings has found it difficult to attract higher skilled workers to live, generate and take up employment in the area. Ensuring that there is a balanced mix and tenure of accommodation would help to address this issue. This might include working with key public sector employers such as the schools, universities and health sectors as well as private employers to ensure that there is access to suitable and desirable accommodation for keyworkers.

The Council recognises the need to ensure that key service providers are able to attract the right staff to the town in order to assist and sustain regeneration. The Council will work with public service providers to assess demand and find ways in which key staff can access appropriate housing

The future of further education in Hastings is currently under debate, and at this point it remains unclear what the aspirations are for the University of Brighton as they relate to Hastings. The Council is committed to working with education providers to ensure that the housing needs of any future student population are assessed and catered for locally.

Whilst the natural migration of households to Hastings can be positive for the economy and aid regeneration, there is a risk that gentrification could further increase demand for what is, in terms of the South East, very affordable, family-sized accommodation. This sustained level of demand is likely to continue to drive-up market prices meaning local people are less able to access affordable, good quality housing in the private sector. In addition, the migration of economically inactive homeless households from more affluent surrounding areas to Hastings could work against the wider strategic regeneration plans and put further pressure on local services.

Community Led Regeneration

One of the government's key priorities is to reduce public spending and promote economic growth to tackle unemployment, poverty and poor health. A favoured approach is to support 'localism' and community led regeneration driven by the principle that local businesses, the community and civic society organisations should be at the forefront of regenerating local areas.

The Council and partners are working jointly to secure Community Led Local Development funding which offers a significant opportunity to enable wider inclusion in the economy and society through active partnership between local people and the organisations that serve them.

There are a number of significant opportunities in Hastings to:

- Ensure residents and business access new opportunities and take effective leadership in changing and sustaining their communities
- Support economically inactive over 55s back into economic activity
- Support the integration and success of those migrating into Hastings and particularly to support the development of black and minority ethnic (BME) businesses
- Use culture and creativity as a tool for economic growth, particularly encouraging the use of digital technology for entrepreneurial activity
- Build on the existing genuine 'bottom up' governance structures e.g. the successful Fisheries Local Action Group [FLAG] model which already has a functioning Local Action Group

The South East LEP

As part of the South East LEP's Growth Deal with the government, the Council has successfully secured £500,000 funding to support the Coastal Communities project which complements the work of the Coastal Space project. The funding will support efforts to make the best use of housing in the coastal areas and realise the economic growth potential of these communities. This housing led regeneration will act as a catalyst to attract private sector investment for the improvement of whole streets and neighbourhoods.

Reducing Fuel Poverty

The number of households in fuel poverty in Hastings is amongst the highest in the south east. This is mainly due to the nature of the housing stock but also as a result of poor housing management in some areas and many households being on low incomes. The council is committed to reducing fuel poverty and is working with partners to introduce a range of measures that will improve housing standards through enforcement, practical improvements to homes, promoting awareness of how to reduce fuel costs and continued applications for external funding for new initiatives to tackle fuel poverty.

'Eco friendly' housing

New build housing generally has much higher build standards to address the issues of climate change and reduce carbon emissions. However, Hastings has a large stock of

accommodation built prior to 1919 where issues relating to fuel poverty and high levels of carbon emissions are significant.

Sustainable Houses in an Inclusive Neighbourhood (SHINE)

The council and European partners are working jointly to secure European Regional Development funding to address fuel poverty and to lower carbon emissions. The Sustainable Houses in an Inclusive Neighbourhood (SHINE) project will complement the work of Coastal Space and put an 'eco uplift' on properties refurbished in the Renewal Area. This will ensure the eco measures included as part of the refurbishment are a much higher standard overall.

Climate Active Neighbourhoods (CAN)

The Council and AmicusHorizon will work jointly to eco-renovate social rented housing that is in poor condition in deprived neighbourhoods. It will address the joint aims of reducing carbon emissions and alleviating fuel poverty in these residential homes. The activity will be supported by wider regeneration activity in the neighbourhood. With European funding, a programme of social investment is planned, which is likely to have long-term beneficial impacts on the sustainability of the neighbourhood.

Empty Homes

The Council is committed to bringing empty homes back into use to make best use of housing stock and help meet housing need. In 2016 there were known to be nearly 900 empty homes in Hastings, of which around 250 have been empty for more than 2 years. This accounts for nearly 2% of all private housing stock which is considerably more than the rest of Sussex where the average is 0.7%. The Council works hard to tackle empty homes and 785 were brought back into use between April 2010 and March 2016. The units empty for 2 years or more are often more challenging to bring back and the proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) since 2010 has resulted in 55 units being brought back into use. The Council took possession of 5 units during 2013-2016 through CPO action. The Council is committed to securing a further 20 CPOs during the period 2016-18 in order to ensure that the availability of private sector housing stock is maximised.

Local Housing Company

In order to increase the supply of housing, including affordable housing, the Council is interested in exploring how it might intervene directly in bringing forward sites for early development, particularly where housing might provide the key to wider regeneration ambitions. The Council would seek to do this on a commercial basis with any return being reinvested in further provision or existing services.

The Council will be undertaking initial viability and options assessment for the establishment of a Local Housing Company (LHC) in 2016 with a view to investing directly in the provision of new or refurbished housing should this prove viable. The aim would be to establish a LHC that could cater for a range of income levels and housing needs.

Evidence shows that Hastings has a significantly higher proportion of smaller dwellings including flats/maisonettes when compared to the profile of the stock across the South East as a whole. Addressing imbalances in the housing stock is important both in terms of

improving housing choice and in terms of the contribution it can make to assist economic regeneration. New housing can help change the image of an area and the perceived quality of life to help foster in-migration of skilled and key workers. Local Plan policy seeks to secure a balanced mix of good quality housing both within sites and across the Borough. New housing, and in particular larger homes, can help attract skilled and keyworkers by providing a choice of homes attractive to economically active households. The Council will work with employers and housing developers to ensure the offer of housing is attractive to skilled and keyworkers and does not act as a barrier to them taking up residence and employment in Hastings.

Actions

- Maintain focus on the regeneration of St Leonards Housing Renewal Area
- Seek improvements in private rented housing through a mixture of licencing and enforcement where necessary
- Encourage and support responsible landlords
- Monitor the condition of the private housing stock
- Work with partners to secure funding for targeted housing interventions within the Borough
- Continue to bring empty homes and derelict land back into use, through CPOs where necessary
- Work with education providers to ensure the housing needs of any future population are assessed and catered for
- Ensure appropriate housing solutions are available for keyworkers where identified
- Consider the establishment of a Local Housing Company
- Reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency for local residents

Hastings & St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016-2019 Action Plan

Priority 1 – Meeting Housing Needs and Aspirations

OBJECTIVES
1.1 Preventing Homelessness
1.2 Delivery of Affordable and Market Homes

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
Maintain a good understanding of the changing demographics, housing needs and aspirations of existing and new households	Regularly review and assess the housing needs of residents in the Borough	Carry out an annual review of shared ownership demand with the Homebuy agent	Undertake a new Housing Market assessment by 2018	Well informed, planned housing delivery is sufficient and suitable to meet changing demographic trends.		HBC
		Share quarterly statistics on the movement of the local housing market with partners	Complete Stock Condition Survey – Autumn 2016			
Meet the housing related support needs of vulnerable groups	Work with ESCC Supporting People Team to ensure housing related support is available	Work with Supporting People to review the joint working protocol between floating support and	Commission generic short term and long term floating housing support	Good quality housing related support is available for all clients groups	At least 1,000 vulnerable people assisted with housing related support annually	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
	for vulnerable people	accommodation-based services to ensure effective move	services until 2018 through the Supporting People & SHORE Partnerships			
Meet the housing needs of vulnerable households in the Borough	Through the Supporting People Partnership continue to fund supported housing schemes for single homeless people and families with support needs	Work with ESCC to manage the impact of implementing Supporting People budget reductions	To provide accommodation for households that are homeless, victims of DV, those with a mental health disability, young people at risk and young mothers are sustained until April 2018	Providers meet targets set in the service specification and deliver outcomes required Saving can be achieved & impact identified & managed effectively	Maintain the current level of 80 units of supported accommodation funded to 2018	HBC
Meet the housing and support needs of those with the most complex needs	Work with Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) and partners to ensure Big Lottery funded Fulfilling Lives programme is delivered	Assist partners to review data sharing practices between services – March 2017	Complex homeless cases are assisted over 2 years between April 2016-18	Improved systems for partnership working Meet needs around housing, mental health, substance misuse and offending behaviour	30 households assisted to 2018	HBC
Improve approaches to homelessness prevention to take account of	Monitor service demand and identify opportunities for improved	Monitor the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan through Quarterly reports to the	Minimise homelessness presentations	Successfully maintain improvements in homelessness prevention achieved over last plan period		HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
the emerging economic environment, welfare reforms, changes to legislation and housing related government policy changes	processes and procedures to raise service standards	Housing and Support Services (HASS) group Review Homelessness Strategy – March 2018		Sustain high level of preventions through 2016-2019 Quality housing advice and support services delivered Effective joint working with partners		
Improve access to accommodation for young people	Work with the YMCA to identify suitable units of accommodation for development in line with the Empty Homes Scheme Work with partners to identify the potential for increased provision of accommodation based support units	Quarterly meetings with YMCA and partners Inform future funding decisions regarding the value of supported accommodation for young people to ESCC – March 2017	40 units leased between April 2015 and March 2018 Sustain current levels of accommodation based support for young people	Increased number of housing solutions for young people Opportunities for increasing the provision of supported accommodation for young people are maximised	40 units leased between April 2015 and March 2018	HBC
Reduce incidences of rough sleeping in the Borough	Consider how the short and longer term housing and support needs of rough sleepers can	Undertake an annual rough sleepers count/estimate with partners	Maintain year on year reduction in rough sleeping over the period 2016-19	Rough sleeping is minimised Appropriate support is available from partners		HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
	be addressed	Review outcomes of Health and Wellbeing Hub – April 2017		to successfully resettle those with complex needs that end up on the streets		
Prevent winter deaths of rough sleepers in adverse weather conditions	Ensure that emergency accommodation arrangements are in place during periods of extreme weather	<p>Annually liaise with the voluntary sector (including the faith groups, the Seaview Project and St Mungos Broadway) in support of their annual winter period service provision</p> <p>Carry out an annual review of the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to ensure it is consistent and fit for purpose</p>	<p>Deliver the Council's winter period policy of temporarily accommodating rough sleepers in periods of continuing extreme weather</p> <p>Snowflake night shelter facility operational</p>	No person is forced to sleep rough during periods of extreme weather	Zero rough sleepers forced to rough sleep when the temperature/feels like temperature is forecast to be 0 degrees or below for 3 consecutive nights or when the weather conditions could pose a serious risk to life	HBC
Maximise access to social housing through the Council's Allocation Scheme	Regularly review the Council's Allocation Scheme, transfers policies, and local lettings plans	<p>Quarterly strategic liaison meetings with main Registered Providers</p> <p>Review the Allocations Scheme with RP partners by March 2017</p>	Monitor allocations through the Homemove scheme to ensure transparency and fairness	A balance is maintained in terms of access to social housing for Homeseekers and Transfer cases.	<p>75 % allocation to Homeseekers</p> <p>25% allocations to Transfer cases</p>	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
	<p>Continue to monitor and review rent policies, tenancy policies and asset management strategies with Registered Providers</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Work with development partners to ensure that the impact of changes to affordable housing provision resulting from the Housing and Planning Act are effectively managed</p>	<p>Carry out an annual assessment of social housing stock numbers (including new builds and disposals), affordable rent and social rent levels and conversion from social rent to affordable rent</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Produce an interim report on the impact of the Housing and Planning Act – April 2017</p>	<p>No affordable rent to exceed Local Housing Allowance level for the area</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Ensure all opportunities for affordable housing development are explored with partners</p>	<p>Rents are kept at an affordable level</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Access to affordable housing is maximised</p>		
Assist social housing tenants to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness	HBC and Registered Providers continue to jointly visit and support tenants at risk of homelessness	Undertake an annual review of joint working protocols with Amicus Horizon and Orbit South to ensure they are fit for purpose	Jointly address the housing and support needs of current social housing tenants at risk of homelessness due to arrears or	<p>Reduced numbers of evictions</p> <p>Fewer possession proceedings</p>	Homelessness prevented for 10 households who were visited annually	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
			anti-social behaviour			
Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation for local people in housing need	Continue to expand the stock of accommodation in the Council's Social Lettings Agency (SLA) Deliver rent in advance and deposit loans to homeless households	Review the project outcomes of the SLA – April 2017 Consider the extension of a management only service for landlords who do not wish to lease – April 2017 Quarterly review loan repayments with the Hastings and Rother Credit Union	Assist people in housing need to access good quality and well managed accommodation Maximise access to affordable housing solutions	Reduced dependency on rent deposit schemes locally Improved management standards in the private rented sector Prevention of homelessness	Provide a minimum of 100 homes through the SLA by 2018	HBC
Improve the quality of privately managed accommodation in Hastings	Monitor and support Letting and Managing Agents to deliver quality services for those accessing accommodation in Hastings	Develop joint enforcement protocols with Trading Standards by August 2016	Enforce the Redress Scheme requirements Enforce the new provisions relating to the publication and display of fees and charges	Quality assured Letting and Managing agents All letting and managing agents are part of an approved redress scheme Better informed tenants of their rights and responsibilities		HBC
Increase the	Proactively support	Annually update a	Provide for the	Sufficient supply of	200 new units	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
supply of new housing in the Borough to meet local housing need	the delivery of new housing and Local Plan targets through a proactive approach to planning	supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing in accordance with the Hastings Local Plan Develop a Self-Build Register	development of at least 3,400 net new homes from 2011 to 2028 Undertake public planning forums on all major residential application sites for more than 30 homes	housing to meet existing and emerging housing demand	delivered annually	
Support the regeneration of the local economy	Support and facilitate the redevelopment of the remaining former millennium communities land at the Ore valley Bring forward public sector land (and land acquired through public investment) for new housing development	Preferred developers for Ore Valley sites identified by April 2017 Review any remaining land holdings of the council	Clear redevelopment proposals covering the Ore Valley sites in place by 2018 Deliver up to 16 homes through the land auction pilot by March 2018 Further development opportunities identified	Mixed use development Successful development of the Kings Road and Church Street sites Better use of Council owned assets A minimum of 30 units delivered 11 new homes delivered on the Kings Road site by 2018 5 units delivered on Church Street site by 2018	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
Increase the supply of new affordable housing in the Borough to meet the needs of local residents	<p>Support Registered Providers to find sites, secure planning permission and deliver homes</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Make best use of planning polices to ensure that all new developments make some provision for affordable housing</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Undertake an options and viability assessment into the establishment of a Local Housing Company (LHC) to help bring forward development on</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning guidance in place by December 2016</p> <p>Annual monitoring of the Planning Strategy Polices DS1 – New Housing Development & H3 – Provision of Affordable Housing</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Complete initial legal and financial appraisal of options by summer 2016</p>	<p>Enable AmicusHorizon and Orbit to successfully realise their 2015-18 NAHP programmes</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Optimise levels of affordable housing in accordance with planning policy</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Establish a Local Housing Company Dec 2016</p>	<p>Help maintain a supply of social rented, affordable and low cost home ownership homes for those unable to secure housing suitable for their needs at a price they can reasonably afford.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Improve overall housing delivery and meet identified housing needs</p>	150 units delivered by 2018	HBC

Policy Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Outcome	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
	suitable sites/properties					

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Priority 2 – Improving Access and Opportunities

OBJECTIVES
2.1 Addressing housing and support needs of vulnerable people
2.2 Delivering targeted interventions to improve health outcomes

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
Seek to ensure that there is adequate supply of accommodation to meet the needs of those with a physical disability	Implement Local Plan requirements for disabled & wheelchair provision, lifts etc.	Approval of Development Management Plan Policy DM3 and DM4 by September 2016	Development Management Plan adopted	The installation of a powered lift system to all floors, for any new building (except a single dwelling house) of three storeys or more.	Schemes for 50 dwellings or more should include at least 2% fully adapted dwellings for wheelchair users	HBC
	Establish an accessibility standard with Registered Providers for new build and refurbished social housing	Establish an accessibility standard by 2017	Adopt the agreed standard by 2018	Accessibility standard applied to all new adapted social housing	.	
	Maintain support for vulnerable people through DFGs, loans and housing solutions	Review level of DFG provision with partners Joint fund Housing Solutions Officers with ESCC to 2018	Identify and deliver commitment and spend against the DFG budget Registered	People with a physical disability are suitably housed		

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
			Providers to continue to provide financial support for adapting their own stock			
Seek to ensure that there is adequate supply of specialist accommodation to meet the needs of elderly households	Contribute and support the Adult Social Care commissioning plans through the East Sussex Better Together (ESBT) Housing sub-group Contribute to Registered Providers' Sheltered Housing reviews & Plans	Review of future specialist accommodation provision undertaken by ESBT Housing sub-group Participate in quarterly partnership meetings in order to reinstate extra care provision at Marlborough House	Improve joint approaches to specialist accommodation provision with Local Authority, Health and Social Care partners Bring 40 units at Marlborough House back into use by 2017	Extra care accommodation for older people made available in Hastings. Reduction in unnecessary admissions to residential care premises	40 extra care units delivered	ESCC
Improve the strategic links between Health and Housing	Explore strategic opportunities for shared initiatives with Health partners to improve outcomes for rough sleepers and reduce A&E presentations	Continue to support ESBT Housing sub-group and develop joint commissioning initiatives to inform the investment planning of the ESBT Integrated Strategic Partnership	Identify with Health and Social Care colleagues measures for longer term resettlement services and improved housing	Less reliance on acute health care services Well informed health professionals on housing and support options for homeless people presenting to their services		ESBT

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
			allocation processes for those with complex needs across Sussex			
Ensure that there is adequate supply of specialist accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable groups	Review and assess the current and emerging housing needs of vulnerable people in the Borough	Establish a forum with ESCC commissioners and Registered Providers by April 2017 to ensure emerging housing needs can be met	Commission further supported housing schemes depending on established need and opportunity	Positive joint working with ESCC commissioners and Registered Providers Suitable accommodation for those with a housing, care and support need		HBC
Support measures to address poverty for local residents	Contribute towards the delivery of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan	Revised HBC Anti-poverty strategy adopted December 16 Annual statement	Work with Partners to deliver a revised strategy and action plan to help address local needs	Better informed and enabled residents		HBC
Support vulnerable people to access advice and assistance to improve quality of life	Commission services to assist communities and local residents to access advice, employment and to maximise income	HBC Community Partnership Funding to commission services up to 2017	Deliver services to enable: Job creation Advice services Safer communities initiatives Active involvement of residents	Improved financial inclusion Independent advice available		HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
			Digital inclusion (e.g. to address issues of universal credit)			
Support measures that help households manage the impacts of welfare benefit reforms	<p>Review and Implement the Council's Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Support the delivery and promotion of the CCG funded Welfare Benefits Project</p>	<p>DHP review completed annually</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Quarterly Welfare Benefit Project core group meetings</p> <p>Quarterly multiagency Housing Benefit Reform meetings</p>	<p>Enable vulnerable households to secure suitable housing</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Maximise income for local residents</p>	<p>More effective targeting of DHP</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Poverty and its effects are considered in relation to Council decision making processes</p>		HBC
Manage and monitor the impact of inward migration	Develop links with partners to coordinate knowledge of the level of inward migration and ensure appropriate support and advice is available for these groups	<p>Continue to carry out annual FOI requests where other LAs do not provide prior information relating to the placement of homeless households in the Hastings area</p> <p>Use equalities and customer satisfaction</p>	Monitor the protocols agreed with East Sussex and London housing authorities for emergency accommodation placements of homeless households	The level and nature of inward migration of vulnerable households is understood		HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
		monitoring to review service delivery				
Manage and monitor the impact on local housing supply from being a Home Office dispersal area for asylum seekers	Monitor the dispersal of asylum seekers to the Borough	6 monthly meetings with Clearsprings/Home office	Maximum of 110 places identified as housing for asylum seekers	Maintain current levels		HBC
Resettle up to 100 individuals under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) by 2020	<p>Establish Implementation plan, including recruitment of necessary staff in partnership with other East Sussex Districts & Boroughs</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Source suitable accommodation sustainably across East Sussex</p>	<p>Establish Project Board through ESBT Housing & Health sub group July 2016</p> <p>SVPRS Coordinators recruited by August 2016</p> <p>Specialist support services in place by Q4 2017</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Resettlement commences Q4 2016</p>	Up to 100 individuals resettled in Hastings under the SVPRS by 2020	The successful resettlement of vulnerable Syrian's in Hastings		HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
Mitigate the impact of rogue landlord behaviour	Review the performance of the DCLG funded rogue landlord project by April 2017	<p>Multi agency working group to meet quarterly to streamline processes and share information</p> <p>Quarterly performance monitoring of the Specialist Legal Service being delivered by BHT</p> <p>Delivery landlord training event – August 2016</p>	<p>Increase levels of enforcement</p> <p>Reduce instances of retaliatory evictions</p> <p>Inform and support landlords</p>	<p>Improve property management standards and conditions in the private rented sector</p> <p>Mainstream rogue landlord project activity into Council services</p> <p>Landlords and tenants educated about their rights and responsibilities</p>		HBC
Encourage local residents in Central St Leonards to positively contribute to their community	Work with Amicus Horizon to encourage tenants to play an active role in governance structures, neighbourhood management and decision making	Undertake survey of residents' satisfaction in 2017/18	Improved engagement with tenants' support networks	<p>Reduced fear of crime amongst residents</p> <p>Increased levels of participation</p>	200 residents engaged per year	AH

Priority 3 – Supporting Economic Regeneration

OBJECTIVES
3.1 Improving the quality of existing housing stock
3.2 Planning for housing needs

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
Consider the establishment of a Local Housing Company (LHC) to aid in the development and regeneration of the town	Undertake an options and viability assessment into the establishment of an LHC	Initial legal and financial appraisal completed – Summer 2016	Establish a LHC – December 2016	Increased provision of quality housing solutions for the community		
Maintain focus on the regeneration of St Leonards Housing Renewal Area and continue proactive enforcement action	Deliver phase 2 of the Coastal Space project 2015-18	Development of Carisbrooke Road and Winchester House by March 2018	Deliver Operational Programme for 2015/18 with the HCA, AmicusHorizon and the Council	Increased social housing provision Improved housing stock in St Leonards Housing Renewal Area	30 units delivered 2015-2018 25 HHSRS inspections per month 90 improvements in private owned properties per annum	HBC
Targeted approach to housing	Identify hotspots of poor housing in seafront and town centres and other areas for phase 3 of	Obtain approval of business case from SELEP	Secure LEP funding	Housing related regeneration of targeted areas	30 units of privately let or vacant	HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
interventions as part of the Coastal Space Project	the Coastal Space project by March 2017				dwelling over the period 2015-18 funded, acquired and improved	
Address poor quality housing management and conditions within private rented accommodation through licensing	Ensure good quality housing management and property standards through the delivery of the mandatory, additional (four town centre wards) and selective HMO Licensing Schemes	Implement decision whether to renew Additional HMO Licensing Scheme by March 2017 Review implementation of selective licensing by December 2016	License all HMO properties that meet the criteria for mandatory or additional licencing schemes	Licensing of all Higher Risk HMOs in the four wards completed by September 2016 80% of all the privately let properties are licensed by July 2020	1,000 HMOs licensed by September 2016 8,000 privately rented properties licensed through Selective Licensing by July 2020	HBC
Enforce housing standards and management in the private rented sector	Continue to take appropriate enforcement action to improve housing conditions across the borough	Statutory standards target reviewed on an annual basis	175 homes brought up to the statutory standard per annum	Improved property standards and management in the private rented sector	875 homes brought up to the statutory standard by 2020	HBC
Bring empty homes back into	Utilise Compulsory Purchase Order powers to acquire empty	Action plan with sites and	Explore back to back CPO	The Council's Empty Homes	70 long term empty homes	HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
use, improve derelict buildings and bring forward land for housing development	homes Encourage owners to invest in bringing property back into use through the continued provision of loans Continue to support the YMCA short term leasing scheme for empty homes	schedule of properties identified by March 2017 Quarterly reports to Empty Homes Steering Group Publicity campaign delivered on the availability of loans during annual empty homes week 20 units leased between April 2015 and March 2017	agreements with RPs Continuous reinvestment of loan funds for further loans Support the continuation of the YMCA leasing scheme to 2018 and beyond	Strategy delivered Improved knowledge of the availability of loans Increased take up of loans Increased supply of housing available to vulnerable groups	brought back into use per annum 20 CPO resolutions obtained from Cabinet 40 units leased between April 2015 and March 2018	
Reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency for local residents	Identify properties exhibiting 'Cat 1 hazards' for excess cold and take appropriate enforcement action Instigate with Trading Standards a programme of Energy	Private Sector Stock Condition Survey carried out in 2016/17 Increase the Standard	Continue to support the energy switching initiatives Targeted EPC enforcement in	Reduction in properties exhibiting Cat 1 Hazards – Excess cold Reduced carbon emissions from		HBC

Policy	Action	Milestones	Targets	Outcomes	Numerical Measure (if appropriate)	Lead
	<p>Performance Certificate (EPC) enforcement</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Deliver the Climate Active Neighbourhoods (CAN) project in partnership with AmicusHorizon and Energise Sussex Coast</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Support the delivery of SHINE (Sustainable Houses in an Inclusive Neighbourhood)</p>	<p>Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of housing</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Targets agreed with East Sussex Energy Partnership and 'Your Energy Sussex' by December 2016</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Review outcomes of CAN project annually</p> <p>.....</p> <p>SHINE services commissioned – September 2016</p>	<p>partnership with Trading Standards established</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>local housing stock</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Households are better informed and able to reduce fuel consumption</p>		

Appendix 1

Key partnership achievements include:

- The commissioning of housing related floating support services for vulnerable people through the Supporting People Programme
- The highest proportion of homelessness preventions in England in 2012/13 (1,896 preventions)
- The success of the private sector access scheme, Letstart, where 374 households were assisted into private sector accommodation to prevent homelessness between 2009-14
- The delivery of 28 new homes for people with a learning disability and 18 homes for people with a mental health disability
- The delivery of 284 new affordable homes between 2009-2014
- Spending £4.169M Disabled Facilities Grant between 2009-14 to make adaptations to the homes of vulnerable people and improve their quality of life
- Assisting 157 vulnerable households with suitable housing solutions to consider more appropriate alternatives to adapting their current home.
- 1,701 properties were improved through the use of enforcement between 2009-14
- An additional licencing scheme was introduced in 2011 to complement the mandatory licencing scheme and 580 HMO licenses issued between 2009-14 to improve standards in the private rented sector
- 300 long term empty homes brought back into use between 2009-14
- The Coastal Space project was launched to aid regeneration of the Central St Leonards Renewal Area: 78 properties were improved through enforcement and 7 units brought back in to use as social rented units
- 38 new homes were delivered at the Ore Valley Millennium Communities site as phase 1 of 4 phases as part of the planned regeneration for the area
- 287 rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping were assisted into suitable accommodation or reconnected to another area
- A rough sleepers outreach service to minimise risk of harm on the street and find housing solutions for those sleeping on the streets
- The Council funded an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor to assist victims of abuse and to prevent homelessness
- The housing needs of gypsy and travellers was met by obtaining planning consent for a housing site with two pitches
- Youth homelessness was kept to a minimum through successful partnership working with East Sussex County Council's Children's Services and through effective interventions to prevent homelessness
- 1,305 households were lifted out of fuel poverty through the work of the East Sussex Energy Partnership during 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Improvements to energy efficiency and the installation of renewable technologies led to 810 tonnes of Carbon being saved during 2009/10 and 2010/11
- 48 households were incentivised to downsize into smaller social housing to free up the larger accommodation for families.
- Various events for private landlords, developers and stakeholders took place to update on policy changes and to help inform future housing related policy and practice
- The Council's Homemove Allocation Scheme was reviewed and amended in 2012 giving priority to local people in the greatest housing need

- 7,163 participants were engaged onto community projects through AmicusHorizon
- A good practice guide for professionals was produced to assist them to address housing issues for migrant communities
- The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Strategic Housing Market Assessment and a Housing Needs Assessment was produced to inform policy around future housing delivery
- The Hastings Planning Strategy was produced
- The Climate Change Strategy was produced in 2011
- The Article 4 Direction policy was adopted which aims to prevent an over concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation in certain areas

DRAFT

Agenda Item 6

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4 July 2016

Report Title: Customer First Strategy and Action Plan

Report By: Jane Hartnell
Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of Report

To consider and adopt the Customer First Strategy

Recommendation(s)

That the Customer First Strategy is adopted

Reasons for Recommendations

The Customer First Strategy is all about putting our customers at the heart of what we do. We are committed to providing excellent services which our customers can access when and how they need to. The strategy states how we will improve access to services and the customer experience. It is our public commitment to Customer First.

The strategy provides a framework for the management of customer contact, information management and access to our services, bringing together a number of projects all working towards the same objectives.

The action plan provides the details for how we will achieve and implement the strategy; which will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Introduction

1. The Council has made a commitment in the Corporate Plan ‘to be more Customer First focused and efficient in the design and delivery of services’. The Customer First Strategy sets out the vision of how Hastings Borough Council will put customers at the heart of service delivery, ensuring value for money, flexibility and choice.
2. The strategy will seek to drive both cultural and technological improvements, it describes our aspirations of how we will behave with customers and how we will manage accessibility to the Council’s services, with an emphasis on efficient and transparent service delivery. Customers include people who live, work or visit the Borough as well as businesses, agencies, elected members and colleagues who use the services provided by the Council.
3. Every service provided by the Council has a customer whether it is internal or external. The Community Contact Centre alone deals with 121,000 telephone calls across all services per year and 20,000 face to face customers for Revenues and Benefits per year. External contact to the Council is increasing and much of this is repeated contact for the same issue and avoidable contact. Improvements to how we deliver our services such as redesigning our processes to meet customers needs, providing a choice for customers of when and how they can access our services, improving communication and working together as one Council will deliver the aims of the Customer First Strategy.

Overview of the strategy

4. Customer First focuses on the needs of individual customers by providing efficient and easy to access ‘joined up’ services. It’s all about improving access to services for customers, as well as improving the experience.
5. The strategy has four main principals:
 - 5.1. Meeting customer needs
 - 5.2. Being accessible
 - 5.3. Improving customer experience
 - 5.4. Providing value
6. The strategy also specifies our Customer First Standards and the expectations for customer contact with the Council.

Action Plan

7. An action plan is included which provides the details for how we will achieve and implement the strategy.
8. There are three main priorities of the action plan, internal communication of the Customer First Strategy, external communication to our customers of the strategy and the implementation of the strategy i.e how we actually deliver what we have promised to customers. Every member of staff in the Council has a role to play

and must be signed up to customer first. Senior management and Member commitment to the strategy along with effective communication and training for staff is key to the success of the strategy. There is currently a disparity across the organisation of how we deal with customers. The action plan aims to ensure we provide an excellent service to all our customers regardless of who they contact.

9. The action plan brings together numerous work strands and projects, some of which are well underway and are already delivering an improved service to our customers. For example under the My Hastings project which provides self-service access for customers to a number of our services, we have seen that 52% of all cases logged on Firmstep have been via self-service. Our customers want a choice of how and when they can access our services.
10. The Corporate Customer Services Manager is working with service managers to identify improvements and redesign processes to provide high quality services in the Community Contact Centre and ensure the customer at the heart of our business.
11. The strategy and the action plan will be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure its success. Feedback from customers through available data, satisfactions surveys, mystery shopping and service reviews will constantly inform the actions required to deliver our customer first aims.

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	Yes
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	No

Additional Information

Appendix 1. Customer First Strategy 2016-2018

Appendix 2. Customer First Strategy Action Plan 2016-2018

Officer to Contact

Natasha Tewkesbury
Corporate Customer Services Manager
ntewkesbury@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451709

Customer First Strategy

2016-2018

Introduction

As a Council we are transforming the way we work. Over the next two years we will:

- maximise the benefits provided by new technology to work more efficiently;
- develop a collaborative 'One Team' ethos to enable us to work together more intelligently;
- design and deliver services which put the needs of our customers first.

What is Customer First?

Customer First is:

“Putting customers at the heart of service delivery; ensuring value for money, flexibility and choice.”

Our Customer First principles are:

- Meeting customer needs
- Being accessible
- Improving customer experience
- Providing value.

Who are our customers?

Our customers are anyone we provide a service, information or advice to.

Our key customer groups are:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Visitors
- Tourists
- Other councils
- Charities
- Partner organisations
- Community groups
- Staff
- Councillors

What does Customer First mean in practice?

It means:

Meeting Customer Needs

- We will provide an efficient, accurate, transparent service.
- We will own and respond to all issues customers present to us.

- We will keep our promises.
- We will have clear standards that our customers can expect and judge us by.
- All staff will take responsibility for providing excellent customer service.

Being Accessible

- Our communication will meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- Customers will be able to access our services online, face to face and over the telephone.
- We will work with partners to deliver our services.
- We will work collaboratively with the voluntary and community sectors to improve access.

Improving Customer Experience

- Our workforce will be flexible and adaptable to meet the changing demands of our customers.
- We will monitor customer satisfaction to enable improvement.
- We will monitor our performance to ensure our customers receive a high quality service.

Providing Value

- We will make most of our services available online.
- We will make our services more accessible and better value for money.
- We will ensure our customers can contact us easily.
- We will ensure our staff have the right skills and knowledge to meet customer expectations.

Our Customer First standards

We aim to satisfy all customer queries at the first point of contact with the Council.

We aim to make all of our services customer focused, accessible and flexible.

In terms of communication:

Writing to us

We will respond fully to your enquiry within 10 working days or acknowledge receipt of your correspondence and let you know how long it will take to respond fully to your enquiry.

E-Mailing us

We will acknowledge receipt of your e-mail within 1 working day and respond fully to your enquiry within 10 working days.

Calling us

The Community Contact Centre is the main telephone service for Hastings Borough Council. You will receive clear and straightforward information about our services.

We aim to minimise the amount of time you wait to speak to someone and will keep you informed of current waiting times.

Visiting our offices

We will aim to provide a polite, welcoming and efficient service, resolving your enquiry first time wherever possible. We will ensure ensure that staff members are smart and presentable and wear name badges.

We aim to deal with your enquiry in 15 minutes but at busy times you may need to wait longer, however we will tell you how long it is likely to be before are seen.

We will measure our success against these standards.

Why is it important?

Customer First is important because we want to provide a better service for our customers and improve customer satisfaction. It is a priority in our Corporate Plan.

Our contact with you

We will always try our hardest to provide the best experience for our customers. Occasionally we will get it wrong. When we do we will take responsibility, do what we can to fix our mistake and make sure that we learn from it.

In these instances we will ask that customers are patient and respectful to our staff. Where possible we will ask that customers work with us to fix the error. We want there to be mutual respect and trust in our relationship with customers.

Abuse of our staff will not be tolerated.

How we are doing this

Projects

Review and Redesign our Services

We are business process mapping (BPM) all our services. This allows us to understand what's working well and what's not and to identify how things could be improved. We are then redesigning how we work to meet our customers' needs.

Making Services Accessible Online

We are making many of our services available online including: paying council tax, reporting fly tipping, reporting a missed bin collection and applying for licences.

All of our online services will be accessible on My Hastings and through the Council website.

Improving Customer Communication

We have introduced a new customer relationship management (CRM) system which enables us to improve our interactions with customers. The CRM will continue to help us to work more collaboratively and intelligently as 'One Council' and will mean a better quality of transaction for our customers.

We are re-developing our website to make it more customer focused and accessible and will be seeking customer feedback on how to make further improvements.

Communication

Communication will be essential to the successful delivery of Customer First.

We will:

- Communicate Customer First with all staff and our partners to ensure collective buy in.
- Tell our customers about how Customer First can benefit them
- Meet our Customer First standards in all our communications with customers.

Internal communications action plan summary

All staff and partners will need to be made aware of our Customer First vision and embrace its standards and principles.

Core internal messages of Customer First:

- An opportunity not a burden
- Raises the profile of the Council
- Creates better access to services for the public
- Makes us more efficient and better value
- Makes us more professional
- Will lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction
- Creates meaningful partnerships between the Council, business, the public and community sectors
- Underpins the new organisational culture

These messages will be delivered by:

- Word of mouth – Transformation Team
- Internal newsletters
- All staff emails
- Team meetings and 1:1s
- DMT briefings – Directors, Assistant Directors
- Communications Board
- The new intranet once it has been developed
- All staff corporate briefings

Key internal audience:

- All HBC staff
- All HBC Councillors
- Our partners

External communications action plan summary

We will make our customers aware of how Customer First benefits them and in what ways.

Core external Messages of Customer First:

- Faster responses to your requests and queries
- A more joined up communication from the Council, which keeps track of and accounts for all of your interactions with different services
- A host of our services available for you to access easily online 24/7
- Easier more efficient and flexible ways for you to transact council services
- We are shaping our services around your needs
- We will continue to improve and develop our services using customer feedback

These messages will be delivered by:

- Word of mouth
- Signposted on the new Hastings Online website
- My Hastings Online itself
- Contact centre staff
- Using corporate social media accounts
- Marketing campaigns

Key external audience:

- Businesses
- Residents
- Charities
- Community groups

- Visitors
- Other councils

Further Information

For further information please email transformation@hastings.gov.uk

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Customer First Strategy Action Plan 2016-2018

1. Internal Communication of Customer First Strategy

Actions	Lead/s	Resources	Timescales
Corporate briefing and introduction to all staff of Customer First Strategy.	Director of Corporate Services & Governance & Corporate Customer Services Manager	Staff resources to prepare and deliver briefing.	July 2016
Presentation and discussion of Customer First Strategy at DMTs and team meetings	Corporate Customer Services Manager	Staff resources to facilitate discussion	July 2016
Develop Customer First area and resources for staff on the intranet	Customer First Communications Champion	Staff resources to develop intranet	August 2016
Develop induction process for new staff on Customer First Strategy, expectations and corporate communication standards.	Corporate Customer Services Manager, Communications Manager & Customer First Communications Champion	Staff resources to develop material. Online e-learning package	August 2016
Embed the Customer First Strategy with operation of the Communications Board to ensure synergy with recommendations and actions from the Board.	Director of Corporate Services & Governance & Customer First Communications Champion		ongoing

2. External Communication of Customer First Strategy

Actions	Lead/s	Resources	Timescales
Publish Customer First Strategy on the Council website and promote through the Council's social media.	Customer First Communications Champion & Communications Manager		July 2016
Promote Customer First through the marketing and promotion of My Hastings.	Customer First Communications Champion	Staff resources to develop materials, attend events. Posters/business cards	June 2016 onwards
Continue to develop Customer First standards and principals through the Community Contact Centre as a centre of excellence.	Corporate Customer Services Manager & Contact Centre Operations Manager		ongoing

3. Implementation of Customer First Strategy

Actions	Lead/s	Resources	Timescales
Develop Customer Service training	Executive Manager of People, Customer	Staff resources to develop	Begin Sept 2016

Actions	Lead/s	Resources	Timescales
programme and framework for all staff. All new staff will receive Customer Service training as part of their induction to the Council.	& Business Support & Corporate Customer Service Manager	training programme. Training resources – online, materials and external training resources	
Develop and produce regular customer insight data, identify service improvements required and work with services to review and redesign processes improving the customer journey.	Corporate Customer Services Manager & Service Managers	Staff resources to produce data. Resources required to implement improvements currently unknown.	Regular reports of Firmstep customer data and cases already produced for Transformation Team and Service Managers for services currently on Firmstep.
Design and undertake regular customer satisfaction/feedback surveys and mystery shopping to inform service improvement priorities.	Corporate Customer Services Manager	Staff resources to design and undertake surveys. Survey software and IT resources to carry out survey.	Sept 2016
Ensure there is a 'Customer' representative as part of service review teams to represent the customer and ensure customer first principals are embedded in any service improvement recommendations.	Director of Corporate Services & Governance		July 2016
Develop links and referral processes with the Community Contact Centre and external support agencies and organisations particularly around employability in order to provide support to those most in need.	Corporate Customer Services Manager	Staff resources to make contact with external agencies and develop procedures. Training of CSOs. IT resources to develop simple online referral process and information.	Oct 2016
Continue to work with the recently established Communications Board to represent the voice of the customers and ensuring there is always a customer focus and consistency to all content.	Corporate Customer Services Manager		ongoing
My Hastings/Firmstep project – new CRM system for whole council, business process mapping services and implementing self service processes for customers	Transformation Manager	See Transformation plan	
New Council website redeveloped and	Transformation Manager	See Transformation plan	

Actions	Lead/s	Resources	Timescales
launched to be customer focussed, accessible and encourage online services.			
Business Process Mapping project to process map all services and identify improvements for internal and external customers.	Transformation Manager	See Transformation plan	
Assisted Digital and Digital by choice project to ensure that those who do not have personal access to the internet are able to access Council services from alternative sources	Transformation Manager	See Transformation plan	

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Agenda Item 7

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4th July 2016

Report Title: Corporate Plan 2016/17 Retrospective Report Back on 2015/16 and Performance Targets 2016/17

Report By: Jane Hartnell
Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Cabinet of the year-end performance for 2015/16 and proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17 to be published on the Council's website.
2. To receive comments from the Overview and Scrutiny committee on year-end performance for 2015/16 and proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17.
3. To outline intentions to continue to review the performance process and trial new ways of presenting performance information during 2016/17 in line with a new single Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny committee be considered.
2. That the year-end performance for 2015/16 and proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17 be approved for publication (the 24th February Council delegated authority to the Cabinet to approve these).
3. That Cabinet support intentions to continue to review corporate performance and planning arrangements in line with the Council's transformation intentions.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Council's Corporate Plan is one of the key documents by which the Council is held to account for its performance, therefore honest and transparent reporting back of how well we performed against targets in the previous year is essential.

Local people and staff also need to be aware of the targets and standards we have set ourselves, and where any of these targets have changed from previous years we need to be clear about the reasons why.

Introduction

1. The Council meeting on 24th February 2016 agreed the Corporate Plan for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 – these documents set out the Council's strategic direction and outline associated work areas for 2016/17.
2. Appendix A contains a report back against the key activities set out in the previous year's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 and sets out draft performance indicator targets which are proposed for 2016/17.
3. The Cabinet has been given delegated authority by the Council to agree year-end performance for 2015/16 and proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17 prior to publication on the Council's website.
4. Transforming the Council remains a key focus within the Corporate Plan 2016/17 -2018/19 and part of this agenda is concerned with ensuring our performance management arrangements reflect the changing nature of the Council. This report concludes by outlining intentions to further review and test new ways of performance reporting in 2016/17.

Director reports

5. Directors reports (appendices B and C) have been provided to the Overview and Scrutiny committee to aid understanding and assist them focus on performance shortfalls outlined in appendix A.
6. In addition to outlining exceptions and performance shortfalls these reports also identify other areas taking up considerable time and resources that may not be specifically referenced in the Corporate Plan.
7. These reports have been successfully piloted during the 2015/16 Scrutiny quarterly meetings schedule.

Retrospective Performance Report Back – Appendix A

8. Appendix A provides a report back on performance during 2015/16 against the corporate plan targets and Performance Indicators, as well as the two main programmes outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015/16, the Transformation programme and EU Funding Programme.
9. The status of each target as at 31st March 2016 is described as either:

G = Green target achieved

A = Amber – target changed, affected by external circumstances or narrowly missed

R = Red - did not hit target – also includes description of how we will address this in 2016/17 (where appropriate)

10. At the end of each service area in appendix A the associated performance indicators are listed in yellow along with their prospective targets for 2016/17 (bold and underlined), to be approved by Cabinet.

Comments

11. The Overview and Scrutiny committee considered the year-end performance for 2015/16 and proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17 at their meeting on 14th June.
12. Discussions were initially steered by the Directors reports and considered a range of topics such as: the substantial accommodation changes including the transfer of civic functions to Aquila House, and leasing of space at the Town Hall to East Sussex County Council; scheduled Planning improvements, Waste collection performance and monitoring arrangements; as well as a number of achievements.
13. Full details can be found here
<http://hastings.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=391&MId=2111&Ver=4>
14. Member's views were sought on the proposed performance indicator targets for 2016/17. Scrutiny Members did not recommend changes to any of the 2016/17 proposed indicators.
15. Comments and responses are set out below and the number of each performance indicator in appendix A considered is bracketed after each comment below:

Comment: Members welcomed the proposed new performance indicator target with regards to the effectiveness of the council's website (5.1).

Response: The new targets reflected the council's channel shift intentions and included the percentage of customers registered for a self-service account and monitoring the increase in the number of customers self-serving online.

Comment: Members queried reducing the target for the percentage of statutory noise nuisance and public health complaints responded to within 5 working days from 95% in 2015/16 to 90% in 2016/17 (1.3).

Response: The proposed reduction anticipates significant increase in the number of scheduled food safety inspections, which will impact on capacity within the environmental health team.

Comment: Members discussed options to boost attendance at the White Rock Theatre (2.1).

Response: The Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture advised that the council was in contact with the current theatre operator to explore options to improve the facilities, when the existing contract has come to an end.

Comment: Members considered whether the proposed target for visitor numbers to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery of 45,000 in 2016/17 was too high, as the target for 2015/16 had not been met? (2.2)

Response: The Lead Member for Regeneration and Culture explained that visitor numbers over the past year had been affected by works to the storage area at the museum, which had limited capacity for special exhibitions and private views. The works to the storage area have now been completed and the number of schools visits had already significantly increased. It was therefore considered that the proposed target for visitor numbers was achievable.

Comment: The committee were mindful of a significant increase in the number of homelessness acceptances over the past year, and noted that this trend may continue in 2016/17 (4.01).

Response: The Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing, Communications and Equalities portfolio holder acknowledged these concerns; she also highlighted the extensive work the Council was undertaking to support homelessness preventions.

2016/17 Performance management arrangements

16. Members and officers are keen to ensure that as the Council continues to change, performance management arrangements adapt to reflect these changes. Following the move from two to one Overview and Scrutiny committee performance reporting arrangements will be reviewed in line with a more general review of these new scrutiny arrangements at the end of quarter 2 of 2016/17.

Policy Implications

17. The Corporate Plan details how the council meets its objectives. The values and vision are expressed in our commitments and policies, these underpin the way we work and prioritise activity. Individual projects and service delivery decisions will reference how we are addressing policy implications throughout the year. This retrospective review of performance identifies our progress across a range of policies and values.

Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Yes
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	Yes
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	Yes
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

http://www.hastings.gov.uk/decisions_democracy/how_we_make_decisions/policies_strategies/corporate_plan/

Officer to Contact

Officer Name Mark Horan

Officer Email Address mhoran@hastings.gov.uk

Officer Telephone Number 01424 451485

APPENDIX A

Performance Monitoring Template

The following report reflects achievements against targets and performance indicators set out in the Corporate Plan 2015/16.

Status of annual targets at 31st of March 2016 is described as either:

R = Red Did not hit target, also includes (where relevant) description of how we will address this shortfall in 2016/17

A = Amber Target changed, affected by external circumstances or narrowly missed

G = Green Target achieved

Status of performance indicators at 31st March 2016 is shown as either **G** (met) or **R** (unmet)

Proposed Year end March 2017 targets (**where relevant**) for performance indicators are included in bold in the measures column.

CORPORATE SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE

Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Contribute to successful delivery of HBC Projects	1	Legal work packages completed on schedule (to be planned/agreed with service departments)	Christine Barkshire-Jones	G	Q4 Completed another 6 Social Lettings Agency leases and tenancy agreements. A vast amount of work has been undertaken in connection with complaints and Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations (FOI/EIR) requests involving long responses from the Council to the Local Government Ombudsman and contact with the Information Commissioners office.
Undertake legal work to achieve HBC prosecutions, enforcement,	2	Levels of activity related to client department led demand reported to Overview and	Christine Barkshire-Jones	G	Q4 Prosecutions summary: 3 Grotbusters £2300 fines Costs (to council) £1300 1 planning contravention £1000 fine Costs £250 3 noise nuisance £470 fine Costs £1070 1 litter £50 fine £30 Costs

APPENDIX A

property sales and leases, planning and contractual obligations		Scrutiny Committee quarterly.			5 dog related offences £5000 fine £525 costs Debt 18 final charging orders securing £47,000 debt owed to the Council. £34,000 of which has been recovered. 1 attachment of earnings and payment instalments to collect £20,000 of hard debt. In addition legal staff completed 9 Contracts, 17 Leases, 2 Easements and 3 Licences
Contribution to effective HBC Governance	3	Levels of demand-led activity reported quarterly e.g. Advice to Members; support of decision making processes, design and review of HBC policies and practices to achieve compliance with legislation and good practice.	Christine Barkshire-Jones	G	Q4 Legal services have been involved in several Standard complaints this quarter. The Corporate Complaints Policy has been reviewed and will be submitted to cabinet in June. The Seashore and Promenade Byelaws have been made – we are currently awaiting confirmation from the Secretary of State.
Complete Digital by Design Project year 1 work packages	4	a) Promotion of new self-service portal to encourage customer channel shift) Staff trained in coaching skills to help customers self-serve c) Contribute to service process mapping from initial	Natasha Tewkesbury	G	Q4 Environmental Health and Electoral Services live on Firmstep. Housing Benefit account look up finalised and ready for testing with customers in the Contact Centre. New Housing Options procedure and Firmstep process to triage Housing Options customers by the Contact Centre implemented. Promotion of self service for missed bin collection reporting via Contact Centre and social media to encourage customer use.

APPENDIX A

		points of contact d) Customer surgeries for Firmstep training helde) Assisted digital support mechanisms for those unable to access services on-line identified			Promotion of self service Council Tax account look up on myhastings during annual billing. Assistance to customers provided in the Contact Centre to set up Myhastings accounts. Referring customers to Hastings Works and Library for support and access to digital services.
Continue to improve customer experience	5	(a) Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of personal and telephone caller's experience of using our service, with a focus on 'right first time'. (b) Work with colleagues to continually refine and improve the customer journey, from first point of contact to resolution, based on intelligence gained from monitoring customer enquiries and feedback opportunities. Arrive at indicators of performance and customer satisfaction	Natasha Tewkesbury	G	Q4 Implemented performance management process for Contact Centre staff to improve performance and customer service standards. Revised Council Tax information and annual billing FAQs to be more customer focussed and introduced online council tax enquiry form for annual billing busy period. Promotion of this via social media to encourage customers to go online for general enquiries. Introduced new reception procedure to improve the customer experience in the Contact Centre and first contact with customer is carried out right first time, which has also enabled further customer data intelligence to be gathered. Regular data reports produced using data from Firmstep to inform service delivery and channel of contact. Staff handled the annual council-tax billing peak demands extremely well, following detailed planning and co-operation with service teams.

APPENDIX A

		(measurable by the Firmstep software) as part of the Digital by Design project during 2015/16.			
Contribute to evidence based decision-making by provision of accurate management information and data analysis services for projects and services	6	a) Efficiency and Customer First Service Reviews with data analysis and review supported – (programme TBA) b) Seek customer insight via surveys on behalf of services and undertake bespoke analysis when required c) Analysis of statistics provided as required e.g. next Index of Multiple Deprivation is due to be published in summer 2015.	Jane Hartnell	A	Q4 Service reviews underway in line with migrating appropriate services to Firmstep / My Hastings (see transformation programme for full details). The external providers have missed the deadline for providing us with the outcome of the benefits review, this could mean that the associated data set informing their recommendations will consequently be out of date. b) The My Hastings database for dealing with queries has been developed in consultation with contact centre and staff teams. c) An analysis of IMD data has been completed and shared with Members and partners to inform next steps.
Support and equip Members to effectively undertake their roles and responsibilities in a changing environment	7	a) Scrutiny annual work programme developed, agreed and completed to time, cost and specification.b) Corporate plan commitments	Mark Horan	G	Q4 (a) Community Safety and Digital Inclusion scrutiny completed and due to report to Q4 Scrutiny committee. All other outstanding scrutiny commitments completed as set out in the joint programme. (b) Performance arrangements continue to be improved and reviewed in line with the move to one scrutiny committee. Member Training and Development Group convened as scheduled to review Q4 training and associated work and

APPENDIX A

		effectively monitored through the council's overview and scrutiny function.c) Member support, training and development facilitated to ensure members are equipped to fulfil their duties effectively.			plan 2016/17 arrangements.
Continue to support local democracy by the effective delivery of electoral services activities.	8	a) Statutory timetables and performance standards met in line with Electoral Commission requirements for management of the 2015 General Election. b) Transition to Individual Electoral Registration completed and new 'normal' arrangements to be embedded.c) Contribute to the Boundary Review for electoral wards in Hastings and East Sussex	Katrina Silverson/ Chantal Lass	G	Q4 a) Successfully achieved in Q1 and Q2. b) The new 'business as usual' arrangements under Individual Electoral Registration' have been successfully implemented since the end of Q3 and continue to progress well, in line with legislative requirements. c) The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its draft proposals for ward boundaries on the 14 th March 2016. This has been circulated to all Members for information. The Councils web site has been updated to include a link to the LGBCE website, and a Member's drop in was held on 13 th April 2016.

APPENDIX A

<p>Lead the redesign of the council's business processes, corporate planning and performance management arrangements in line with the council's Efficiency and Transformation programme</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>a) Manage the council's Transformation programme to time, cost and specification b) Associated corporate work packages delivered c) Corporate planning and associated performance management arrangements refreshed</p>	<p>Jane Hartnell / Stephen Dodson</p>	<p>G</p>	<p>Process Review & Design WP01 1. Process Mapping Complete for all old CRM service areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Customer First Strategy WP02 Strategy being fully reviewed and incorporated into Phase 2 2) Communications and Organisational Change WP03 Full review undertaken and incorporated into Phase 2 3) Agreed Design principles for communication channels WP04 1. Soft launch new look website late May 2016. 2. Evaluate all communications channels and established Terms of Reference and membership of a Communications Board 4) Implementation of Firmstep (CRM) (phase 1) WP05 95% Completed - Bulky Waste & Pest Control should be done Phase 2 1st Quarter <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Confirmed phase 2 requirements i.e. version 2 of My Hastings will include geographical layers, photo resizing, LLPG links, (eg parent shell property data base) 5) Addressing digital exclusion 'Digital by Design' WP06 Report to O&S completed and recommendations to be incorporated into Phase 2 6) Efficiency savings WP07 1. Implementing efficiencies monitoring plan across service areas 2. Undertaking pilot 'Time & Motion' studies – Initially for
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APPENDIX A

					<p>Housing, Planning, Bulky Waste, Pest Control scoped. Produce report for phase 2</p> <p>7) Financial system interfaces (A) WP08 (A) 1. Successful closure of accounts at the year-end of 31st March</p> <p>8) Financial system interfaces (B) WP08 (B) Draft Business Case developed for phase 2</p> <p>9) Housing – Additional, Mandatory and Selective Licensing WP09 1.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Further adaption of form following feedback from landlords, including adaption of help text to ensure plain English; Introduction of ‘save form’ function; Development of ‘parent shell’ solution to enable whole form to be published (to include HMO Licensing applications); Publicity for landlords / letting agents on the scheme to increase application rate; 850 Licences issued</p> <p>10) Data Analysis and policy information WP10 Implementation of an Electronic Record and Document Management System (ERDMS) WP11 1. Implement IDOX upgrades for the Planning teams - some components implemented - others into next quarter</p> <p>11) Pilot the Legal Team storage requirements in new SharePoint. Commence migration of other service areas to new SharePoint.</p>
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APPENDIX A

					<p>12)Housing Options WP12 1. FirmStep triage form complete 2. CCC staff have been trained in the use of Firmstep for Housing Options purposes. 3 Go Live 4. Review and revisions - update for next PRP Process Map updated - to test and review</p> <p>13)Mod.Gov implementation WP13 Training completed for key officers and use of Mod Gov for report writing monitored and reviewed.</p> <p>14)Future corporate planning process WP14 1. Agree new Corporate Plan. Work with Scrutiny to assist any further recommendations made relative to their roles in the performance management process. Draft 2017/18 corporate planning and performance monitoring timetable.</p>
<p>We recognise that our residents come from diverse backgrounds. Our 2015/16 equality objectives are to:1. Develop a workforce that feels valued, respected and is reflective of the diverse communities we serves.2. Deliver services which are accessible and welcoming to all</p>	10	<p>a) Via Equalities Impact Assessments demonstrate that our policies and practices are not inherently discriminatory and do not disadvantage any particular group on unjustifiable grounds in their application. (All services)b) Provide a training package to ensure all staff and Councillors have a clear</p>	Jane Hartnell / Shabana Bayjou	G	<p>Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) completed as per EIA timetable. Website currently under review. 17 Members completed Equalities training in October 2015. Training for 2016/17 will be completed through the Council's new online learning tool.</p>

APPENDIX A

<p>communities and are capable of responding to the different needs and aspirations our customers have.3. Celebrate the diversity of Hastings so the Borough is an increasingly cohesive place where people from all communities get on well together.</p>		<p>understanding of equalities legislation based on the Equalities Act 2010. (POD) c) Use technology and creative techniques best suited to different population groups in line with the digital inclusion work package in the council's transformation and efficiency programme (Corporate and Democratic) d) Demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies to publish information relating to employees who share protected characteristics annually. (Corporate and Democratic)</p>			
<p>Ensure the recruitment of a permanent</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>a) Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure and</p>	<p>Verna Connolly</p>	<p>G</p>	<p>Updated recruitment policy and procedure. Reviewed selection processes to include selection tests for most roles.</p>

APPENDIX A

<p>complement of high calibre managers and staff</p>		<p>processes reviewed. b) Induction arrangements reviewed and subsequent activities implemented.</p>			<p>Management Development Programmes (level 3 and level 5) designed in collaboration with Sussex Training Consortium (STC) courses to be introduced in Quarter 3, 2016.</p>
<p>Support the Council to compete in a competitive labour market to recruit and retain talented staff</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>a) Workforce development action plan drafted and consultation with Trade Unions completed. b) Publicise and roll out workforce development action plan.</p>	<p>Verna Connolly</p>	<p>A G</p>	<p>Workforce Planning Service Reviews completed in Finance and Legal. Timetable amended to run alongside Business Process Review timetable. This work enables managers to consider their future service structures and identify skills gaps and critical roles and succession planning routes if relevant.</p> <p>Management information reviewed and gaps in workforce data improved to assist in the formation of future service/organisational requirements.</p> <p>There have been 11 recruitment campaigns in this quarter.</p>
<p>Provide HR support in line with the Council's transformation and efficiency programme.</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>a) E-appraisal scheme designed and introduced to ensure performance is in line with strategic targets b) Staff survey conducted (June 2015), results and associated action plan disseminated (Sept 2015) c) Proactive support and</p>	<p>Verna Connolly</p>	<p>G</p>	<p>Appraisal process ongoing – helping managers keep staff focused and engaged on delivery of critical priorities</p>

APPENDIX A

		guidance on the implementation of restructuring delivered including identifying training needs in response to change.			
Performance Indicators		Targets		Met / Not Met	Performance to end of Q4
Reduce the proportion of working day/shifts lost due to sickness absence to 6.25	7.1	Q1 - 1.55 Q2 - 3.15 Q3 - 4.70 Q4 - 6.25 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target – 6.25</u>	Verna Connolly	Not Met	Q1 - 1.98 Q2 - 4.06 Q3 - 5.42 Q4 - 7.74 (2.32 Q4) Review of OH provision ongoing. Sickness absence is up 1.33 days per employee. More than last year which was 6.41. Over the quarter we had additional 224 days sickness than Quarter 3. These absences are as a result of flu / flu like viruses, including swine flu - which is one of the 3 recognised flu viruses.
Reduce the proportion of working day/shifts lost due to short term sickness absence	7.1a	(7.1a&b No targets have been set for these indicators, they are simply provided for additional information and context.)	Verna Connolly		Q1 - 1.12 Q2 - 2.38 Q3 - 3.33 Q4 - 4.96

APPENDIX A

Reduce the proportion of working day/shifts lost due to long term sickness absence	7.1b	(7.1a&b No targets have been set for these indicators, they are simply provided for additional information and context.)	Verna Connolly		Q1 - 0.86 Q2 - 1.68 Q3 - 2.09 Q4 - 2.78
Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Promote a culture of transparency in everything the Council does.	14	a) Details of Council assets, pay policy, senior management salaries, resources, decision making, contracts and spending published to aid transparency. b) Freedom of Information and other data requests responded to within legislative timescales – levels reported to O & S quarterly c) Complaints analysis and learning opportunities reported quarterly, facilitated by the new	Jane Hartnell	A	<p>a) Pay Policy approved and available on website</p> <p>b) There have been 695 in year FOI requests in total. 248 FOI have been received this quarter, 31 of these are outstanding and 14 were late in responding.</p> <p>c) There have been 310 in year corporate complaints received in total. Corporate complaints continue to be addressed in a timely manner. This quarter out of 71 complaints received 12 are outstanding.</p> <p>The FOI roll out onto My Hastings has continued to be soft tested during Q4. Once this is refined, work will be underway to move the complaints process onto My Hastings.</p>

APPENDIX A

		complaints recording process.			
Achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the annual statement of accounts.	15	Unqualified audit opinion gained by 30th September	Peter Grace	G	As reported at quarter 3, an unqualified opinion on the 2014/15 accounts has been achieved.
Maintain the high occupancy of industrial units against a background of an uncertain economic environment.	16	Percentage of void industrial units and actual income versus the budget.	Amy Terry	G	As at 31 March 2016 occupancy was as follows: Factory Units – 61 units let 1 unit vacant 1.6% void (unchanged) Castleham Business Centre West – all 20 units let 0% void (5% Q3) Castleham Business Centre East – all 17 units let 0% void (unchanged)
Monitor developments in the rollout of the Government's new 'Universal Credit' scheme and take appropriate action as necessary.	17	Submit updates to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees when further steps are clarified, identify the implications for the Council and the community, and implement revised working arrangements as	Jean Saxby	G	As at 31 March 2016, 50 claimants have moved onto Universal Credit. 23 claims have been reassessed due to non dependants (adults in the household other than the claimant/partner) being in receipt of Universal Credit. Initial estimates prior to going live on 20 April 2015 suggested that there could be as many as 1,350 claims affected. Note that the impact has been considerably less. Department for Work and Pensions have now advised that

APPENDIX A

		appropriate.			<p>Hastings is scheduled to go to 'Full Service' in December 2016. This means that all new customers making a claim from December will be claiming Universal Credit, not Housing Benefit.</p> <p>Existing Housing Benefit customers will continue to receive HB until the migration phase of the project which is scheduled to take place between 2019 and 2021. The above only applies to working age customers. There are currently no plans for pensioners to transfer to Universal Credit. As more information becomes available, further updates will be provided.</p>
Review the current Council Tax Support Scheme and consider implications for 2016/17 onwards.	18	Current Council Tax Support System reviewed	Jean Saxby	G	A meeting will be held in May 2016 with our colleagues in East Sussex to discuss the future of the Council Tax Support Scheme from 2017/18 onwards.
Implement the outcomes of the Benefits 'Customer First and Efficiency' Service Review	19	The review to be undertaken by Shelter to completed in the early part of 2015/16 and subsequent actions implemented as timetabled	Jean Saxby	A	<p>The summary report from Shelter is still awaited.</p> <p>The delay in this review is as a result of external circumstances.</p> <p>The revised report is now scheduled for late May 2016.</p>
Continue to deliver the annual Audit	20	Comparison of audits completed against	Tom Davies	A	All audits, Housing Benefit Grant Subsidy and International Auditing Standards work for BDO completed except for the

APPENDIX A

<p>Plan and report outcomes to the Audit Committee</p>		<p>those on the published audit plan reported in the annual audit report.</p>			<p>audit of the Social Lettings Agency which remained a work in progress at year end.</p> <p>External Audit required an unprecedented level of checking on the Housing Benefit Grant Subsidy work this year, before they would sign-off the claim resulting in approximately 6 audit weeks of work more than before.</p> <p>In addition to normally expected ad-hoc work, the team undertook additional advisory work concerning a Paypal account and comprehensive audit of fleet vehicles.</p>
<p>Continue to maximise the benefits from the Council's procurement arrangements, working in collaboration with other local authorities, the East Sussex Procurement Hub and other partners.</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>Value for money contracts secured, savings achieved and procurement arrangements completed.</p>	<p>Tom Davies</p>	<p>G</p>	<p>The following procurement activity was concluded during quarter 4 by the East Sussex Procurement Hub:</p> <p>Hockey Pavilion Demolition- Bexhill Road Hastings. Contract awarded.</p> <p>Provision of a "Limited Period Free to User" wireless network service. No returns received by the deadline. Suppliers who were previously interested approached to investigate and understand why no returns received.</p> <p>Audio Visual Equipment for Hastings Council Chamber. Contract awarded.</p> <p>Promenade Improvement Works. Original tender redesigned and reduced after previous tender exercise (September 2015) came back far over budget. New tender issued January 2016 and award now made.</p> <p>Stock Condition Survey (tender). Tender issued in January but due to cost the tender exercise</p>

APPENDIX A

					<p>was cancelled in February.</p> <p>Stock Condition Survey (quote). Following cancellation of tender exercise project was redesigned as a quote and issued March with return and award planned for April/May.</p> <p>Castleham Estate Works. Contractor formally appointed March 2016.</p> <p>Hastings Castle Public Convenience Extension. Four bids received and contractor appointed March 2016.</p> <p>Public Convenience and Building Cleaning Service. Soft Market Test undertaken during February 2016 Responses to be used to shape formal tender.</p> <p>Consultancy Services for Community Led Local Development. Provider appointed in March 2016.</p> <p>Hastings Town Hall External Redecorations. Quotations issued in March with returns and award planned for May.</p> <p>Waste Data Audit. Quotations issued February. Evaluations involved all members of the Joint Waste Partnership including officers from Hastings Borough Council. Awarded in March 2016.</p> <p>Forward Looking to Q1 - 2016/17;</p>
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APPENDIX A

					<p>Tenders for Hastings Country Park to be issued in June / July 2016 Rock-A-Nore Retaining Wall to be issued Beach Chalet Occupational Health MSTAR2 Temporary Agency Staff Seafront Signage Replacement Seafront Kiosk White Rock Masterplan Exercise Hastings Research Project Agresso – Upgrade and review Coastal Erosion Risk Management Consultancy Services</p> <p>Plus work to enable adoption of revised Contract Procedure Regulations into Financial Operating Procedures.</p>
Performance Indicators		Targets		Met / Not Met	Performance to end of Q4
Increase the % of Council Tax collected in year to 96.3%	6.1	Q1 - 35.4% Q2 - 63.1% Q3 - 90.2% Q4 - 96.3% <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 96.3%</u>	Jean Saxby	Not Met	96.22%Just missed target of 96.3%Overall a good performance. Overall collection rate for the year will exceed the 96.5% target within the next few months.
Increase the % of non domestic rates collected in year to 98%	6.2	Q1 - 35.0% Q2 - 59.5% Q3 - 84.1% Q4 - 98.0%	Jean Saxby	Met	98.25% Target met.

APPENDIX A

		<u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 98.00%</u>			
Reduce the average number of days to process new housing benefits claims to 15	6.3	Q1 – 15 Q2 – 15 Q3 – 15 Q4 - 15 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 15</u>	Jean Saxby	Met	15 days Target met
Reduce the average number of days to process changes to housing benefit claims to 5	6.4	Q1 – 5 Q2 – 5 Q3 – 5 Q4 - 5 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 5</u>	Jean Saxby	Not met	7 days Narrowly missed target
Reduce the average number of days to process new Council Tax Reduction claims to 15	6.5	Q1 – 15 Q2 – 15 Q3 – 15 Q4 - 15 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 15</u>	Jean Saxby	Not Met	16 days Narrowly missed target
Reduce the average number of days to process changes to Council Tax Reduction claims to 5	6.6	Q1 – 5 Q2 – 5 Q3 – 5 Q4 - 5 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 5</u>	Jean Saxby	Not Met	6 days Narrowly missed target

APPENDIX A

Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Provide a comprehensive communications service for the Council (internal and external)	22	Web visits and page views increased by 5% year on year, increase number of twitter and Facebook followers by 10% over year.	Kevin Boorman	G	Total web visits this quarter were 459 389, and page views 1 921 477; for the year our visits were 1 772 679, and our page views 6 330 645. Our 2014/15 visits were 1 601 957, and page views 4 136 769, so over the year our visits were up 10.6%, our page views 53% Facebook likes are up from 3930 to 4240 this period, and up from 3378 at the start of the year, a 25.5% increase; Twitter followers are up from 3714 to 3860 this period and up 3397 from at the start of the year, a 13.6% increase.
Performance Indicator		Targets		Met / Not Met	Performance at end of Q3
Increase visits to the Borough website to 1,600,000	5.1	Q1 - 400,000 Q2 - 800,000 Q3 - 1,200,000 Q4 - 1,600,000 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: It is proposed that this indicator is replaced to reflect the council's channel shift intentions: By Q4 2017 the percentage of customers registered for a self-service account and</u>	Kevin Boorman Mark Bourne	Met	As noted above, total web visits this quarter were 459 389, and page views 1 921 477; for the year our visits were 1 772 679, and our page views 6 330 645. Our 2014/15 visits were 1 601 957, and page views 4 136 769, so over the year our visits were up 10.6%, our page views 53%

APPENDIX A

		<u>self-serving online doubles to 40 % (60% target by 2019).</u>			
Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Continue the implementation of the ICT review, ensuring that it delivers the planned outcomes (including additional work generated by other service reviews, etc.). Work with colleagues and other partners to develop and introduce a more user-friendly, and transactional, website, continue to maintain the Council's IT network, and provide IT support to enable the smooth running of the Council.	23	ICT review recommendations implemented on time and on budget, website content streamlined, 95% of all Helpdesk calls within target time resolved and a network availability of 99% achieved.	Jane Hartnell / Stephen Dodson	G	Please refer to transformation programme update.

APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL SERVICES

Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
To co-ordinate the work of the council and its partnership activity in relation to poverty and welfare reform.	1	The council's anti-poverty strategy and action plan reviewed and associated targets achieved.	Andrew Palmer	G	The Anti-Poverty strategy has been reviewed and actions implemented. Further discussion is required with partners regarding targets for 2016/17 given reduced public sector resources available.
Continue to support the delivery of a broad based programme of regeneration activity in Central St Leonards in partnership with Amicus Horizon, the local community, Town Team and other partners.	2	<p>a) Fund, acquire and improve a minimum of 68 units of privately let or vacant dwelling over the period 2015-18 through the Coastal Space programme with AmicusHorizon.</p> <p>b) Continue to pursue and lobby for new area based investment and intervention in deprived coastal neighbourhoods, for example through the SE Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Plan and Europeanfunding steams</p> <p>c) Provide support to the town team and other partners to further develop and implement community based regeneration plans for St Leonards</p> <p>d) Continue to support a wide range of community safety, marketing, business support and</p>	Andrew Palmer	G	<p>A total of 38 units were delivered under the 2013-15 programme and further 30 units are due to be delivered over the 2015-18 period.</p> <p>AmicusHorizon have had an offer accepted for a large property that will deliver 20 x 1 beds and 5 x 2 beds (subject to planning permission).</p> <p>Viewings are taking place regarding the remaining 5 units to meet the target in full.</p> <p>Item C&D – St Leonards Festival commissioned 111 COLLECTIFF over two years and due to take place 16th July 16. Organisation of St Leonard's market delayed and will now start in May 2016. Police hub in Silchester Road now open and is having a positive impact.</p>

APPENDIX A

		community development activities in the St. Leonards area.			
Improve facilities at Hastings Castle for 2016, and develop a funded long-term strategy for the castle recognising its local, regional, national and international significance	3	Short-term improvements to Hastings castle agreed and refurbishments delivered; events programme for Hastings castle for 2016 season agreed in principle; long term strategy for significant improvements to Hastings castle agreed.	Monica Adams-Acton	A G	i) Works have been delayed slightly by need for archaeological survey. . The new railings have been installed. Works to the toilets and entrance will start during May. ii) The University of Brighton report was completed this period, and is forming the basis for a review of long term options for the Castle, and wider work around invasion, identity and migration.
To build on current cultural and Seafront regeneration by investigating how physical assets in the town centre and seafront might be used to stimulate new investment in the cultural and wider economy.	4	A strategic framework laying out the council's plans for White Rock, Town Hall, Museum and other assets with the engagement of community, business and statutory partners as well as potential funders	Monica Adams-Acton	G	A draftreport has been received setting out the outcome of the Bilfinger GVA's study. This a key evidence-based technical document which analyses the retail, leisure and other uses and future needs. In Q1, follow-up work to the Bilfinger GVA study will include more in-depth investigative work into the development potential of the White Rock Area and key town centre sites; and the re-appraisal of a number of Conservation Areas. Again these work areas will form part of supporting evidence base for the development of an Issues and Options document later in the year. The Seafront Strategy Action Plan was adopted by Cabinet in March.
In conjunction with colleagues, particularly in respect of the 950 th Battle anniversary,	5	Plan completed by September 2015 and subsequently delivered.	Kevin Boorman	G	Marketing plan completed, and new, more contemporary, logo for 1066 Country now being used; very good publicity generated for Hastings & 1066 Country in the Christmas/New Year period with English Heritage

APPENDIX A

<p>produce a tourism marketing plan for Hastings & 1066 Country for implementation for the 2016 season, and deliver the associated work programme.</p>					<p>announcing that the Battle of Hastings was the most significant anniversary in 2016, and the Royal Mint announcing their Battle of Hastings commemorative 50p. We have already started selling the latter in our TIC. Detailed planning underway for October 2016, with very considerable interest from the travel trade in our events programme.</p>
<p>Support Hastings' different festivals and events, and organise the Seafood & Wine Festival and Herring Fair, and the MidSummer Fish Fest on behalf of the Fisheries Local Action Group, to attract visitors and make the town a better and more inclusive place to live</p>	6	<p>All HBC-supported events delivered successfully in partnership with their respective organisers, acknowledging that the support for and delivery of these events may be different, and the 2015 Seafood and Wine Festival, and fish festivals, delivered successfully.</p>	Kevin Boorman	G	<p>All three fish festivals successfully delivered during 2015, and other major events organised by the community such as Jack in the Green and Hastings Week (including bonfire) similarly delivered very successfully, with our support.</p> <p>In Q4, detailed planning got underway for the 2016 fish fair season, including an appropriately themed Seafood & Wine Festival in September. Preparations being finalised for Jack In The Green, with event management plan, etc., tested at a tabletop exercise on 13th April.</p>
<p>Continue to develop, and use, the new 'Famously Hastings' brand and website</p>	7	<p>Wider use of 'Famously Hastings' branding where possible/appropriate, and further content added to the 'Famously Hastings' website, ensuring it is the 'go to' website for those living in, visiting, or wanting to study or invest in Hastings. Continued engagement with</p>	Kevin Boorman	G	<p>We continue to add content to the Famously Hastings website, as required, and 'Famously Hastings' is used in news releases and other copy where appropriate The appropriateness of continuing with the Famously Hastings brand will be tested as part of our strategic image review during 2016.</p>

APPENDIX A

		partners to raise awareness of the branding			
Contribute to a number of partnerships to further the town's infrastructure regeneration efforts by lobbying for improvements to road transport links in light of link road build and campaigning to retain, improve and develop rail links to serve the town.	8	A21/A27/A259 improvements raised on the political agenda, continue to play an active role in the 'HS1 to Hastings' work, and Hastings' interests served as far as practicable during the disruption caused by major rail infrastructure works e.g. Thameslink/London Bridge	Kevin Boorman	G	The benefits of the BHLR are being seen across the western side of town, especially Bexhill Road; and if all remaining legal challenges to the Queensway Gateway are overcome, when completed it is expected to significantly reduce congestion at the western end of The Ridge. Work continues on dualling the A21 between the Tonbridge and Pembury bypasses. The Hastings Transport Summit took place on 18 th March, and provided new alternatives for developing high speed rail for Hastings, which we will continue to pursue. London Bridge is on course to reopen for Charing Cross services in August.
Facilitate the Hastings and St. Leonards Local Strategic Partnership which brings together representatives from the local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to take a town-wide perspective in addressing local problems, strategies and initiatives by encouraging joint working and community	9	a) LSP Board supported to work effectively; work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver services which respond to locally identified need, and act as a collective voice with a shared vision for shaping the town. b) Place Survey (TBC)	Shabana Bayjou	a)G b)R	At the January LSP meeting, the UoB VC announced plans to review the UoB's presence in Hastings. LSP partners have since held two meetings to discuss a way forward and will also be reviewing recent developments at the meeting on 25 th April. This meeting will also welcome partners from the health sector to discuss community and personal resilience and receive a presentation from Simon Opi re the pier re-opening. b) There is no appetite to undertake a Place Survey at this time.

APPENDIX A

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 118</p>		<p>Community Safety Hub.</p>		<p>G</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead on delivery of the Safer Hastings action plan and provides key coordination for the partnership. • develop the Hastings Community Alcohol Partnership and support a number of other working groups addressing a wide variety of issues including hate crime, youth nuisance and support for the business crime reduction partnership. • chair weekly Community Safety Hub meetings which are well attended. <p>Additional issues are under research in addition to the PSPO mentioned earlier including preventing radicalisation, raising the profile of human trafficking/domestic slavery and linking this to wider safeguarding issues across Hastings.</p>
<p>Work through the Council’s shared waste contract arrangements to reduce the number of missed waste and recycling collections, recycle household waste and keep our streets clean.</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>a) Average annual missed waste and recycling collections rate reduced from 2014/15 levels. b) No less than 30% of household waste recycled. c) No more than 5% fail rate for average adapted street and environmental cleanliness score (NI 195).</p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>a) The average missed bin rate during this quarter is 161/100,000, an increase on last quarter when it was 146/100,000. For the year as a whole we achieved 146/100,000 compared with 130 last year. Whilst under target, it still represents over a 99.9% success rate. It’s also worth noting that most missed bins are collected no later than the following morning. However, we continue to work closely with Kier’s management to improve this performance.</p> <p>b) Whilst we are still waiting for the March recycling data to be confirmed, there appears to have been a slight increase in the recycling rate</p>

APPENDIX A

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 10</p>				<p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>compared with the last quarter. Further communication campaigns are being planned to increase participation and reduce contamination rates.</p> <p>c) The latest results for this indicator are within the target of no more than 5% failures. However we are concerned with the increase in both dog fouling and litter and are working with Kier to reschedule the street cleaning rounds to move resources to where they are needed most. The individual scores were:- Litter – 8% Detritus – 7% Graffiti – 1.0% Flyposting – 0.7% Dog fouling – 0.8% Giving an average of 3.5%.</p>
<p>Performance Indicators</p>		<p>Targets</p>		<p>Met / Not Met</p>	
<p>Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, dog fouling, detritus, graffiti and flyposting)</p>	<p>1.1</p>	<p>Q1 – 5% Q2 – 5% Q3 – 5% Q4 – 5% Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 5%</p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>Met</p>	<p>Q1 – 3.0% Q2 – 3.0% Q3 – 3.0% Q4 – 3.5%</p>
<p>Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (Bigger is better)</p>	<p>1.2</p>	<p>Q1 - 30% Q2 - 30% Q3 - 30% Q4 - 30% Proposed Year end March</p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>Met</p>	<p>Q1 - 31.5% Q2 - 29.0% Q3 - 28.7% Q4 - 29.0%</p>

APPENDIX A

		<p>2017 target: 30% <u>Once we know the actual recycling rate for 2015/16 we may increase this target.</u></p>			<p>Verified data for March is not available yet, so this figure is provisional at this stage.</p>
<p>% statutory nuisance and public health complaints responded to within 5 working days (bonfires, noise, drainage, accumulations etc.). (Bigger is better)</p> <p>Page 120</p>	<p>1.3</p>	<p>Q1 - 95% Q2 - 95% Q3 - 95% Q4 - 95%</p> <p><u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 90%</u> <u>It is proposed that this target is reduced as the number of scheduled food safety inspections for 2017/18 is predicted to be 40% higher & this will impact on the environmental health team resources available for this complaint work.</u></p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<p>Cumulative performance throughout the year: Q1 - 83.0% Q2 - 86.0% Q3 - 89.0% Q4 - 90.0%</p> <p>Performance improved throughout the year including quarter 4.</p>
<p>% of food establishments which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law (Bigger is better)</p>	<p>1.4</p>	<p>Q1 - 92% Q2 - 92% Q3 - 92% Q4 - 92%</p> <p><u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 92%</u></p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>Met</p>	<p>Q1 - 93.0% Q2 - 93.0% Q3 - 94.0% Q4 - 92.0%</p> <p>93% of establishments assessed over the year were compliant, meeting the target for the year.</p>
<p>The average number of failed bin collections (per 100,000)</p>	<p>1.5</p>	<p>Q1 - 130 Q2 - 130 Q3 - 130 Q4 - 130</p>	<p>Mike Hepworth</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<p>Q1 - 114 Q2 - 162 Q3 - 146 Q4 - 161</p>

APPENDIX A

collections) (Smaller is better)		<u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 130</u>			
Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Maintain and enhance standards of quality, cleanliness and safety in our parks, playgrounds and open spaces.	12	a) Playground facilities refurbishments (capital programme) arising from new play facilities strategy and action plan delivered. b) Lower park water treatment (floating islands, in-stream planting) to improve bathing water completed c) The Landscape Group enhancements programme (new flowerbeds) delivered.	Mike Hepworth	G G G	a) Kensington, Mare Bay and Highwater completed on target and budget. Carnoustie will be considered in financial year 2016/17 b) Bathing water project completed. All in-stream planting & planting and aeration of lower ponds completed. c) Successfully moving from high maintenance high cost bedding to sustainable planting. Seafront, Warrior Square and Pelham roundabout completed.
Manage and develop Hastings Country Park and Combe Valley Countryside Park with partners and stakeholders	13	a) New interpretive centre at Hastings Country Park opened. b) Combe Valley Community Interest Company fully established.	Mike Hepworth	R G	a) Groundwork pursuing Interreg and HLF funding opportunities. Working up a Stage 2 Interreg bid for decision June/July whilst also working up HLF bid. Considered expedient to await the outcome of funding bids before pursuing tender. Councillors at Full Council and Scrutiny advocated pursuing grant aid to achieve a better quality centre which has resulted in delays to original the timetable. b) Completed. CIC is fully functioning. Groundwork South administering. Board of Directors established.

APPENDIX A

Work with partners to ensure that our bathing waters meet and maintain the new EU quality standard for bathing water.	14	a) Planning for long term solution (outfall extension) b) Partnership activities continued – monitoring, meetings, pooling funds c) Continue to press and coordinate partnership activities towards achieving adherence to bathing water quality standards.	Mike Hepworth	G G G	a) Following good results for 2015 it was concluded that no further work required on potential outfall solutions at this time. b) The technical group & executive board have continued to meet regularly, & joint working has continued throughout the year. c) As above.
Work with partners to implement flood and coastal erosion protection measures.	15	a) Bulverhythe flood plan refreshed. b) Review and revise surface water management plan c) Submit business case to DEFRA for 16-17 capital works to Harbour Arm and groynes	Mike Hepworth	G A G	a) Revised Hastings Flood Plan has been produced and implemented. b) SWMP will be reviewed jointly with ESCC following the updating of the East Sussex Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2016 c) We expect a decision from the Environment Agency by mid May to confirm grant funding.
Maintain standards of safety and cleanliness on the seafront and pursue opportunities for refurbishment and enhancement.	16	a) Planned Bottle Alley improvements implemented b) FLAG projects (Big Beach) completed. c) New kiosks opened d) Access improvements to the beach implemented	Monica Adams-Acton	G G R R	a) Bottle Alley improvements essentially complete We anticipate LED lighting to be installed during September/October. b) FLAG programme completed. c) A new kiosk will be installed as part of the promenade works which will commence in Q1 16-17 d) Liaison with disability access groups and initial audits will take place in 16/17
Maintain the quality of the Museum service	17	a) Visitor target achieved b) Collections assessed with Arts Council advice c) Collections	Monica Adams-Acton	A	a) Visitor target not achieved. The target at 2.2 below includes attendance for both Hastings Museum and Old Town museum (now closed).

APPENDIX A

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 13</p>		<p>coordinated with County archive for cleaning, digitising and storage d) Local history redisplayed</p>		<p>G G G</p>	<p>The annual target for Hastings Museum alone was 43,686 and actual attendance was 42,437 – a shortfall of 1,249 for the year. This was primarily due to: i) the need to use other parts of the museum to store archived materials while the storeroom was treated for mould infestation. This meant that we were unable to hold exhibition previews, which sometimes bring in 300-400 people. ii) Lack of capacity to engage with schools resulted in a drop in schools visits. Both issues have been resolved for 2016-17. b) Resilience project completed, final report produced. Invitation to apply to next round ACE funding. c) store clean completed, collections returned. d) pre -1066 local history redisplayed. Next phase to open in June 2016.</p>
<p>Work with partners to develop sustainable play, sport and physical activity opportunities for all</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>a) Targets for Active Hastings and Street Games programmes met. b) Ore Valley adventure playground sustained. c) Year 2 Play Hastings Strategy targets for play opportunities and events met.</p>	<p>Monica Adams-Acton</p>	<p>a) G</p>	<p>a) Targets met. Two new initiatives were launched during Q4: The Opening Doors project in St Leonards and the Walk Once a Week project, which is part of a wider Living Streets initiative aimed at encouraging pupils to walk to school. Funding was awarded from The Lions, The Foreshore Trust and Safer Hastings Partnership (JAG funding) to resource a 1066 Cycling Festival which will take place in June. The volunteer programme continues with 5 volunteers from the Seaview Wellbeing Centre, amongst others, achieving accredited sports leader training this quarter. ESCC public health have confirmed funding for</p>

APPENDIX A

Page 124				<p>b) G</p> <p>c) G</p>	<p>Active Hastings for 2016/17 with a possible extended offer for 17/18 also.</p> <p>b) Adventure Playground operated as planned during 2015/16. In2play have been awarded continuation funding from Children in Need and People’s Health Trust which will enable operations to be sustained throughout 16/17. The funding includes a £26k HBC contribution, as budgeted.</p> <p>Targets met. Highlights include operating a weekly neighbourhood Street Play initiative, a community crèche service and helping to re-launch the Play Forum in affiliation with the local Youth Partnership. Play Officer support has helped to enable Better Braybrooke to achieve a £15k funding award for Hughenden Road pocket park. Joint officer and Cllr support was also pivotal in helping a local resident association to achieve a £36k Veolia Environmental Trust grant to build a new play space in combe valley.</p>
Develop plans for sustaining and enhancing leisure facilities, seeking opportunities for partnership and external funding.	19	a) Actions from the refreshed leisure facilities assessment completed b) Playing pitch audit and strategy produced to support funding bids	Monica Adams-Acton	<p>a)G</p> <p>b)A</p>	<p>a) Regular liaison with facility operators including Freedom Leisure, Ark William Parker Academy, Horntye and Summerfields Gym Club.</p> <p>b)Scheduled to be finished in Q1 2016/17. A number of key stakeholders have been involved in signing-off each of the 4 stages of the process. This extensive process coupled with a delay in initially mobilising the partners has resulted in slippage, but has been necessary to ensure a more robust strategy with partnership buy-in.</p>
Deliver refurbishment of	20	a) Annual repairs and renewals	Mike	G	a) The agreed programme of works for 2015-16

APPENDIX A

<p>public realm assets with particular attention to energy efficiency</p>		<p>programme delivered b) Car parks LED lighting installed c) Cliff works emerging from 2015 intensive investigations delivered</p>	<p>Hepworth</p>	<p>G</p>	<p>has been completed. R&R Programme for 2016-17 has been developed and works are now beginning to be progressed.</p> <p>b) Following the success of the Pier UG Car Park re-lighting works, it was agreed that Carlisle Parade UGCP would be the next priority for re-lighting. A budget of £40k has been allocated in the current version of the 2016-17 R&R Programme. Anticipated that these works will commence towards the end of the financial year to enable a possible redecoration to follow on immediately, subject to finance from 2017-18 programme. Subsequently it has been agreed that the significantly more expensive re-lighting of Priory Street MSCP would be reconsidered once the future of this CP had been clarified.</p> <p>c) The design works for 22 Rock-a-Nore retaining wall have been completed. Planning application and tender exercise are being progressed. Ownership issues have had an impact on the programme but it is expected that the works will be undertaken in the 2016-17 year. Following receipt of budget costings for the higher priority items, allocations have been included in the R&R Programme in years 2016-17 and 17-18. Following receipt of the costing, the additional survey work to West of St Leonards Parish Church has been completed and a report is now awaited.</p>
<p>Performance Indicators</p>		<p>Targets</p>		<p>Met / Not</p>	

APPENDIX A

				Met	
Number of people attending White Rock Theatre performances (Bigger is better)	2.1	Q1 - 15,500 Q2 - 20,500 Q3 - 56,000 Q4 - 75,000 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 75,000</u>	Monica Adams-Acton	Not Met	Q1 - 16,689 Q2 - 24,793 Q3 - 61,424 Q4 - 74,888
Number of visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery (Bigger is better)	2.2	Q1 - 9,750 Q2 - 24,000 Q3 - 35,000 Q4 - 45,000 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 45,000</u>	Monica Adams-Acton	Not Met	Q1 - 10,325 Q2 - 23,444 Q3 - 33,187 Q4 - 42,437
Total attendances at Council Leisure Centres (Bigger is better)	2.3	Q1 - 102,500 Q2 - 207,000 Q3 - 297,500 Q4 - 400,000 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 400,000</u>	Monica Adams-Acton	Met	Q1 - 100,977 Q2 - 200,987 Q3 - 295,288 Q4 - 403,330
Target	No.	Measures	Lead Officer	RAG	Q4 Performance
Through our zero tolerance approach to neglected and derelict buildings and land, take tough measures, to remove eyesores and bring back empty homes or buildings to use	21	a) A minimum of 70 long term empty (over 2 years) dwellings returned to use and 50 neglected/derelict buildings improved.	Andrew Palmer	G	76 long term empty properties returned to use during the year, 17 of which were during Q4
Bring back empty homes or buildings to	22	b) A further programme of compulsory purchase orders in	Andrew Palmer	G	Minor slippage. However, Cabinet approved a CPO of a large long term empty property In April

APPENDIX A

use using Compulsory Purchase if necessary		respect of long term empty homes brought forward in the second half of the municipal year.			2016 linked to the Coastal Space Project. Once completed this would provide approximately 17 new homes. A further CPO programme of street purchases will be brought forward to Cabinet in June 2016.
Build on the success of the existing HMO licensing schemes by potentially introducing the Selective Licensing of all privately rented homes in designated parts of the town	23	a) A further 250 Houses in Multiple Occupation in the four wards of Gensing, Central St Leonards, Braybrooke and Castle licensed through the existing HMO licensing schemes. b) Subject to the results of licensing research and consultation exercise undertaken in 2014/15 implement a selective licensing scheme in up to 10 wards within the borough.	Andrew Palmer	G	a) 221 Houses in Multiple Occupation licenced in the year. This is marginally below target b) Selective Licensing Scheme launched in October 2015. To the end of March 2016 951 applications for selective licencing received.
Complete the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme for Central St. Leonards Renewal Area and the conservation and repair grant programme for Pelham Arcade.	24	Existing grant programmes completed by March 2016.	Andrew Palmer	A	The Central St. Leonards THI project at the Congregational Church Stalled as a result of unforeseen personal circumstances. Works have re-started and are due to complete by December 2016. The other THI project on site at 108 Marina is due to complete in April 2016. The restoration works at Pelham Arcade continue. 4-5 Pelham Arcade is close to completion Works on restoring the frontage at 12A Pelham Arcade, are expected to complete

APPENDIX A

					over the summer 12 Pelham Arcade is now back on site and due to complete in May 2016. We are currently waiting for Historic England to confirm their grant funding for Pelham Arcade in 2016/17. It is hoped to secure commitment from all of the remaining property owners in Pelham Arcade to come into the scheme, during 2016-17, providing that sufficient grant funding is available.
Build upon the success of the existing Letstart scheme by establishing a Social Lettings Agency for the town to improve access and management of privately rented accommodation (subject to Cabinet approval)	25	A minimum of 60 units of accommodation released by March 2016	Andrew Palmer	R	19 units were leased in total for the first year. The team are actively working on a further 6 properties which should be leased within the next quarter and are exploring the options of leasing HMO's (one 5 bed and one 4 bed). The team have redeveloped the SLA website and continue to actively promote the scheme through local media, a newsletter distributed with LHA payments to landlords, poster campaigns, social media, exhibition stands at local events and business forums alongside direct marketing to property owners.
Performance Indicators				Met / Not Met	
Number of homelessness Acceptances (Smaller is better)	4.01	Q1 - 36 Q2 - 73 Q3 - 109 Q4 - 145 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target:250</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q1 - 60 Q2 - 123 Q3 - 185 Q4 - 251 There were 485 homelessness applications

APPENDIX A

					received during the year, which is a 17% increase compared to the previous year and reflects a national trend in increased homelessness. This is despite a significant increase in preventions locally.(See Separate report)
Number of homelessness cases prevented (Bigger is better)	4.02	Q1 - 500 Q2 - 1,000 Q3 - 1,500 Q4 - 2,000 <u>Proposed Year end March</u> <u>2017 target:2,000</u>	Andrew Palmer	Met	Q1 - 777 Q2 - 1,329 Q3 - 2,081 Q4 - 2385 The target has been exceeded
Number of private sector dwellings (units) brought in line with the current statutory standard (Bigger is better)	4.03	Q1 - 50 Q2 - 100 Q3 - 150 Q4 - 200 <u>Proposed Year end March</u> <u>2017 target: 200</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q1 - 44 Q2 - 79 Q3 - 103 Q4 - 178 Although the final outturn was slightly below the target this should be viewed as positive. The impact of proactive inspections in the 4 wards resulted in fewer notices being served in Qtrs. 1-3 as a consequence of reduced levels of tenant complaints Numbers increased again in Q4 as the impact of Selective Licensing scheme was felt and also in response to seasonal increases in complaints at the end of the winter months.
Number of affordable homes delivered (Not suitable for quarterly reporting, for reporting at yearend)	4.04	Target for the year 75, not suitable for reporting quarterly. <u>Proposed Year end March</u> <u>2017 target:75</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q4 - 29 units of affordable homes were delivered in 2015/16. The target reflects overall housing delivery and will vary from year to year given market forces, HA development programmes, availability of funding etc. It should be noted that the target was exceeded in 2014/15 when 129

APPENDIX A

only)					homes were delivered.
Long term (2+ years) empty properties returned to use (Bigger is better)	4.05	Q1 - 18 Q2 - 35 Q3 - 53 Q4 - 70 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target:70</u>	Andrew Palmer	Met	76 long term empty properties returned to use during the year, 17 of which were during Q4.
% major residential & commercial planning applications determined within 13 weeks or as agreed with the applicant (Bigger is better)	4.06	Q1 - 90% Q2 - 90% Q3 - 90% Q4 - 90% <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target 90%</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q1 – 67% Q2 – 50% Q3 – 88% Q4 – 100% Average for the year was 83% of apps decided in time. Whilst this is slightly below the year-end target it demonstrates a significant improvement in the second half of the year. Average for the last 2 quarters being 92% and well above the target figure
% minor residential & commercial planning applications determined within 8 weeks or as agreed with the applicant (Bigger is better)	4.07	Q1 - 85% Q2 - 85% Q3 - 85% Q4 - 85% <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target : An interim target of 85% has been set for the year. This will need to be reviewed in line with revised</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q1 – 69% Q2 – 60% Q3 – 81% Q4 – 79% End of Year: 71% of apps decided in time. Performance for the year was below the target but there was improvement over the year and by the second half performance was much closer to the target figure

APPENDIX A

		<u>targets being established by central government through a new Housing & Planning Bill.</u>			
% householder planning applications determined within 6 weeks (Bigger is better)	4.08	Q1 - 65% Q2 - 65% Q3 - 65% Q4 - 65% <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: An interim target of 65% has been set for the year. This will need to be reviewed in line with revised targets being established by central government through a new Housing & Planning Bill.</u> <u>A new indicator covering appeal success will also be introduced.</u>	Andrew Palmer	Not Met	Q1 – 42% Q2 – 36% Q3 – 70% Q4 – 50% End of Year: 48% of apps decided in time. This fluctuated throughout the year and remained below target at year end. This is being addressed as part of the New DC managers review, Additional staffing capacity is now being achieved through a new internal training programme and should start to produce results by Q2 2016/17..
Net number of new homes built (Not suitable for quarterly reporting, for reporting at yearend only)	4.09	Target for the year 200, not suitable for reporting quarterly. <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target:200</u>	Andrew Palmer	Met	244 completed during the year exceeding the target
Number of neglected and derelict buildings improved (Bigger is better)	4.10	Q1 - 12 Q2 - 25 Q3 - 37 Q4 – 50 <u>Proposed Year end March 2017 target: 50</u>	Andrew Palmer	Met	3 properties improved in Q4. Total for the year was 53 properties exceeding the year-end target
Target	No.	Measures	Lead	RAG	Q4 Performance

APPENDIX A

<p>Promote and support high quality physical and economic Development initiatives that stimulate economic growth and jobs opportunities for local people.</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>a) Complete funded plans to repair and refurbish the White Rock Baths as a BMX/skateboard venue. b) Provide direct support and referral services to cultural and advanced manufacturing businesses that support job creation and retention within these sectors. c) Support further development of employability services within the town that provide skills development, apprenticeships and job opportunities for unemployed people. d) Develop and implement a rolling annual action plan to deliver the refreshed Seafront Strategy objectives. Priority actions will be subject to available funding. e) Continue to progress the Town Centre & White Rock Area Action Plan (TC&WRAAP) through the key stages to adoption including the first public consultation stage scheduled for quarter 4 and develop supplementary planning documents that provide detailed guidance on Local Plan policies.</p>	<p>Officer Monica Adams-Acton</p>	<p>G G G G G</p>	<p>a) White Rock Baths renovation works completed. The Source Park opened 12th February 2016 . b) CCF3 Sea Escapes programme on track for completion December 2016. Creative and Tourism mentoring programme established. Social Media Tool training sessions programmed. c) Continued support of Own Grown, New website almost completed. 1st Stage CLLD application successful. d) All costed elements of Seafront Strategy Action Plan for completion in 15/16 have met target. Action plan overseen by Seafront Regeneration Group. e) A draft report has been received setting out the outcome of the Bilfinger GVA's study. This a key evidence-based technical document which analyses the retail, leisure and other uses and future needs. In Q1, follow-up work to the Bilfinger GVA study will include more in-depth investigative work into the development potential of the White Rock Area and key town centre sites; and the re-appraisal of a number of Conservation Areas. Again these work areas will form part of supporting evidence base for the development of an Issues and Options document later in the year.</p>
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APPENDIX A

		Complete essential repairs and refurbishment works and a subsequent lease with The Source for the establishment of a BMX/skateboard venue within the White Rock Baths.			
To contribute to the regeneration of the borough through a rich cultural programme that appeals both to local people and visitors, extending, broadening and promoting the borough's cultural activities to establish Hastings as a nationally and internationally recognised centre for arts and culture.	27	a) Secure new funding streams and develop a cultural programme to mark the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 2016. b) Continue to deliver a programme of cultural events on the Stade in 2015-16 that appeal to a wide audience and attracts cultural visitors to the town. c) Facilitate the Cultural Leaders steering group and support the work of cultural partners across the Hastings-Rother area. d) Undertake initial feasibility work into cultural-led development opportunities in the White Rock area.	Monica Adams-Acton	G	a) Detailed planning for delivering the festival programme is underway. The website launched in March and our social media is very active. We have raised £17,600 in sponsorship to date. Our Intern funded by the Creative Employment Programme started in March focussing on marketing. b) Planning for Stade Saturdays 2016-17 continued, bolstered by the success of the Coasters Strategic Touring Programme bid to Arts Council England, which will bring additional match funds to the Stade Saturdays budget for up to three years. c) The Cultural Leaders Group has moved into a new phase with an external Chair. The group will continue to support the objectives of the Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy and other local strategies in a proactive way. d) see target 4.
Promote environmentally sustainable regeneration and economic activity.	28	a) Pursue funding sources for carbon reduction and energy efficiency initiatives. b) Subject to successful funding bids, implement low carbon project in residential area of the town.	Monica Adams-Acton	G	a & b) Climate Active Neighbourhood (CAN) Project approved Feb 2016. AmicusHorizon is Hastings lead partner with HBC and ESC being local sub-partners. Project will be launched locally following EU referendum. The project will focus on activities in the NE Hastings area. Sustainable Houses in Inclusive

APPENDIX A

					Neighbourhood (SHINE) is due to be re-submitted early May 16. There have been delays in the submission due to state aid issues which have now been resolved by the lead partner
Page 134	29	a) Dedicated officer support to BME communities, the Youth Council, and the Access For All group. b) Implement a programme that promotes and celebrates cultural diversity. c) Support the work of the St Leonards Town Team in the delivery of activities that enhance the retail and leisure environment in St Leonards.	Monica Adams-Acton	G	<p>a) Youth Council members promoted and delivered a successful grants programme. They organised the first Practitioners Youth Conference in March 16 for the town. 50 participants attended this event. The Youth Council also represented themselves on the issue with supported housing at the HASS meeting, and met with the Home Office to review gang culture in Hastings.</p> <p>a) The Mosque Open Day (Feb), International Women's (Mar) and Chinese New Year (Feb) were all very successful. The yearly Eat Global festival was very organised in March 16.</p> <p>b) Please see item 2(C&D) above.</p>
	30	a) Dedicated support for Town Team programme of activity and St Leonards Festival. b) Support the Town Centre Partnership's development of a BID proposal in Hastings Town Centre. c) complete current FLAG programme and develop new bid for future EU FLAG programme.	Monica Adams-Acton	G G G	<p>a) ST Leonards Festival commissioned and set to be held on 9th July 2016.</p> <p>b) The BID proposal is being developed by consultants Revive and Thrive with a Steering Group established to oversee the work.</p> <p>c). FLAG 1 activities completed December 2015, final claim submitted January 2016. EMFF FLAG (FLAG 2) EOI submitted March 2016, awaiting outcome 1st qtr 16/17.</p> <p>d. FLAG partnership structure maintained</p>

APPENDIX A

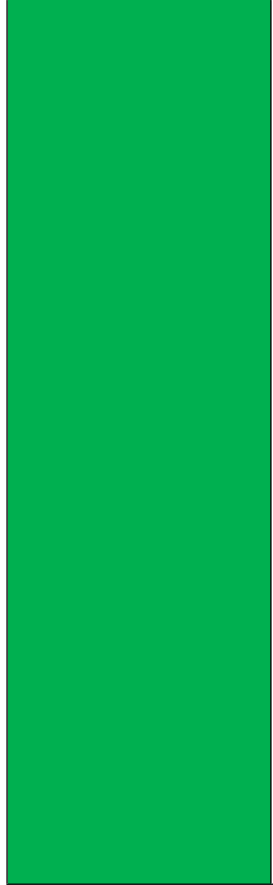
		d) Support the ongoing work of the FLAG partners.			
By 2019 success looks like: - Funding identified, secured and project delivered to benefit of local residents - Strong partnerships and European contacts sustained building on the successes of Future Cities, ACE and Safe		a) External funding strategy developed in line with business transformation objectives b) EU funding strategy developed, partnerships sustained and appropriate funding applications made	Monica Adams-Acton	G G	a) External funding activity aligned to corporate plan priorities and monitored quarterly. Hastings hosted a meeting of the Eurotown's Social Inclusion task team in March, which enabled exchange of good practice, and potential new activity between representatives from UK, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands.

APPENDIX A

External Funding Pipeline

Project Title	Activity	Department lead	Application stage	Status	Funding stream	Next steps?	HBC Project Grant Value £
SHINE	Low carbon Retrofit of residential houses and energy efficiencies in St Leonards	Housing (AP)	full application (2nd)	Progressing	2 Seas 2:1	2nd stage decision in Nov 2015 was to refer to JS for operational reasons. This included increasing the cooperation elements of the project and address any State Aid issues relevant to a few of the partners. This work could not be completed for the tight Jan 2016 deadline, so re-delivery is in May 2016. Energise Sussex Coast	£165,000 confirmed

APPENDIX A



						will now remain a partner as state aid issues resolved, so original CMG report is valid. Members to be briefed upon final confirmation of application (9 May). Decision Sept/Oct 2016.	
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APPENDIX A

CAN- Climate Active Neighbourhoods	Energy efficiencies in households in neighbourhoods including Ore, focussing on community behavioural change	Housing (AP)	full application (2nd)	Bid submitted	NWE V B	Approved Feb 2016. Kick-off meeting April. Hastings steering group of partners already met.	£75,300 confirmed
CLLD (Community led local development)	Development of a local action group representing HBC, voluntary sector and businesses to deliver enterprise, jobs, growth and skills for the most disadvantaged communities within Hastings and Bexhill.	Regen (VC)	full application (2nd)	Progressing	ESIF (ERDF&ESF)	First stage approved. Funding agreements received. To sign. LAG inception meeting 26/4.	Main budget tbc
Sustainable mobility actions for travel: delivering sustainable tourism	Sustainable mobility action plans from a visitor prespective, to assess the	Regen (KB)	full application (2nd)	Progressing	Interreg Europe	First call decision was a narrow failure. To be re-submitted by LP for 13/5/16	£110,000 est

APPENDIX A

SMART- DEST	opportunity of electric tram link along seafront						
Traditional Markets (GO-TRADES)	Develop local markets, themed markets, market exchange and entrepreneurial support for market holders.	Regen (JD)	full application (2nd)	Bid submitted	FCE interreg	Bid submitted 24/3/16 . Delayed from 2015 submission due to partnership changes. Decision in Summer 2016.	£197000 confirmed
ESF BBO (European Social Fund - Building Better Opportunities)	Addressing employment needs for clients furthest from job market (in areas of disabilities and long term health, mental health, carers, older people, lone parents, difficulty sustaining work).	Regen (VC)	concept/outline (1st)	Bid submitted	ESIF (ESF)	HBC is named in 4 bids submitted by local partners. Finer details to be worked up upon first stage approvals. Decision on this stage now delayed until May 2016	Budget tbc

APPENDIX A

<p>UP Straw: Urban and Public building in Straw</p>	<p>The whole project will be about the construction of public buildings in straw bales, in different situations (5 different countries, various context, urban and rural, school, nursery, administrative building, health centre, social housing, ...). These buildings will become examples for the construction sector and serve as demonstrators for the public sector.</p>	<p>Environment & Place (MP via MD)</p>	<p>full application (2nd)</p>	<p>Progressing</p>	<p>NWE</p>	<p>Submitted Nov 2015, approved at first stage. Await LP info re next stage deadline (possibly July submission). Clarification requested re HBC role and financial status 4/16 as Groundworks is the full partner.</p>	<p>TBC</p>
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APPENDIX A

FLAG 2		Regen (VC)	concept/outline (1st)	Bid submitted	MMO/EMFF	EOI submitted. Decision 3/5 for LDS. Deadline 8/7. Final decision September 2016	€750k (tbc)
(DIY TOV) DIY Regen: Transforming Ore Valley.	Bottom Up Development, Community Self Build and Collective Ownership through an evolved Organisation Workshop in the Ore Valley, Hastings. HBC lead partner. £4m ERDF grant for project.	Regen (VC)	full application (2nd)	Bid submitted	UIA	Submitted 30/3/16. Eligibility check end of April. Strategic fit decision end of June. Final decision end of Oct 2016	£260,000 confirmed

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TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - Phase 1		Actions & Progress		Date: 08/04/16		Version: Final							
Project	Ref Number	Description	Project Start Date	Project Completion Date	Project Lead/Project Manager	Previous Quarter (Q1 1st April - 30th June 2016) Q3 1st September	Previous Quarter (Q2 - 1st July - 30th September 2016)	Previous Quarter 3 - 1st October- 31st December 2016)	Targets/Milestones for Quarter 4 - 1st January 31st March 2016	RAG	Risks/ Issues	Mitigation	
Process Review & Design	WP01	Provide clear guidelines on how to analyse existing service delivery and identify better ways of working through business process mapping (BPM). Rollout BPM across all service areas.	01/10/2014	26/11/2015	Stephen Dodson	1. Corporate Business Process Mapping (BPM) guidelines produced. Service Mapping tested. 2. Customer Journey mapping for CCC process 90% complete. 3. BPMs completed for Waste (Waste) Housing Renewal, Housing Options, Environmental Services (90%)	1. Services identified for Business Reviews including Building Control. Sign off and start roll-out of communications plan. 3. Start on internal change programme-staff training awareness raising.	1. Complete BPM with identified services areas. 2. Identify and start next service areas for BPM.	1. Process Mapping Complete for all old CRM service areas. 2. Geographical layers, photo raising, LUPC links, log Parent shell property data base 2. 95% Completed - Bulky Waste & Pest Control should be done Phase 2 1st Quarter	U/A	1. BPM has revealed the scale of the task for some service areas to address, this has led to delay of migration of some service areas to Firmstep platform.	1. Outstanding service areas to be carried forward into 16/17	
Customer First Strategy	WP02	Define and communicate the Customer First strategy. Focused on meeting customer needs.	10/02/2015	27/10/2015	Daniel Taylor	1. Draft Strategy Produced	1. Strategy to be finalised	Strategy to be signed off	Strategy being fully reviewed and incorporated into Phase 2	U/A	1. Strategy not clearly focused and not corporately adopted	1. Ensure strategy has meaning and relevance for organisation and customers see difference	
Communications and Organisational Change	WP03	Improved internal and external communications to provide clear, uncluttered, and relevant messages	24/04/2015	02/02/2016	Daniel Taylor	1. Draft communications strategy produced	1. Recruit specialist Customer First Communications Officer. 2. Sign off and start roll-out of communications plan. 3. Start on internal change programme-staff training awareness raising.	1. Recruit Communications Officer. 2. Evaluate internal messaging and change programme - e.g. CCC role in shifting customer behaviour. "Time 4 Attention", work to increase take up of On-Line "My Hastings".	Review programme and incorporate into Phase 2	U/A	1. Complexity of messages to be communicated to internal and external stakeholders and customers	1. Clear comms plan showing the right message to the right person in the right way. Start communicating core messages to Members and Staff.	
Agreed design principles for communication channels	WP04	A new look and feel to the website and other communication channels to provide a modern and relevant interface for all customers.	08/05/2015	26/11/2015	Daniel Taylor	1. Assessment of current HBC website offering - 'fit for purpose' checks underway. 2. Assessment of current Content Management System (CMS) completed.	1. Recruit specialist Customer First Communications Officer. 2. Refreshed web content for Hastings online. 3. Implementation of CMS. 4. Undertake review of internet and all internal contents. 5. Undertake review of HBC's use of social media.	1. Review of existing web pages and move to new testing site. 2. Recruit Communications Officer.	1. Soft Launch new look website - delayed until post May election. 2. Evaluate all communications channels and establish Terms of Reference and membership of a Communications Board	U/A	1. Service Areas not providing information and updates in time for soft launch. 2. Not gaining 'buy-in' for new look website and communications methodology.	1. Customer First Champion working closely with Service Managers and keeping Directors and AD's informed. 2. Establishment of a Communications Board will ensure greater control of messaging and methods.	
Implementation of Firmstep (CRM) (phase 1)	WP05	My Hastings Online. The new purpose built customer relationship management (CRM) system that will improve the interactions and transactions between customers and the council	20/10/2004	27/10/2015	Mark Bourne	1. Firmstep Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system installed. 2. Kier Waste management services process completed and uploaded. 3. My Account (part 1 - Council tax look up and personal log in) Live. 4. FO's and 3 Cs being developed. 5. Soft launch of My Hastings with Report if feature enabled and soft testers recruited. 6. Successful integration of Self Customer Forms.	1. Prioritising of Firmstep Integrations: a) Complete Zetcom integration b) Address technical glitches c) Agree protocol for Kier way 'completed' tasks d) Form building for Housing Options e) Go live with FO's & 3Cs f) Continue integration of Housing Licensing g) Start moving existing CRM processes onto Firmstep g) Implement payment form and payment process. 4. Develop Phase 2 requirements.	1. Go live with Housing Options 2. Go live with Housing Licensing 3. Transfer of all remaining processes on CRM to Firmstep	1. Confirm phase 2 requirements - Version 2 developments Geographical layers, photo raising, LUPC links, log Parent shell property data base 2. 95% Completed - Bulky Waste & Pest Control should be done Phase 2 1st Quarter	U/A	Various technical issues with Firmstep platform	1. 3rd party supplier working to rectify issues as soon as possible 2. Continuous refinement based on feedback from users.	
Addressing digital exclusion 'Digital by Design'	WP06	Transforming our service processes to enable them to be accessed on-line by all. This will include: identifying current levels of digital access and barriers, identifying EU funding opportunities, working in partnership, creating a Digital by Choice Plan.	01/04/2015	10/05/2016	Stephen Dodson	1. Community and voluntary sector partners informed and promoting soft launch of My Hastings online. 2. Information on national and local digital inclusion gathered and ready to be utilised when project starts	1. Initial identification of who are the 'digitally excluded' within the borough and commission research 2. Undertake internal audit of how services are currently being accessed and where possible by whom and how.	1. Link to O&S Digital Exclusion review.	Report to O&S completed and recommendations to be incorporated into Phase 2	U/A	None at this stage	na	
Project	Ref Number	Description	Project Start Date	Project Completion Date	Project Lead/Project Manager	Previous Quarter (Q1 1st April - 30th June 2016)	Previous Quarter (Q2 - 1st July - 30th September 2016)	Targets/Milestones for Quarter 3 - 1st October- 31st December 2016)	Targets/Milestones for Quarter 4 - 1st January 31st March 2016)	RAG	Risks/ Issues	Mitigation	
Efficiency savings	WP07	Underlying further review of costs and implementing agreed service improvements by a combination of process re-design, IT solutions and improved customer focus.	08/12/2014	02/02/2016	Stephen Dodson	1. Implementation and monitoring of Unflow to identify levels of internal printing cost (<50K per annum). 2. Initial review of service area costs. IT systems, Energy, External printing, Postage, Internal waste. 3. Business Process Mapping of Building Control Started.	1. Complete Efficiency Savings Report and make recommendations to P&R. 2. Produce Efficiency implementation plan.	1. Complete and Implement Efficiency Savings Plan	1. Implement efficiency monitoring plan across service areas 2. Implement T & Motion studies - Initially Housing Planning, Bulky Waste, Pest Control scoped. Produce report for phase 2	U/A	1. Scale of work involved in monitoring all service areas	1. Monitoring plan and template developed and provided dedicated resource.	
Financial system interfaces (A)	WP08 (A)	1. Upgrade of Paye Net Cash Receiving System to a newer version p	26/02/2015	16/11/2015	Kit Wheeler	1. Partial testing on ACR, Paye.net, AIM. 2. Imports are working with exceptions.	1. Further testing and analysis after issues has been identified by external consultants which resulted in a delay to the original go live date.	1. Upgrade of system was completed in November with all users moves across to the new version of Paye.net, offering better reporting functionality for finance and now the version is fully supported by external providers. 2. Financial savings for a licence fee which has been identified as being redundant in the new system relating to cheque processing which is still in the process of being negotiated with our external providers Capita. New reduced fee from April 2016 to be confirmed.	1. Successful closure of accounts at the year-end of 31st March	G		Project debrief session planned for Friday 8 th January to discuss any implementation issues and ways of improving working relationship between Finance and IT departments.	
Financial system interfaces (B)	WP08 (B)	Undertake analysis of existing financial system interfaces - specifically paye net and AVIS Income Management (AIM) Agrees/ front in order to identify and potentially implement most efficient and effective Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP)	01/11/2015	31/03/2016	Kit Wheeler	N/A	N/A	Undertake an initial review, using external professional demonstrations of potential systems as well as business mapping the current processes, looking at potential improvements. Business mapping process was started as part of overall Finance mapping, further discussions will take place in QTR 4. Demonstrations for new systems / add-on's booked for Wednesday 13 th January	Draft Business Case developed		To be identified and analysed.		
Housing - Additional, Mandatory and Selective Licensing	WP09	To implement an on-line housing licensing scheme for the existing additional and mandatory licensing schemes and prepare the on-line version of the proposed Selective Licensing scheme. These areas will be fully integrated into the Firmstep CRM system.	23/02/2015	15/11/2015	Matt Chinn/Tracy Caister	1. Business Process Mapping completed. Firmstep building form. 2. Testing commenced	1. Await Council's opinion 2. Form build to be completed 3. Form reflects Council's opinion 4. Testing and refining form 5. Landlord to test form 6. Further refining of form 7. Integration completed	1. Full testing complete, including landlord testing 2. Form for Selective Licensing published on 26 November 2015. 3. To end of the quarter 124 applications received	1. Further adaptation of form following feedback from landlords. Including adaptation of help text to ensure plain English 2. Introduction of 'save form' function 3. Development of parent shell solution to enable whole form to be published (to include HMO Licensing applications) 4. Publicity for landlords / letting agents on the scheme to increase application rate 5. 850 Licences issued 6. Commission new Housing Stock Condition Survey to inform consultation on revised Additional HMO licensing scheme.	A	1. Size and complexity of the form has been highlighted as a barrier to applying for licence this may affect application numbers as the form is refined. 2. Due to complexity of the form the save form function requires adaptation of Firmstep on the platform level - significant development required by provider.	Actioning landlord feedback on the form as it is received and refining.	
Data Analysis and policy information	WP10	Project Closed and incorporated in WP14											
Implementation of an Electronic Record and Document Management System (ERDMS)	WP11	To reduce wastage and improve e-documentation.	27/01/2015	31/03/2016	Mark Bourne	Initial investigations into post handling, legal team and estates team requirements revealed a poor business case for the further upgrade. IDOX investment that would be required. Work will now concentrate on optimising IDOX for planning and implementing a new version of SharePoint.	Implemented new version of Share point. 1. Created test SharePoint Foundation 2013 instance. 2. Created a data framework in which documents can reside.	1. Investigated, scoped and ordered IDOX upgrades: i. IDOX Public Access v2.1 upgrade (€5000) ii. Core DMS upgrade to 4.2 (€18,000) iii. IDOX photo loader for DMS (€2000) iv. Additional IDOXcan licenses (€900) v. Reinstallation of updated software onto windows 7 PCs (€900) vi. Upgrade to latest version of Acrobat LUPC Connector 8. IDOX database 'health check'	1. Implement IDOX upgrades for the Planning teams - some components implemented - others into next 2. Pilot the Legal Team storage requirements in new SharePoint 3. Commence migration of other v Service areas to new SharePoint.	U/C	1. User acceptance and training requirements for the new SharePoint are unclear.	1. The Legal Service team SharePoint implementation pilot will be used to inform the wider roll-out of the new version.	

Housing Options	WP12	Housing Options to improve in the following two areas: • Restructure of the front-end of Housing Options Service • Develop a more effective phone handling service. Both areas will be fully integrated into the Firmstep CRM system.	10/1/2015	31/03/2016	Joe Powell	1. All Business Process mapping completed. 2. Consultation with Transformation Team and CCC. 3. Project completion date slipped due to decision to move from Locala to Local Pad design and integration in to Firmstep and CCC more complex.	1. CCC training materials designed and ready to deliver. 2. Prototype version of Local Pad is tested and 2nd stage development authorised		1. Firmstep Inage form complete 2. CCC staff have been trained in the use of Firmstep for Housing Options purposes. 3. Go Live 4. Review and revisions - update for next PRF Process Map updated - to test and review	A	Tests indicate additional work and time is required to finalise the software.	An abridged software package has been outlined to enable us to go live prior to software being completely finalised. An additional 8 weeks has been allocated to the design phase to accommodate delays.
Mod Gov implementation	WP13	This will include the second and third phase of the Mod Gov implementation process and will consist of: • Developing a Library • Creating internal forms and templates for members and officers. Providing communications and training in the new forms and templates	17/1/2014	28/02/2016	Mark Horan	A Mod Go library has been developed containing key information for Members previously hosted on the Council's intranet. Internal forms and templates have been drafted and are being tested and refined this and next quarter. Online video based training materials are in development to assist training.	1. Add Emergency Planning procedures to Mod Gov Library and continue to refine library according to use. 2. Report back to Directors on sign off and quality assurance options with regards to the report writing template. 3. Schedule and begin face to face training with key stakeholders.	1. Refine library as appropriate. 2. Complete any outstanding training and any final amendments to templates and associated documentation. 3. Launch and refine templates and complete any follow up requirements.	Training completed for key officers and use of Mod Gov for report writing monitored and reviewed.	GA	There is slippage in terms of rolling out training this quarter as it took longer than scheduled to seek agreement for work flow templates	Training dates have been scheduled with key officers in advance of the amended project completion date. The remainder of the quarter will be used to support and review use.
Future corporate planning process	WP14	This will include: Working to ensure there is a golden thread between corporate priorities, targets and service based activities. Publishing a timetable and to do list reflecting the council's plan, review business cycle. Testing the use of project based approaches to the design, development and implementation of corporate targets and performance management and consider how risk analysis is integrated. Enhance the performance review process to streamline demands on officers and tailor information provided to scrutiny in line with their requirements.	01/04/2015	31/03/2016	Mark Horan		1. Evaluate Q1 performance management arrangements and refined for Q2 reporting. 2. Roll out templates to assist with 2016/17 target drafting working with lead members and senior management to complete.	1. Evaluate Q2 performance arrangements and refine for the duration of the year. 2. Refined target drafts and associated work plans ready for public consultation and to support development of team targets and individual work plans.	1. Agree new Corporate Plan. Work with Scrutiny to assist any further recommendations made relative to their roles in the performance management process. Draft 2017/18 corporate planning and performance monitoring timetable.	GA	Corporate plan targets drafted but further work will be required to firm up work plans.	Cascade draft templates (post corporate plan agreement (Feb)) to encourage the completion of work plans before the civic year commences.

Appendix B – Director Report: Corporate Services and Governance

Subject: **2015/16 Performance Review Director’s Report**

Submitted to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **14th June 2016**

Prepared by: **Jane Hartnell, Director of Corporate Services and Governance**

Introduction – Overview of 2015/16

1. 2015/16 has been an incredibly busy year for the whole Council, and our staff have all worked extremely hard to deliver effective services for local people and to deliver the Council’s ambitions. We have delivered against our planned targets in very trying circumstances when our main operational building was completely refurbished around us. We have also made very good progress in delivering on the many projects within the council’s organisational change programme – The Transformation Programme and these have touched all parts of our organisation.
2. In addition to the planned activity undertaken in 2015/16, colleagues also delivered a number of other projects as opportunities/circumstances arose during the year. These include the lease and refurbishment of space in the Town Hall to ESCC Registration Service and the related transfer of democratic and civic functions to Aquila House. Opportunities were explored to facilitate new income generating and economic development resources e.g. building a brand new factory.
3. We have experienced a number of challenges in managing within reduced resource levels. Although colleagues are working hard to find more efficient ways of working, we are experiencing the ongoing impact of managing with less, particularly when skills, experience and/or organisational history/knowledge are lost. These tighter staffing levels also mean we have less resilience, this has been a particular problem for a number of our services when colleagues experience personal issues e.g. bereavements, illness or need for recovery time after operations.
4. I am very proud of the way colleagues continue to work extremely hard, take on new responsibilities and challenges, deliver above expectations and support each other to achieve the best outcome for local people. I hope that Members of Overview and Scrutiny will share this view.

Year-end performance summary

a) Legal and Electoral Services

5. During 15/16 the team’s resilience was challenged to cover the absence for medical reasons of a senior member of staff. The team worked well together to

reallocate work, take on additional responsibilities and cover this work without the need to bring in expensive external support.

6. During the year the team's work included:

- Providing a proactive and positive role in delivering council projects and protecting the council's interests and probity. Some projects have required significant legal input to ensure schemes, associated policies; procedures and agreements are properly planned and operated e.g. Selective Licensing Scheme. In addition new Seashore and Promenade Byelaws were made, completed a Parking Order for most of the council's Car Parks.
- Legal work for large number of leases including The Source (White Rock Baths), and individual leases for the Social Lettings Agency.
- Completion of in-house legal work for property sales e.g. property sold after CPO, purchase of Aquila House
- Supporting the Licensing Committee to consider applications in the public interest and securing prosecutions and fines for enforcement activity (e.g. dog fouling, noise nuisance, planning and debt collection e.g. council tax debt
- Contributing significant time to providing legal advice for contentious planning issues e.g. Queensway Gateway, Rocklands, Holmhurst St Mary
- Achieving a positive outcome from the inspection by the office of Surveillance Commissioners to check we are compliant with the legislative demands of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- The Elections team had a very significant workload in 2015/16. They facilitated the biggest change to electoral registration in a century - Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Following the transition years, the new 'business as usual' arrangements have been implemented since the end of Q3. The team have also successfully delivered a General Election, 3 By-elections, a new style annual canvass and preparation for the Borough, Police and Crime Commissioner and By-elections in May 2016. These elections were only made possible by the continued support of colleagues from across HBC and is a brilliant example of our One Team working.
- In addition the Boundary Review was supported by senior policy, legal, planning and elections staff. These changes will now be implemented and will necessitate a polling station review, all out HBC elections in 2018, use new boundaries for ESCC elections in 2017

b) People and Business Support

7. The small Business Support team have played a greater than anticipated role in Aquila House refurbishment project, implementation of new working arrangements and associated technology e.g. Condeco room and desk bookings. During this time they also maintained parallel support for Council activities that continued in the Town Hall, and assisted with the transfer to Aquila. The junior level staff extended

their working days considerably to ensure the impact on day to day operations was minimised. Their role is now being refocussed to undertake facilities management now that HBC own the building.

8. The Personnel team have completed a high number of recruitment exercises during the year – the 52 recruitment campaigns led to the employment of 78 staff. Difficulties with recruiting specialist roles e.g. planners, finance officers meant some of these exercises had to be repeated two or three times.
9. In addition, the team continue to:
 - i. Play a lead role in delivering the organisational development aspects of the Transformation Programme – see presentation.
 - ii. Support managers to:
 - (1) release savings or increase efficiencies through restructuring, redeployment and redundancy as well as offering opportunities for professional development e.g. growing our own.
 - (2) undertake their staff management roles effectively e.g. introduced an e-appraisal system, give 1:1 support and support training needs.
 - (3) robustly manage sickness absence – there has been an increase in short term absences over the year and serious longer term sickness absences have affected the resilience in a number of service areas

c) Community Contact Centre

10. Customer experience at CCC continues to improve, a cohort of six new Customer Service Officers were recruited and trained to deliver the full range of CCC services over the year.
11. The reception process has been reviewed and following an earlier Housing Options Service Review a new triage process has been put in place and the CCC staff now undertake the role previously done by Housing Options officers. Whilst this has led to better customer service and more effective use of housing resources, there is obviously an impact on CCC resources which is why channel shift from Digital by Design is crucial to achieve.
12. The CCC staffing resources have been impacted by the secondment of two of the Team Leaders to the Firmstep Project. The Team Leaders have worked with IT and service departments to develop the new customer journey maps and associated process 'forms' which the software systems use to deliver customer transactions. Whilst this investment of customer service skills into the project is vital and is viewed as an 'invest to improve' for the service, there have been opportunity costs.

d) Revenues Service

13. The benefit claimant numbers have reduced by some 5% in 2015/16. The Council has continued to receive year on year reductions in funding and as a consequence of losing the equivalent of two members of staff each year there will inevitably be

an impact on the service. However the service itself is performing very highly given all the challenges it faces.

14. The Council consulted on the Council Tax reduction scheme and unlike other East Sussex authorities resolved to leave the scheme untouched for 2016/17 – thus supporting the most vulnerable in the community. Universal Credit will start impacting more heavily from December 2016 when all new working age claimants will be applying for it – rather than housing benefit.
15. In terms of performance indicators:
 - a. The overall Council Tax collection rate for the year will exceed the 96.5% target within the next few months. A number of the revenues targets were missed mainly due to the absence of a key officer to sickness and need to train a new member of staff.
 - b. Additional pressures were placed on the service this quarter as a result of the installation of two new servers; business rate appeals continue to cause concern both for work associated with backdated payments and the impact on future income streams; additional time is being spent on supported/exempt accommodation cases which are becoming contentious and creating additional work.

e) Audit and Procurement Service

16. Staffing issues impacted on this small team of three. A new Group Auditor was appointed to fill the vacancy following the retirement of a senior colleague. The Housing Benefit Subsidy Grant Audit claim was far more resource intensive than usual. The council's procurement processes continue to be well supported by the East Sussex Procurement Hub.

f) Finance and Accountancy

17. The preparation of the Council's Budget for 2016/17 was made more challenging as a result of significant changes and delayed Government announcements of funding streams. The team has also welcomed four new colleagues this year all of whom needed to experience budget setting and year-end reporting here.
18. In addition the team piloted an earlier close down of accounts as part of their preparation for the mandatory requirement for all Councils to close down their 2017/18 accounts by end of June 2018 (as opposed to September). This 'practice run' is added to workload pressures.

g) Estates

19. 2015/176 was an excellent year for enhanced occupancy rates and higher income from revised rental and lease agreements. The new factory unit for BD Foods will be built in 2016/17 following renegotiation of existing leases.
20. There was additional unscheduled property-related work associated with the income generation opportunities for leasing out parts of the Town Hall to ESCC and SEAP, space in Aquila House to Learning Direct and the purchase of Aquila House.

h) Surveyors

21. The small surveyors team have made a valuable contribution to the Aquila House accommodation project, maintenance of the Town Hall and have absorbed responsibility for the major cliffs maintenance and protection project.

i) Continuous Improvement and Democratic Services

22. The team have implemented a project fundamentally changing the way members and officers prepare and access decision making reports and processes. The implementation of Mod Gov is facilitating efficiencies all the way through the decision making process.

23. The increasing level of Freedom of Information requests will be managed more effectively and efficiently in future, following work to develop of an on-line process using Firmstep. This process is also being adapted for our new Corporate Complaints process.

24. Senior policy officers continue to support projects and work packages across the council including FLAG, external funding bids, the Local Strategic Partnership's Mind the Gap project and the Transformation Programme.

j) Transformation Programme – Year 1

25. Over the past year we have been working together to transform the way we work. At the core of this transformation has been the fundamental principles of: Customer First, One Team, Smarter Working and Digital by Design.

26. The breadth of the Programme makes summarising complex therefore a presentation setting out achievements and next steps will be given at the meeting.

Jane Hartnell, June 2016

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Appendix C – Director Report: Operational Services

Subject: **2015/16 Performance Review Director’s Report**

Submitted to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **14th June 2016**

Prepared by: **Simon Hubbard, Director of Operational Services**

Introduction

1. As quarter 4 is the end of the financial/performance year, it is worth highlighting not only areas of concern but some areas of outstanding achievement from 2015/16. I also picked out a couple of issues I believe might be of significance in the forthcoming period.

Development Management

2. As reported before this part of the Planning Service was given additional financial support to help it address issues caused by staff shortage and sickness. Andrew Palmer and latterly the new Planning Services Manager, Eleanor Evans have worked hard to provide short term responses and to consider the changes needed in the future. Eleanor will be completing her review and recommendations shortly as agreed previously. These will be the subject of discussion with members of Overview and Scrutiny.
3. Without pre-empting the bulk of Eleanor’s review there has been a general “strengthening” of processes and report writing around decisions. Greater thoroughness may have implications for staff time and there may be a need to consider this alongside issues of existing and proposed performance requirements and cost.
4. In terms of yearly performance the results (contained within the performance review document) are:

i) Major applications completed in 13 weeks or as agreed with applicant:

Target 90%

Q1 67%

Q2 50%

Q3 88%

Q4 100%

Average 83%

ii) Minor applications completed within 8 weeks or as agreed with applicant:

Report Template v28.0

Target 85%

Q1 69%

Q2 60%

Q3 81%

Q4 79%

Average 71%

iii) Householder applications completed within 6 weeks or as agreed with applicant:

Target 65%

Q1 42%

Q2 36%

Q3 70%

Q4 50%

Average 48%

5. In general, a marked improvement in performance can be seen following a period of difficulty caused by staff shortages and the pressures of dealing with the Queensway Gateway application and Rocklands.
6. The Government is currently consulting upon a series of new performance standards for Planning Services and this consultation expired in April. The consultation paper runs alongside the Housing and Planning Bill which has been through both the House of Commons and House of Lords. The House of Commons are now considering whether to accept amendments suggested by the House of Lords. If agreement isn't reached on suggested amendments this may delay the implementation of new measures which were initially anticipated in Autumn 2016. Local authorities not achieving minimum standards may lose their right to assess applications and determine decisions.
7. It will therefore be important to ensure that the planning process (which goes beyond the Development Management team into Legal Services, Conservation and a variety of external consultees) is structured in a way which will deliver these targets. Central to this is a planning team which is confident in taking and interpreting advice and takes responsibility for the overall process. For both officers and members in all Councils this will mean decisions being firmly rooted in Planning Policy and the ability to do this speedily.
8. i) Current statutory targets are:

HBC Performance Against
Targets

50% of major applications determined in 13 weeks	HBC 83%
80% of appeals against major decisions dismissed	HBC 100% (no appeals made)

ii) Proposed new targets are:

Estimated HBC Performance
Against New Targets

60-70% of non-major applications determined in 8 weeks	HBC 79%
80-90% of appeals against non-major decisions dismissed	} 48%
90% of appeals against major decisions dismissed at appeal	100% (no appeals for majors this year)

There is therefore a need to ensure that the decisions of both officers and members are as challenge proof as possible. This means a balanced interpretation of policy and ensuring that applications are not turned down without sound planning grounds and that those grounds would be clearly identifiable to an inspector.

Waste Contract

9. Performance around the delivery of refuse collection and street cleaning will often be an issue. Our contractors, Kier operate over 4 out of 5 of the districts in East Sussex as one contract but there are different local management arrangements and issues in each. Locally, the performance of the contact is mixed:
 - Street cleanliness – target 5% future outcome 4%
 - Recycling – target 30% recycling outcome around 30%
 - Bin collections missed – target 130/100,000, outcome around 146/100,000
10. The relationship between the partners and Kier is sometimes challenging but the Council continues to achieve the savings from the contract. There are certainly issues connected with the reporting of dog mess, dumping and other issues electronically to Kier which are then claimed as completed when this doesn't appear to be the case. This is being followed up in discussion involving colleagues from Corporate Services operating the reporting systems as well as the Waste Team. Clearly for an electronic reporting system to be effective it must command belief in its integrity and this doesn't appear to currently be the case.
11. I do not believe the relationship with Kier is likely to be without tensions. The value of the contract to the company is much diminished by the reduction in recyclable values. The contract is managed through a combination of the Joint Waste Committee, the Central client manager based with Rother, and day to day local contract management through our own waste team. HBC staff will continue to press for the best possible service from the contract and in particular the correct operation of reporting systems.

Housing issues

12. It remains a real concern that the Council's ability to deal with issues of homelessness will be further tested moving forwards. Members will note that the

number of homeless acceptances has increased and Housing colleagues feel this trend will continue.

13. Rents within the local housing market are above what many in housing need can afford, particularly so for those on very low incomes or in receipt of out of work benefits. Whilst this has been a long standing issue in London and more affluent parts of the South East is now being felt more widely across the region, including Hastings and other areas of the coast. This must in part be a result of the same pressures driving people out of wealthier hotspots in search of more affordable options in housing in areas that relatively speaking still remain lower value. This may in turn further encourage other authorities to directly house families out of area at least on a temporary basis.
14. The impact of the new housing Bill and further welfare benefit reforms look likely to place further pressures upon those for whom there are few affordable housing options now available. The following welfare reforms are of particular concern regarding their potential financial impact on those at risk of homelessness are
 - a planned reduction in the benefit cap from 26,000 to 20,000 per annum
 - a four year freeze on benefits
 - the ending of the family element of child tax credits and a restriction of payments to 2 children.(and the equivalent changes with universal credit when introduced)
 - a 4 year freeze to LHA rates
 - The withdrawal of HB entitlement for 18-21 year olds which comes on top of an increase in the age at which the single room allowance is applicable from 25 to 35 years of age
15. Members will receive a full briefing on housing and homeless issues shortly via the Members Bulletin because it is important that there is a wide understanding of the changes taking place in the housing market – part of which has historically been strongly linked to the benefits economy.
16. Additionally the welfare reform outlined above when considered within the context of the Governments general Housing policy direction, seems likely over the next few years to result in:
 - More homes being made available for first time buyers and those who can afford to pay higher rents
 - fewer Housing Association properties being available at social and affordable rent levels over time,
 - Reduced security of tenure for social housing tenants
 - Reduced income for some benefit recipients
 - Increased difficulty accessing the private rented sector for people on benefits
 - Reduced income for housing associations and therefore less borrowing capacity for new developments
 - Less government funding for affordable rent in the foreseeable future
 - Increasing pressure on homelessness, particularly amongst young people

17. It orders to maintain levels of homeless prevention it will be necessary for the Council to redouble its efforts moving forward. The Council has a strong record in tackling homelessness and has made a number of successful interventions to avoid homelessness in recent years.

- a) The Council has sought to tackle issues in the supply side through its local licencing activity. The Selective Licencing of 12 wards was very successfully launched in November and subject to the results of a further stock condition survey, work will begin on considering whether to extend the additional licencing of HMOs in the town centre wards beyond the end of the current 5 years scheme .
- b) The Lettings Agency continues to expand albeit at a slower rate than originally envisaged. Nevertheless it is on course now to reach the break-even point in 2016/17

The Coastal Space project will deliver at least 68 new rented and homes and we aim to extend this through a 3rd programme with funding by the SELEP and the Borough Council, if a SELEP bid is successful. In addition the YMCA DownsLink scheme which has provided a further 83 spaces for young people over the last 2 years.

- c) Additional interventions with the street community include commissioning an outreach service to assess need and provide information. This is shortly to be complimented by a CCG commissioned Housing and Well Being Hub currently under development with Health Colleagues.

On a positive note

18. I cannot sign off 2015/16 without acknowledging the raft of success delivered by our teams across the Council. In no particular order I would ask that members note in which their officers had sole or major roles:

- The delivery of the Source Skatepark
- The revival of Hastings Pier
- The achievement of a “good” standard for our bathing water
- Delivery of a state of the art CCTV scheme
- Licencing scheme
- 3 successful Fish Festivals organised, and Jack in the Green and Bonfire events supported
- Conclusive study making the economic case for extending HS1 to Hastings and Bexhill
- Adoption of the Development Management Plan
- Long term properties returned to use
- Hugely successful Active Hastings programme recognised with new ESCC funding support package
- Bottle Alley refurbishment
- Extra funding obtained and preparations made for 950th anniversary celebrations



Agenda Item 8

Report to: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 4th JULY 2016

Report Title: INCOME GENERATION

Report By: Simon Hubbard
Director of Operational Services

Purpose of Report

1. To outline work on income generation and to identify potential timescales, benefits and risks.
2. To seek approval for the proposed next steps contained in the report.
3. To seek the commitment of future Invest to Save budgets to the income generation programme.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the programme for income generation is agreed together with the establishment of an Income Generation Board.
2. That the future Invest to Save budget is committed to this work and proposals for funding studies and the required staff support should be taken from this source.
3. The Local Government Association [LGA] is invited to review this programme and recommend any changes to it, and the support arrangements they consider appropriate that work to deliver additional income generation activity on the seafront is agreed.
4. A further update of the work of the Income Generation Board is considered in 6 months' time.

Reasons for Recommendations

Income generation work is now sufficiently developed to require decision making structures and staff support commensurate with its future significance in terms of finance and staff resources.

Introduction

- 1) With the Council facing continued financial pressure the Corporate Plan identifies the generation of income as a major priority. This presents us with an opportunity not only to consider new sustainable income might be developed, but how new and relevant services might be developed.
- 2) It will be crucial to develop a focused programme and explore a number of programmes without becoming involved in so many that the effort becomes diluted. However, over time the whole organisation will need to have considered how income might be increased. It is felt that the initial programme proposed in this report is ambitious. It will require time and space to be created for the learning needed, the engagement of those with business knowledge and the training and motivation of staff.
- 3) This report is focused on income generation as a priority though wider considerations of impact and risk will need to be considered within each of the work streams discussed below. There are two strong reasons for a focus on income:-
 - a. Firstly without income generation the Council will be faced with reducing services and will struggle to develop new ones. We need to become more sustainable.
 - b. By taking a more commercial approach the Council may generate new goods or services of benefit to residents or which boost the local economy.
- 4) The Council will be able to accomplish some income generation within its existing structures but other new ways of thinking and delivering will be required.
- 5) The following areas have been identified as initial priorities for consideration:-

Housing	The Council can consider developing housing for sale and/or rent or acquiring property for this purpose. There are particular opportunities identified where the Council owns land identified in Local Plan Allocations for housing development. There may be opportunities to address urgent housing need depending on the options adopted. There is considerable interest in this by Councils nationally both as a profitable enterprise but also to bring on much needed development. The Council has commissioned Savills (financial appraisal) and Trowers (legal) to help prepare a business case. The intention is that the findings will be presented to Members seminar in July with a view to seeking Cabinet approval on the way forward in September.
Property Investment	The Council already has a considerable property portfolio and the income stream associated with this

	was c£3.3m in 2015/16. Much of this income is from long established industrial and commercial units. It is appropriate to consider how this can be increased from new units and shops, the sale and development of land. Newer areas to consider include Property Investment Funds and investment in property outside Hastings.
Beach Huts, Chalets and Seafront Assets	The Council already earns income of £183k from assets like beach huts (before costs) and there are opportunities to both increase this income and improve the town's offer to visitors and residents. Examples from other seaside towns indicate that there is considerable scope and this aspect of income generation can be developed relatively quickly.
Income from Parks	Again this can be developed relatively quickly but is likely to yield relatively low amounts and require balancing with other users of Parks.
Energy	This is the most complex area and will require a combination of shorter term immediate action and the development of a longer term strategy. Many green energy schemes are controversial and may require consultation and debate. There are a number of national and local initiatives that might be fruitful to follow. There is the potential opportunity to use Council assets to produce low or non-carbon sourced energy and generates ongoing income for the Council.

- 6) The Council is already successful at generating income and recovering costs - amounting to some £12.1m in 2015/16. A step change is however now required in generating income if the Council is to avoid the full £3.5m of required savings falling on existing service provision.
- 7) The Council's main income streams being:-
- Property (factory and shop rentals/leases) – £3,600,000
 - Off street car parking (including Foreshore Trust owned car parks)- £ 2,113,000
 - Cemetery and Crematorium - £1,111,000
 - Development Control (Planning) Fees - £270,000
 - Land charges - £250,000
 - Housing Licences - £210,000
 - Green Waste - £248,000
 - Beach Huts - £184,000
 - Local Licence Fees – £168,000
 - Cliff Railways £358,000
- 8) The Council has historically been very successful in obtaining contributions from other bodies (Sport England, Arts Council, Coastal

Communities Fund etc.) as well as recycling grant and arts costs. It is estimated the value of this is c£15m. However, these sources cannot be considered sustainable and do not provide ongoing income generation. It will become more difficult to find “clean” sources of HBC expenditure to use as matched funding as the budgets of the Council reduce.

- 9) Whilst the Council will look to increase existing income streams, it will, wherever practical, also seek to reduce the costs of providing the respective services – thus increasing the net income for the Council.
- 10) The Council has recently improved its position through the acquisition of Aquila House and transfer of staff away from the Town Hall. Recent new income streams include:-
 - Income of £91k p.a. from the rental of offices at the Town Hall
 - Savings of £50k p.a. in costs on Aquila House
 - Income c£40k p.a. from shop units in Aquila House
 - Income of £27k p.a. from new office rentals in Aquila House

There is considerable potential for the creation of new income streams from the use of Aquila House and the development of packages to attract meetings and conferences.

Housing

- 11) Members are aware of the pressing housing problems faced in the Borough and nationally and these issues have been covered elsewhere. However, these conditions mean that it may be possible for the Council to both draw income streams from housing developments.
- 12) For the Council to invest directly in expanding the supply of good quality accommodation, be that for sale or at market or submarket rents, might extend the local housing on offer to many more households. It would also provide an opportunity to offer greater security of tenure for those whose aspiration is not to live in a socially rented home. Such an offer, whether it be purpose built accommodation or the refurbishment of existing housing, might also be vitally important in attracting employers and staff with the necessary skills to aid economic growth within town.
- 13) In seeking to address these demands there is the opportunity for the Council to develop homes for either sale or rent which could give the Council a favourable return on any investment.
- 14) The desire to drive forward regeneration in the town is of paramount concern and there are advantages that a housing company might realise. Housing building still

lags behind the projections set out in the Local Plan yet we know that there are a number of sites with planning permission for residential use that are not being built on at present. This can partly be explained by construction capacity, financial exposure, market conditions etc. We also know that developers will tend to develop out those sites that are most profitable first. Despite improvements in the market locally Hastings may still be less attractive in terms of profitability than other areas of East Sussex or the wider South East. This risks holding back the delivery of much needed homes, it also impacts upon the wider regeneration of the town and may stall other commercial redevelopment plans. The Housing Company could complement the Council's powers as a planning authority and enable mixed development on appropriate sites to come forward.

- 15) Market conditions are not as beneficial here as in other parts of the county or wider South East and the housing market still remains relatively weak in some parts of the town. Income projections will therefore need to be realistic and reflect specific site constraints and market conditions. What is appropriate on one site may not be so for another. However, a local housing company would possibly have several important advantages in bringing forward development. Firstly, it might borrow through the public works loan board on terms that are unlikely to be available to many private sector developers. Secondly, the Council, whilst still generating income, could also take a longer term view on the level of financial return than many investors would be prepared to consider. This might be particularly relevant where housing values at the lower end of the scale or where marginal land is being considered for redevelopment. The Council also has the option of developing land already within its ownership.
- 16) Undertaking housing development for sale on a commercial basis on appropriate sites could generate surpluses which typically can account for 15-20% of the gross development value (developer profit) and which could be realised by the Council or reinvested.
- 17) The potential for income generation might be applied to both housing for open market sale and rent. A local housing company may be able to use its capacity to borrow cheaply over an extended repayment period in order to build homes for market rent or at levels that are closer to those regarded as affordable rents, creating the potential to build genuinely sustainable and mixed-income developments on sites. A further advantage would be that a local housing company would be able to offer occupants far greater security of tenure than the typical 6 monthly private sector let.
- 18) Such a model might also be applied to both new housing or the regeneration of existing housing, in a way similar to that currently being undertaken in St Leonards through the Coastal Space programme, where the scale of the investment required to improve housing does not produce a substantial return in the short term and where a longer term investment commitment is necessary. However, the Council will need to balance its need for income against delayed income or higher risk projects.
- 19) Local housing companies can take several different forms, but all involve the establishment of one or more Special Purpose Vehicles [SPV]. Whilst they exist to facilitate investment and development of new housing that can meet locally

identified needs, they should not be viewed as a variation on or extension of traditional Council Housing.

- 20) The Local Government Act 2003 enables Local Authorities to establish Local Authority Trading Companies [LATCs] to trade. The General Power of Competence under The Localism Act 2011 as well as specific housing powers allows local authorities to expand their trading activities into areas not related to existing functions. If trading is to be done in the wider commercial market with a view to generating a profit (rather than just on a broad cost recovery basis) the Council must establish a company for the purposes. This can be a company limited by shares or guarantee or an industrial and provident society.
- 21) A recent survey, published in August 2015, indicated that more than 50 Councils in England have or are considering setting up their own housing companies. We are aware that within East Sussex several Local Authorities are considering setting up their own housing companies.
- 22) The most common approach is for the creation of a 100% council owned company, usually constituted as a company limited by shares with Council officers acting as directors and company secretaries. Purposes include the provision of new build private sale, mixed tenure and affordable homes as well as leasing of empty property etc.
- 23) Clearly where a wholly owned company (WOC) is used, the Council retains 100% control and returns but also carry 100% of any risk. It is possible however to minimise this risk by buying in the appropriate expertise, for example in respect of legal, financial and development expertise or housing management services. Housing Associations or other Councils can provide development or management capacity if considered necessary. There are other delivery options.
- 24) The Council has employed the services of specialist legal and financial consultants in this field (Trowers & Hamlin /Savills) to advise the Council on the range of issues connected with the establishment and funding of a company. The consultants are preparing a base legal and an assessment of financial and commercial aspects of the business case including:
 - The viability, affordability and deliverability of the proposals
 - The potential financial implications for the Council, including financial risks, their sensitivity to changes in key assumptions and risk mitigation options
 - Funding structures and options
 - Tax implication of the proposals
 - State Aid considerations

They will also provide advice on legal powers and constraints, necessary consents, tenancy options, state aid and procurement requirements.

- 25) The initial financial analysis of the local market and modelling of the development will be underpinned by feasibility assessments of potential projects/sites. This will take account of local housing market conditions; build costs, sales values, cash flow etc. and test viability.
- 26) The intention would be to complete this initial work and present findings to an all Member briefing in July or early August, with a view to Cabinet considering the establishment of a shell company at the September meeting.
- 27) Should the Council decide to proceed then it is anticipated that it would take at least 6 months beyond that decision to get to a point where a company is established and ready to move forward with a first purchase.

Property

- 28) A comprehensive report will be brought forward to Cabinet in the next 3 months which will focus on 4 areas of potential investment.
- 29) Property related initiatives and income generation opportunities
New revenue streams that are currently being explored which could assist the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets include:-
 - a) Aquila House temporary lettings of rooms/ Council chamber etc,
 - b) Bottle alley and Foreshore units,
- 30) Sale and development of existing assets
A number of projects are in the pipeline:
 - a) The West Marina development, whilst a cost neutral scheme in capital investment terms, has the potential to produce a significant income stream. Soft market testing is expected shortly.
 - b) The Council has agreed to purchase the lease of some units at Sidney Little Road to enable a larger scheme of new build to take place whilst at the same time as securing additional industrial unit rental income. The legal formalities are expected to be completed shortly and the development opportunities will then be reviewed.
 - c) The Council is involved in negotiations for the acquisition of a larger site within Hastings, and if agreement in principle can be reached this would need Cabinet consideration probably by early autumn.
 - d) The Council has a land and property disposal programme. In 2016/17 the Council should dispose of Summerfields and potentially the site known as Mayfield E (either for sale or development by HBC). (£1.1m estimated receipts in 2016/17). In 2017/18 there are a number of assets that may be at a stage where they can be sold or developed (£4.3m estimated receipts in 2017/18).
 - e) Other surplus assets and land e.g Cross Street toilets, will be disposed of if productive and viable alternatives cannot be found.

31) Acquisition of investment property

The Council has various options of investing in all sorts of property. None is without risk and there are examples of other local authorities doing so.

- a) In acquiring property there is stamp duty land tax to consider and thus the need to hold property generally for a longer period to recover the purchase cost and then make a return.
- b) The paper will cover some of the options that are not being covered within the housing paper, particularly in terms of industrial properties or shops.
- c) Whilst a steady income from rentals may be achieved, given cost of acquisition, repairs and refurbishment and rent free periods for new tenants, negative returns may result in the first couple of years. As such each purchase requires significant due diligence to be undertaken.
- d) The level of investment, timing of returns, and risks will be considered by the paper.

32) Property Investment Funds

- a) The Council can invest in a wide and diverse portfolio of property assets quickly and efficiently by means of existing property funds. A significant number of authorities are now doing so.
- b) The return is considerably higher than that achieved from investing cash, but does carry a much higher risk. Similar to purchasing investment properties the money invested decreases on purchase due to stamp duty land tax, and such investments are generally held for a minimum of 4 to 5 years to achieve an annual dividend currently some 4.7% per annum and capital growth.
- c) The paper will outline the approval process required, which would require amendments to be agreed by Full Council to the Investment Policy and Treasury Management Strategy. The revised policy could be agreed by the autumn, and each £1 million invested would potentially achieve, at present, an additional £40,000 p.a. of income for the Council.

Beach Huts, Chalets & Rental Sites

- 33) The improvement of the facilities on the seafront offer the potential to boost not only the Council's income but improve the facilities and attractiveness of the town to visitors and local people alike.
- 34) It is believed that it is possible to take rapid action to put in place improvements before next season.
- 35) The Council currently has:-
 - 216 Beach huts privately owned paying an annual licence fee
 - 115 Chalets let on an annual basis
 - 30 Chalets owned by the Foreshore Trust let on a weekly basis

- 30 Boat sites, being privately owned equipment paying an annual licence fee
- 36) Licence fees range between £340 - £510 depending on the exact location. There is currently a high demand for beach huts with front row huts attracting prices on the private market in excess of £25k.
 - 37) We have identified another 20 potential further sites that could be used for private beach hut sites. This may generate £7k - £9k annual income.
 - 38) However it is recommended that instead of releasing the new beach hut sites for private owners, HBC instead builds 20 new beach huts at a cost of approximately £50k (based on an individual cost of £2.5k for a standard 8' x 16' hut). It is anticipated that these could be let on an annual basis for a minimum of £1.5k each, with a payback on investment in under two years based on £30k additional minimum income. Thereafter this becomes additional income to the Council.
 - 39) Beach huts would be expected to last for a minimum of 10 years, and more likely 20+ years. They require relatively little maintenance and would be easily absorbed into our existing administration.
 - 40) The Council would benchmark comparable fees and advertise for new tenants for the beach huts alongside the procurement process to maximise early take up.

Chalet Sites

- 41) Hastings Borough Council also owns a total of 115 chalets that are let on an annual basis at West Marina and concrete chalets at Marina.
- 42) It is proposed to install a further 10 wooden chalets at West Marina at a cost of approximately £11,000 these would produce an annual income of £9820 and the investment would be paid back in just over a year.
- 43) Maintenance is minimal for these chalets and the costs could be contained within existing budgets as would the administration and management of them. We currently have 40+ people on the waiting list for these chalets.
- 44) Staff have also identified further potential sites for seasonal beach chalets on the beach directly east of Hastings Pier, where there were bathing stations and beach huts historically. With the recent opening of Hastings Pier, refurbished Source Park and further planned improvements at White Rock. It

is felt there would be strong demand for this type of facility close to the town centre.

Increasing Income

- 45) The licence fees for chalets and beach hut sites are reviewed each year, usually in October/November as part of the wider corporate reviews of charges. The increase for the past 5 years have been 2012 5%, 2013 & 2014 no increase (in view of transfer of responsibility for non-domestic rates to tenants) 2015 6% and 2016 1%.
- 46) In view of the continued strong demand for beach hut and chalet sites it is suggested that a minimum increase of 10% is considered for 2017. This would generate an additional income of approximately £18300 based on existing numbers of sites.
- 47) Other local authorities have set the rate of increase for the next three years or beyond e.g. 22.5% spread over three years (10%, 7.5% and 5%). A spreadsheet detailing a range of possible increases and the revenue benefit will be produced for the annual review of fees in October.
- 48) In the future it is possible for the Council to increase its earnings from the assigning or sub-letting of sites subject to further investigation:-
 - a. By insisting sales are to people on an HBC waiting list, offering both income and transparency and
 - OR
 - b. Making an administrative charge on sub-letting if our conditions were changed to allow this.

Proposals

- 49) It is proposed to move forwards with:-
 - i. Seeking investment of around £50k for 20 beach huts against an estimated annual income of £30k.
 - ii. Seeking investment of £11k for 10 chalets at West Marina producing c£10k per annum for the Hastings Foreshore Trust subject to Trustee's agreement.
 - iii. A study of the provision of glamping and overnight accommodation at an estimated cost of £10k.
 - iv. A review of licence fees as part of the next budget process – a 10% increase could yield £18k.

It is possible these steps (excluding glamping and increased control on the private letting of sites) could yield around £58k in surplus for the Council and Foreshore Trust.

- 50) Subject to approval it would be expected that the new chalets/huts could be in place for the beginning of next season. The exact locations would be identified, planning permission sought and procurement begun via the East Sussex Procurement Hub.

Parks and Gardens

- 51) The Council has done little to actively market its parks and gardens and there are real limits to how much assets can be used that are usually freely open to residents and the public. However, there are a number of well-known events like the Beer Festival, Hastings Proms and Hastings County Fair which point to how parks can provide a successful focus for community celebration. However, the income from the hire of parks for events is limited.
- 52) Given the relatively low level of income that is likely to be generated it is not proposed that resources are spent in a formal market assessment but that some action is taken in the following ways:-
- i. Set up of a GIS map of potential event sites including price and suitability.
 - ii. Approaches are made to trade organisations and potential high value bookings like regular markets.
 - iii. A target is set for 2017/18 to have created a minimum of 6 small events and 1 larger event on our green spaces together with seeking commercial involvement on regular events on the Stade Open Space.
- 53) If members are supportive of the principle it is proposed that the Marketing and Major Projects Manager and Environment and Natural Resources Manager draw up a scheme for the marketing of parks and spaces to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder. In the first instance officers estimate that c£15k per annum can be generated, but that this can only be achieved through the active promotion of our sites, followed by a review after a year of operation. The review should take into account community benefit or concerns as well as income generation.

Energy Markets

- 54) In the UK energy supply and generation are changing, in response to the energy trilemma of:
- a) Security and independence of energy supply
 - b) Affordability and Accessibility – including energy price and demand, protecting households from fuel poverty and enabling businesses to remain competitive
 - c) Decarbonisation of the national grid supply – changing from a carbon intensive/ fossil fuel dominated energy system towards a low carbon one.

- 55) Hastings B C is in a unique place to become actively involved in the solutions to the above energy trilemma. As stewards of place, we have a unique role in working with local partners and stakeholders on the planning and management of new municipal decentralised energy assets.
- 56) It is proposed to recognise the complexity and opportunity involved by taking a multi-faceted approach.
- i. Projects that will be initiated now.
 - ii. The development of a long term approach for income generation for energy. This should form a key part of an Energy Strategy.
- 57) The Council already benefits from a royalty from BIFFA who pay for the rights to collect methane gas and use it to generate electricity for the national grid. The royalty is paid on the basis of the electricity sold with HBC receiving 30% of the income (ESCC retaining the rest).

Proposed first steps:

- 58) Officers will investigate the potential of Aquila House to both find savings and generate income. In particular the Council should examine the possibility of putting a Photo Voltaic [PV] array on the building to offset energy costs and supply excess to the Grid.
- 59) Investigate the possibility (in conjunction with ESCC) to investigate how the site, as it settles, could be used for other forms of energy production. The lease arrangement allows for this to happen in partnership through ESCC and BIFFA.
- 60) These projects are both potentially significant but the most significant gains come through the development of a strategy:-
- i. Identifying the potential of all Council owned property for renewable or low carbon energy production, including our business parks and commercial sites.
 - ii. The development of business cases and prospects where this is appropriate.
 - iii. The funding routes that might support the development of a long term approach to the utilisation of our stock in renewable or low carbon energy generation.

Although there may be some uncertainty at this point it is presumed that currently approved European programmes will continue.

- 61) However, there are more strategic opportunities that exist which require further investigation:-
- i. Developing power purchase agreements, possibly in conjunction with the other local authorities to become “traders” in power.

- ii. Investigating new methods of financing energy projects like Green Bonds.
- 62) This report is not intended to address the issues of long term energy strategy by the Council but it is clear that outside the extensive and practical task of looking at the use of our assets there is an urgent requirement to set this work in the context of Renewable Energy Strategy developed in partnership with others.
- 63) It is suggested this work is divided into 3 discreet parts:-
- a) The assessment of the potential for Aquila House by the end of 2016 delivered through Corporate Services staff examining how savings and income can be generated from the newly acquired building. If appropriate a business case for investment will be brought forward.
 - b) Commencing discussion with BIFFA and ESCC in relation to Pebsham Waste Site.
 - c) The commissioning of a three part study to be completed by the end of 2016:-
 - i. Assessing the viability of green energy generation utilising the Council's assets identifying those where the development of full business cases for investment would be appropriate.
 - ii. Identifying the longer term and strategic opportunities for the Council's involvement and the creation of a Sustainable Energy Strategy to sit in the context of national and regional opportunities for co-operation.
 - iii. Identifying how energy related income might be built into future initiatives like that of the development at White Rock or the future housing activities of the Council – for example potential District Heating schemes.

This work to be led through the Sustainability Policy Officer.

Generating further new income potential

- 64) Income generation must be central to the Council's existence moving forward. This is a long term change of approach rather than a temporary response. Some ideas are already in germination which indicate the potential for further innovation.
- i. The potential to work with software suppliers to market products developed here with other local authorities once our internal transformation programme is completed, if market testing indicated this is potentially attractive and should be investigated.
 - ii. The Leisure Team has identified the potential to generate further income from advertising in its programmes and to pursue sponsorship for its larger community events.
 - iii. The Council should investigate if there are gains to bringing services back in house when contracts expire and if there is potential to market these services to others.

It will be necessary to test all areas of the Council's activity going forward for potential for increasing income and it is believed this should be built into regular discussion at team meetings, performance review processes by encouraging staff and members to identify new ideas.

Resourcing

- 65) When considering issues like housing, energy, parks and commercial buildings there are two key challenges:-
- i. Retaining a focus on income generation in the face of other social or economic objectives inside individual thematic areas.
 - ii. Managing the whole process in terms of the Council's investment and the balance between risk and the urgent need for additional income.
- 66) For the type of investment required to deliver action across fields this wide will require a fully corporate rather than project based approach. It will require (at the appropriate point) consideration of the Council's borrowing limits and a rigorous approach to the approval of projects business plans.
- 67) It is likely that the Council will need to consider new vehicles such as Council owned companies either itself or in partnership with other authorities.
- 68) Both additional officer support and governance structures will be required to have an overview sufficient to address the potential and the risks.
- 69) It is proposed that three actions are taken:-
- i. The establishment of an Income Generation Board [IGB] which will consider both the overall programme, establish an action plan and make the recommendation to Cabinet regarding the approval of projects. It is proposed that this group is small and consists of the Council Leader, Chair of the Audit Committee, Section 151 Officer and the Strategic Director. A full brief for the group's work will be produced.
 - ii. That the officer input takes the form of the sponsor being the Director of Operational Services with a project manager being based in Finance. It is not thought sufficient resources currently exist within Finance, particularly while this programme is in gestation. Additionally, Legal Services are likely to take on a considerable workload from the development of this programme. The Invest to Save budget should be used to employ support staff to facilitate the programme through the employment of a part time officer or contractor to manage the programme and additional legal costs. The final arrangements for the deployment of these resources to be agreed between the Director of Operational Services, Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council.

- iii. That where and if appropriate the importance of this programme is recognised by the adjustment of officer work programmes and targets. The full implications of this programme will depend upon its potential and complexity and may require refocusing of officer time moving forward.

Implications

- 70) Anti-poverty: Members will need to consider at the appropriate point in project development if action is required to ensure income generation does not risk worsening poverty. However, this is for consideration as proposed actions are developed and there may be scope to include anti-poverty elements around energy, skills, etc., into programmes without generating funding the Council will not be able to sustain services to often hard pressed community.
- 71) Financial Implications: The need for investment to launch this work is identified. The need to address financial risk is also identified in the report.
- 72) Risk Management: (i) Implications are identified and specific structures for control are contained in the report. (ii) However, the LGA have offered to assist the development of this programme subject to us applying for support through their Productivity Expert Programme. It is intended to ask them to advise the Income Generation Group on the programme, its management and if there are other elements that should be addressed. It is anticipated this will both assist risk mitigation but also in identifying best practice elsewhere.
- 73) Organisational Implications (OD) issues: Workforce and organisational development is focused on service redesign, learning intervention and process improvement. This involves examining the way we work with a focus on the efficient and flexible use of resources.

An entrepreneurial approach means doing things differently. Income generation projects require a strong partnership between HR and all parts of the business.

This means there will be a degree of risk especially for initiatives not previously tried or tested to minimise the risk managers are expected to produce a business case for each initiative/project that provides evidence of analysis of the market as well as financial assessment. Managers have been supported in the development of their skills through 1-1 training in the usage of corporate project management templates.

The challenge for 2016-2018 is to upskill leaders, managers and other key staff and develop their commercial and entrepreneurial skills using a matrix management approach and utilising project and programme manager skills to work across services.

To address this training need we have identified a number of training interventions which have been incorporated into our training programme. These are:

- New management development programme (level 3 and level 5)
- Setting up a trading Company – practical steps
- Contract Management workshops
- Preparing tender documents workshops
- Resilience training
- Customer Care Training
- Performance management and remote workers.
- Project Management
- Political awareness
- Commercial skills for all staff

The service workforce planning review has also highlighted training to support our succession planning programme to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills to deliver within our changing environment and new ways of operating.

- 74) Other implications: Other implications may arise in the development and delivery of this programme.

Conclusion

- 75) This report outlines the proposed actions in respect of income generation and seeks approval for:
- i. The first project delivering new beach income, subject to a business case.
 - ii. Identifies the timescales for the development of the major strands being developed.
 - iii. Identifies the internal management structures and resources that will enable the management and oversight of the programme.
- 76) The Council should embrace the need to develop far more of a commercial approach to its work. It is as much a part of transformation as the changes to customer service and developing electronic systems we are undertaking. Much of this work also raises the possibility of providing new services that may well provide to be exciting and beneficial in themselves. Indeed, new interventions in areas like housing and energy are essential to maintain relevance to current issues and the changes taking place in the lives of residents. The Council of 5 years' time will have to be very different from the model today. This will mean changes to staff roles and priorities over time as energies are rightly absorbed into new ways of working.

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	No
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

Officer to Contact

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Agenda Item 9



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4 July 2016

Report Title: Amendments to the council's constitution – Refresh of planning protocol

Report By: Christine Barkshire-Jones, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of the Report

Council is asked to approve the revised planning protocol.

Recommendation(s)

1. To consider and approve the revised planning protocol as part of the Constitution of the Council

Reasons for Recommendations

To agree the revised planning protocol giving clear guidance to Councillors about how they should carry out their duties in relation to planning and development proposals.

Introduction

1. Members are aware of a number of high profile planning applications which have come before the planning committee recently. They have raised debate over a number of matters dealt with by the planning protocol, which required clarification and further discussion.
2. Hastings Borough Council first updated the planning protocol on 18 April 2007. It was revised again because the Local Government Association (LGA) published revised updated guidance in 2009. Cabinet on 10 January 2011 approved the setting up of a pre-application consultation forum to consider major development proposals before they are submitted as a planning application. The LGA in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) produced an update in 2013 to the 2009 version. The protocol was updated again to reflect these changes.
3. There is a need to regularly update and refresh the planning protocol to reflect changes in practice and procedure. The planning protocol has clarified the position in respect of lobbying with the introduction of a declaration of lobbying form in the interest of transparency, clarified the expectation on planning committee members to attend planning training and expanded upon the distinction between predetermination, predisposition and bias amongst other matters of clarification.. The current revision to the protocol has been consulted on amongst officers in planning and legal services and went to Working Arrangements Group (WAG) twice where it was debated thoroughly. WAG agreed this version on 14 April 2016.

Code of Conduct

4. The planning protocol is a council protocol under Part 5 of the constitution of the council. Breach of this protocol could lead to complaints being made to the council's standards committee.
5. Members are reminded that councillors with a prejudicial interest can address the planning committee, but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions and giving evidence where a

member of the public would be permitted to do so. This would apply if a councillor presented a petition in accordance with the rules of public speaking and is their nominated spokesperson. If the councillor is the applicant they would have a right of reply to a petition against their application. Once they have completed making their representations and answering questions they are required to leave the room in the usual way.

6. Members are also reminded that ward councillors can address the planning committee in accordance with the rules of public speaking at planning committee. A ward councillor who is also a member of the planning committee and who wishes to represent their constituent's views at planning committee should first approach the other ward Councillor to speak on behalf of their constituents. If this is not possible, the ward councillor may speak at the planning committee on behalf of their constituents as the nominated spokesperson for a petition.
7. However, they should declare their position and after making their representations, sit back and make it clear that they are not taking part in the debate or vote, to avoid accusations of bias and pre-determination.
8. ward councillors who are also members of the planning committee who wish to address the committee in this manner should give notice to the chair and the Chief Legal Officer prior to the committee meeting. This would also need to be made clear to members of the public and recorded in the minutes when the item is called for consideration. Members are reminded that they need to balance the needs of their constituents with their part in the decision making process of planning committee and also any risk of challenge.

Conclusion

9. It is recommended that the council endorses the revised planning protocol for adoption.

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	No
Anti-Poverty	No

Additional Information

Appendix 1 planning protocol version July 2016

Appendix 2 amended planning protocol

Officer to Contact

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Officer Telephone Number 01424 451731

Hastings Borough Council

Planning Protocol

Hastings Borough Council

Planning Protocol

Introduction

1. This Protocol replaces and updates that which was adopted by Council on 18th December 2013.
2. Planning has a positive and proactive role to play at the heart of local government. The planning system works best when Councillors, officers and all other parties essential to its effective operation clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and the context and constraints in which they operate. The purpose of this Protocol is to give clear guidance to Councillors about how they should carry out their duties in relation to planning and development proposals. This Protocol seeks to ensure openness, transparency, fairness and consistency in planning decisions and to ensure that the planning process operates properly, legally and effectively. Planning decisions should be made openly, impartially, with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons. The process should leave no grounds for suggesting that a decision has been partial, biased or not well-founded in any way.
3. Planning decisions involve balancing:
 - a. the needs and interests of individual constituents and the community, with
 - b. the need to maintain an ethic of impartial decision making on what can be highly controversial proposals.

This Protocol provides guidance on achieving this balance. It reflects the enhanced role for Councillors as champions of their local communities and recognises their ability to participate in discussions prior to the receipt of a planning application on behalf of their communities. Councillors may be contacted by members of the public and asked to advise them how to make representations on planning applications or if they would address the Planning Committee on their behalf in their role as Ward Councillor. This Protocol provides guidance on the role of Councillors and how to avoid predetermination or bias in decision making.

4. This Protocol applies to Councillors at all times when involved in the planning process. This includes taking part in decision making meetings of the Planning Committee, or when involved on less formal occasions, such as meetings with officers or the public. It applies equally to planning enforcement matters or the making of compulsory purchase orders.
5. If in any doubt about the application of this Protocol, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer, preferably well before any meeting takes place.

The Relationship to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors

6. This Protocol is a Council Protocol under Part 5 of the Constitution of the Council. Breach of this Protocol could lead to a complaint being made to the Council's Standards Committee.

7. This Protocol supplements the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors (the Code). It is unlikely that there will be any conflict between the two but, if there is, the provisions of the general Code of Conduct will take precedence.
8. Councillors must apply both the general Code of Conduct and this Protocol in dealing with all planning issues. Failure to do so may place the Council at risk of legal challenge or a finding of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

The General Role and Conduct of Councillors and Officers

9. Councillors and Officers have different but complementary roles. Both serve the public but Councillors are responsible to the electorate, whilst officers are responsible to the Council as a whole. Officers advise Councillors and the Council and carry out the Council's work. They are employed by the Council, not by individual Councillors. It follows that instructions may only be given to officers through a decision of the Council or its Cabinet or a Committee. A successful relationship between Councillors and officers can only be based upon mutual trust and understanding of each others positions. This relationship, and the trust which it underpins, must never be abused or compromised.
10. The Code sets out the requirements on Councillors in relation to their conduct. It covers issues central to the preservation of an ethical approach to Council business, including the need to register and declare interests, as well as appropriate relationships with other Councillors, staff and the public.
11. In planning terms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which must be balanced with that of the wider interest. Much is often at stake in this process, and opposing views are often strongly held by those involved. Whilst Councillors should take account of these views, all Planning Committee members should not favour any person, company, group or locality, nor put themselves in a position where they appear to do so.

Gifts or Hospitality

12. Councillors shall not accept gifts or hospitality from developers or from any person involved in or affected by a planning proposal, including pre-application proposals. A gift or hospitality might be considered to influence a Councillor's judgment and it is important that there can be no justifiable grounds for suggesting a decision either has been, or appears to have been, influenced or biased in any way. The Code, in any event, requires that the Councillor must within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £50, provide written notification to the Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality. A gift over £50 will constitute a personal interest and be registerable as such. All details will go on the register of gifts and hospitality, which is open to public inspection and will remain on the register for 3 years. Councillors must consider whether any gift or hospitality over the value of £50 constitutes a prejudicial interest.

Registration and Declaration of Interests

13. The Local Government Act 2000 and the national code place requirements on Councillors on the registration and declaration of their interests, as well as the consequences for the Councillor's participation in consideration of an issue, in the light of those interests.
14. Both Councillors and Officers are required to observe codes of conduct and statutory provisions; the aim of which is to ensure the integrity of the Council and individual

Councillors. These require the open disclosure of any personal and/or prejudicial interests in issues being considered by the Council, its Cabinet or any of its Committees. The Code requires that Councillors register their financial or other interests in the Register of Members' Interests held by the Monitoring Officer. This is in addition to the requirement for Councillors to declare any personal interests as defined in the Code. If a Councillor has a personal interest, they should consider whether that interest is prejudicial as defined in the Code.

15. The Council's Monitoring Officer has provided all Members with detailed guidance on the Code and in particular, declaration of interests. This is regularly updated. Members of the Planning Committee must ensure they are familiar with the Code. The requirements must be followed scrupulously and Councillors should review their situation regularly. It is the personal responsibility of individual Members to ensure they comply with the Code and make all appropriate declarations at Planning Committee meetings. Members should take advice early, from the Monitoring Officer or the Solicitor to the Planning Committee, and preferably well before any meeting takes place, if they are in any doubt as to their position.
16. The provisions of the Code are an attempt to separate out interests arising from the personal and private interests of the Councillor and those arising from the Councillor's wider public life.
17. The Register of Members' Interests is maintained by the Monitoring Officer and is available for public inspection. An interest can either be personal, prejudicial or pecuniary. The Code defines these terms and should be referred to for the appropriate detail. If Councillors have an interest in any matter, they must disclose the existence and nature of their interest at any relevant meeting, including informal meetings or discussions with Officers and other Councillors. Councillors are advised to disclose their interest at the beginning of the meeting and not just at the commencement of discussion on that particular matter. Councillors can still declare an interest which only comes to mind or light after declarations of interest have been considered on the agenda at any point prior to discussion of that particular matter. The obligation to disclose the existence and nature of an interest applies to **all Councillors attending the Planning Committee meeting, whether sitting as a Member of the Planning Committee or as a Councillor addressing the Planning Committee or sitting in the public gallery**. The responsibility rests with individual Councillors to ensure that they indicate to the Chair that they have an interest to declare.
18. Where a Councillor has a personal interest in a matter they must always declare the existence and nature of their interest. They can participate in the discussion and be involved in making the decision.
19. If a Councillor has both a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter they must always declare the existence and nature of their interest. They cannot participate in any discussion or be involved in making the decision, either formally or informally and must not seek to influence the decision in any way. They must withdraw from the room during discussion of the matter and cannot remain even as a member of the public. This applies to all Members with a prejudicial interest regardless of whether they are members of the Planning Committee, which is making the decision. A prejudicial interest would require withdrawal of the Councillor from the Committee during consideration of that item.
20. If in any doubt about Registration and Declaration of Interests, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Predetermination, Predisposition or Bias

21. In addition to declaring personal or prejudicial interests, members of a Planning Committee need to avoid any appearance of bias or of having predetermined their view before taking a decision on a planning application. A useful test to determine whether a position or view could be considered to be biased is to think about whether a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility of bias. Predetermination goes beyond predisposition and essentially evades the process of weighing and balancing relevant factors and taking into account other viewpoints.
22. Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced provisions for dealing with allegations of bias or pre-determination where the Councillor had or appeared to have a closed mind when making the decision. The Councillor is considered not to have a closed mind "just because" they had previously done anything relevant to the decision, that directly or indirectly, indicated what view the Councillor took, or would or might take, in relation to a planning decision.
23. The fact that a Councillor may have campaigned for or against a proposal does not automatically mean that they have a closed mind. Councillors will need to be careful to consider, and ensure that it is apparent that they have considered, all relevant considerations and made their decision in accordance with their statutory duty. Councillors must be prepared to change their view right up to the point of making the decision. Councillors can listen to applicants and objectors, and indicate their view, but must not be biased in their consideration of the issues. Councillors can support or oppose an application and represent the views of their constituents in their role as a Ward Councillor. To do so as a Planning Committee Member MIGHT compromise their role on the Committee and Councillors are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer..

Predisposition

24. A distinction is drawn by the Courts between a Councillor having clearly expressed an intention to vote in a particular way before a meeting (pre-determination) and a predisposition to an initial view. Where the Councillor is clear they have an open mind and are willing to listen to all the material considerations presented at the Planning Committee before deciding on how to exercise their vote, there is no predetermination.

Predetermination

25. If a Planning Committee Member has been lobbied by friends or others and wishes to promote or oppose a planning application, they will need to carefully consider whether this has become a personal interest or not. In addition, they also need to consider if their view is likely to be regarded as predetermined. In other words whether they have already made up their mind and are not prepared to listen to the material considerations presented at the Planning Committee before making their decision. If a Councillor has predetermined their position they should not take part in the decision making for that application as to do so will be a breach of the Code of Conduct and leave the decision open to legal challenge by way of judicial review.

Bias

26. Councillors should not participate in the consideration of a planning application if to do so would give the appearance of bias. The test for bias is: "Would the fair-minded observer, knowing the background, consider that there was a real possibility of bias?" It is not the Councillor's view of whether they are biased that is relevant but the view of

the independent observer. Perception is important and can lead to judicial challenge in the High Court. If a Councillor believes that their participation would lead a fair-minded observer to consider that there is a real possibility of bias, they should not participate in making the decision and should withdraw from the room. The Courts have held that it is primarily a matter for the Councillor to judge whether to withdraw, but given the scope for challenge the Councillor should always err on the side of caution. Whilst not every application will raise the question of bias, there will be occasions when a member of the public in possession of all the facts might consider that there is a real risk of bias. In these circumstances, the Councillor should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.

27. Councillors do not have to have a personal interest in order to come within the definition of bias. There may not be specific consequences for the Councillor who has failed to acknowledge and respond to their bias, as opposed to failing to declare a personal or prejudicial interest under the Code. Councillors must be aware that in failing to consider the issue of bias there are consequences for the decision, which may be challenged on the grounds of bias in the High Court.
28. If in any doubt about the issue of bias, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Development Proposals Submitted by Councillors and Council Development

29. Planning applications submitted by the Council are considered by the Planning Committee in a public meeting rather than by Officers under delegated authority in accordance with the Council's Standing Instructions to Authorised Officers.
30. Planning applications submitted by Councillors can easily give rise to suspicion of impropriety. Whilst it is perfectly legitimate for such proposals to be submitted it is vital to ensure they are handled in such a way that gives no grounds for accusations of favouritism. All proposals submitted by Councillors are for this reason determined by the Planning Committee. Current Councillors who submit their own proposals or act as agents for people pursuing planning matters, should not play any part in the decision making process for those proposals.
31. The consideration of a proposal from a Councillor in such circumstances would be considered as a prejudicial interest under the Code, and as such the Councillor would be required to withdraw from any consideration of the matter. The Code also provides that the Councillor should "not seek improperly to influence a decision about the matter". It is important to emphasise that "improperly" does not imply that a Councillor should have any fewer rights than a member of the public seeking to explain and justify their proposal to an officer in advance of consideration by a Committee.
32. A Councillor submitting a planning application has a prejudicial interest but may address the Planning Committee where members of the public enjoy the same public speaking rights i.e. as the applicant. The Councillor should consider whether it would be wise to address the Planning Committee given all the circumstances of the case, which could include the nature of the prejudicial interest and the relationship of the Councillor with the remainder of the Planning Committee. If the Councillor as an applicant decides to address the Planning Committee they must leave the room once they have made their presentation.

Lobbying of and by Councillors

33. Lobbying of Councillors for or against proposals is a normal part of the planning process. Those who may be affected by a planning decision will often seek to influence it by approaching their elected Ward Councillor or a Member of the Planning Committee. Lobbying can lead to the impartiality and integrity of a Councillor being called into question, unless care and common sense is exercised by all the parties involved.
34. It is important in maintaining the integrity of individual Councillors and the Council as a whole that Members of the Planning Committee (or Members who may end up acting as substitutes on the Planning Committee) should take care about expressing an opinion that may be taken as indicating that they have already made up their mind on the issue before they have been exposed to all the evidence and arguments. In such situations, Councillors should:-
 - a. If lobbied, explain that, whilst they can listen to/receive viewpoints from residents or other interested parties, they cannot decide or indicate before the relevant Planning Committee meeting which way they intend to vote as it would prejudice their impartiality. They should also explain that it is necessary for them to hear all the arguments both for and against the proposal before making up their mind.
 - b. Avoid giving members of the public planning advice except in relation to general planning procedures and often it may be wise to direct any such request to an appropriate Planning Officer.
 - c. If approached by residents or other interested parties, they should be referred to the appropriate Planning Officer in order that advice can be given and their opinions can be included in the Officers report to the Planning Committee. Copies of any correspondence or other written material received by a Member should be forwarded to the Planning Officer without delay.
35. Councillors should be aware of the need to act fairly and without bias towards every application. Councillors must keep an open mind upon an issue upon which they will be asked to vote, up until the moment that they vote upon it. Failure to keep an open mind may result in an application for judicial review of the decision reached. Any interested party may apply for judicial review of a planning decision. One of the grounds being that a Councillor who voted in favour of the decision to approve or refuse the application had approached the issue with a closed mind, and so had failed to take all relevant considerations into account. Failure to maintain an open mind may invalidate the entire decision-making process.

Pre-application Discussions

36. Discussions between a potential applicant and Hastings Borough Council prior to the submission of an application can be of considerable benefit to both parties.
37. With the recognition of the need to allow and encourage Councillors to be champions of their local communities it is now accepted that Lead Councillor and Ward Councillor engagement in pre-application discussions on major development is necessary to allow Councillors to fulfill this role. Councils have not previously involved Councillors in pre-application discussions for fear of them being accused of predetermination when the subsequent planning application came before the Planning Committee for determination. In order to avoid perceptions that Councillors might have fettered their discretion in any pre-application discussions, all Councillors should enter into such discussions within clear guidelines, and include:

- a. Clarity at the outset that any discussions will not bind the Council to make a particular decision and that any views expressed are personal and provisional.
 - b. Advice given by Officers should be consistent and based on the Development Plan and material considerations. Officers should be present where practicable when Councillors attend any pre-application discussions. Councillors should not become drawn into any negotiations and should ask Officers to deal with any necessary negotiations to ensure that the Council's position is co-ordinated. Councillors should complete the form at Appendix 1 following any pre-application discussion which will be attached to the Planning file in the interests of openness and transparency.
 - c. Pre-application discussions should be arranged by Officers where practicable. A written note should be made by Officers of all meetings and the matters discussed should be confirmed by letter which should be placed on the file as a matter of public record. If there is a legitimate reason for confidentiality regarding the proposal, a note of the non-confidential issues raised, or advice given, should be recorded on the file in the normal manner.
38. If Councillors are invited to, or asked to arrange, a formal meeting with applicants, developers or groups of objectors (for instance, residents' associations) or supporters, they should inform the case officer dealing with the application. This applies to meetings at all stages of the planning process, including the pre-application stage.

Presentations of Development Proposals

39. The Council does, on occasion, allow presentations of development proposals. Presentations are to keep Councillors informed generally on matters, which appear to have or are likely to have strategic importance for the Borough. Presentations will not be allowed in relation to any matter which is the subject of a current planning application to the Council. At such presentations Councillors must try to maintain an impartial role, listening to what is said and asking appropriate questions but not expressing a fixed opinion, and keeping an open mind on the issues at all times. This applies to pre-application public consultation meetings arranged by Developers in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Pre-Application Consultation Forum

40. The Council has introduced a Pre-Application Consultation Forum to consider significant major developments, prior to them being submitted as planning applications. Significant development proposals are defined as residential schemes of 30 units or more, employment/industrial scheme of 5,000 m² or more, retail schemes of 2,500 m² or more and leisure schemes of 1,000 m² or more. The Council reserves the right to seek wider community involvement on other applications which do not fall within these thresholds if they consider that they are likely to be particularly sensitive or will have a very significant impact on the local community.
41. A Forum is a meeting held in public where a developer is able to explain proposals directly to Councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage about a development site. The purpose of the Forum is to:-
- a. enable the developer to explain development proposals directly to Councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage.
 - b. identify any issues that may be considered in any formal application.

- c. inform Councillors and the public of a development proposal at an early stage in the pre-application process.
 - d. inform officer pre-application discussions with the developer.
 - e. enable the developer to shape an application to address community issues.
42. The Chair of the Forum is the relevant Lead Member or their nominated substitute, who is not a member of the Planning Committee, who will introduce the Forum and explain who is going to speak. The planning officer will provide a background to the proposal. The developer explains the proposal (this may involve contributions from several people). Those persons specified in paragraph 44, then have the opportunity to speak and raise any issues, observations and comments. The developer has an opportunity to respond to what has been said by invited speakers. Councillors present at the Forum may ask questions of the developer. The planning officer summarises the main points raised during the Forum, which is then closed by the Chair of the Forum
43. Forum meetings will be held in public, but only those invited to speak on behalf of recognised key stakeholder groups will be able to raise issues at the Forum. Groups invited to ask questions and express their views at the Forum will be restricted to properly constituted residents' groups covering the area of the proposed development, traders' groups for the immediate area, local campaign groups that have emerged specifically to comment on the development (only one of this type of group will be allowed to ask questions although more than one representation may be received) and properly constituted Borough wide bodies which could include business organisations.
44. Properly constituted is defined as those groups with a published constitution, has an open membership and a democratic election of officers. In addition, registered social landlords will be allowed to ask questions. Individuals do not have an automatic right to speak at the Forum unless invited to do so. Attendees can then make written comments to officers who will forward any comments received to developers. The Forum will not affect any rights to make representations when a formal planning application is submitted. All Councillors are invited to attend the Forum, including those who are on the Planning Committee.
45. After the Forum, the main points will be recorded and passed to the developer for their consideration during further pre-application discussions with officers and in putting the application together. A copy will be passed to all interested parties and placed on the planning application file. The Planning Committee will in due course consider an application based on the facts, issues and advice and nothing said at the Forum will prejudice that consideration.

Chair's Briefings

46. The purpose of Chair's Briefings will be to brief the Chair and Vice Chair on applications to be brought to the next meeting of the Planning Committee.. The purpose of the Briefing is for Officers to explain the forthcoming agenda, consider whether a site visit is required in respect of a particular application and consider administrative arrangements. Chair's Briefings are not to discuss the planning merits of the application or to make decisions

Officer Reports to Committee

47. All matters requiring a decision by the Planning Committee should be the subject of a written report from Officers, which should be accurate and cover all relevant planning issues. In particular, it should include a clear outline of the site history, the relevant

development plan policies, the response of consultees and the nature of objections (electronic links to objection letters and correspondence will be provided to Councillors prior to the Planning Committee Meeting). The report shall include a clear recommendation with a technical appraisal justifying it. Any objections or other relevant issues arising after the report is published shall be reported verbally to the Planning Committee at the meeting. Councillors shall not put improper pressure on Officers to make a particular recommendation and should not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the officers' impartiality.

48. The Courts and Ombudsman have advised that officer reports on planning applications must have regard to the following points:
 - a. Reports should be accurate and cover the substance of any objections and the views of those consulted.
 - b. Relevant information should include a clear exposition of the Development Plan; relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); site or related history; and any other material considerations.
 - c. Reports should have a written recommendation of action. Oral reporting (except to update a report) should be avoided and carefully minuted when it does occur.
 - d. Reports should contain technical appraisal which clearly justify a recommendation.
 - e. If the reports recommendation is contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, the material considerations which justify the departure must be clearly stated.
 - f. Any oral updates or changes to the Report should be recorded.
49. It is important that the report covers these points, not only as a matter of good practice, but because failure may constitute maladministration or give rise to judicial review on the grounds that the decision was not taken in accordance with the Development Plan and the Council's statutory duty under Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (see paragraph 66 below).
50. Officers must always act openly and impartially and provide consistent professional advice, in accordance with the rules of their professional body, based on planning policies and procedures, ensuring Councillors are aware of all relevant material planning considerations before decisions are made.
51. Councillors shall give due regard to recommendations and professional advice given by Officers. Councillors are not bound to follow recommendations or advice received, but may depart from this where there is justification to do so, based on clear and legitimate planning grounds which must be recorded in full when making the decision having regard to the relevant planning policy where appropriate.

Public Speaking at Planning Committee

52. Members of the Planning Committee shall not allow members of the public to discuss planning applications with them during the course of the Meeting itself other than through the procedure for public speaking. The procedure for public speaking set out below does not apply to the Pre-Application Consultation Forum.
53. All planning matters will be considered in public session, unless there are specific reasons for dealing with an item as exempt under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in which case the public will be asked to leave the

room. Whilst this will be rarely exercised it may be necessary for example in consideration of enforcement matters.

Petitions

54. The procedures for public speaking allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee where a petition of objection against the recommendation of the planning officer is received **at least three clear working days** before the Planning Committee considering the item is due to sit. A standard form of petition is available to view on the Council's website. Petitions must contain a minimum of ten signatories.. Each page of the petition must clearly state the planning application to which it is referring, giving the address and the reasons for the objection. Petitions must contain names, addresses and signatures. Petitions submitted must be the original document as photocopies are not accepted. Electronic petitions are not acceptable.
55. Where there is a petition against the proposed development the lead petitioner is invited to attend the Planning Committee meeting. Petitions should clearly state who the lead petitioner is and provide their full name and contact details. They (or their representative) will be invited to address the Planning Committee. Where the lead petitioner (or their representative) fails to attend the scheduled Planning Committee meeting the Chair will ask if there is anyone else present in the public gallery who wishes to address the Planning Committee on behalf of the petition. The applicant or their agent has a right to speak in response to the petition. Each person making representations may speak for up to a maximum of five minutes and may be asked questions by Members of the Planning Committee.
56. The procedure for public speaking allows for an applicant (or their agent) and a petitioner to speak for and against the application respectively. If two petitions are received and petitioners are making similar points, the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) will exercise his/her discretion and preference will be given to petitions from the immediate locality of the neighbourhood. Where the petitions are making different points the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) may exercise his/her discretion and allow both petitioners to speak. Each person may speak for up to a maximum of five minutes. Where there are two petitioners, the applicant may speak for up to a maximum of ten minutes in the interests of natural justice.

Ward Councillors addressing the Planning Committee

57. If a Ward Councillor wishes to address the Planning Committee about a matter in their ward being considered at the Planning Committee they should advise the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) and the Committee Administrator prior to the meeting itself and will be entitled to speak after the petitioner and applicant have addressed the Committee. Ward Councillors should comply with the procedure for declaration of interests if they speak at a Planning Committee meeting in the same way as members of the Committee. A Ward Councillor may address the Planning Committee for a maximum of five minutes but may not be asked questions by Members of the Planning Committee. County Councillors should direct any County related queries they have in respect of a planning application to East Sussex County Council. Where the Ward Councillor has a prejudicial interest they may only address the Planning Committee if they are the applicant or lead petitioner and must withdraw from the room once they have made their representations.

Submission of Documentation

58. Documents must be submitted **at least three clear working days** before the Planning Committee meeting. For example if the Planning Committee was held on a

Wednesday, documents should be received by the Council by 3pm on the previous Friday. Any late documents should not be circulated to the Planning Committee as all parties may not have time to react to the submissions, and members of the Planning Committee may not be able to give proper consideration to the matter. Officers may not be able to provide considered advice on any material considerations arising. This must be made clear to those who intend to speak. Members of the Planning Committee should not read emails or correspondence received after the deadline for submission of documents. The acceptance of circulated material could imply a willingness to take the necessary time to investigate any issues raised and lead to the need to defer the application or risk a complaint about the way the material has been considered. This care needs to be taken to avoid the perception of external influence or bias.

Decision Making

59. A decision on a planning application must not be made before the Formal Planning Committee Meeting scheduled to determine the application. **Political group meetings shall not be held prior to a Committee Meeting**, as Group Meetings can give the appearance of bias. The fair-minded observer may perceive that Group Meetings behind closed doors are likely to affect the decisions of those Members attending. The holding of Group Meetings may therefore give rise to judicial challenge. The use of political whips to seek to influence the outcome of a planning application is likely to be regarded as maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman. Councillors will be seated alphabetically and shall not sit according to their political groups in order to avoid the appearance of group decision-making. Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If the Officer's report recommends a departure from the Development Plan the justification for this must be contained in the report. Such applications must be advertised in the local paper in advance of consideration by the Committee.
60. Decisions must be made on planning merits and the reasons for making a decision should be clear and supported by material planning considerations. The reasons for refusing an application shall always be recorded, as should any conditions attached to an approval. If the Planning Committee wish to refuse an application contrary to Officer recommendations or impose additional planning conditions the reasons for doing either must be clearly stated when this is proposed.
61. Councillors are advised to take the following steps before making a decision which differs from the officer recommendation:
 - a. Discussing the areas of difference and the reasons for that with planning officers prior to the Planning Committee meeting.
 - b. Recording the detailed reasons as part of the mover's motion.
 - c. Adjourning for a few minutes for those reasons to be discussed with Officers advising the Planning Committee and then agreed by the Planning Committee.
62. If a Member of the Planning Committee proposes to refuse or grant an application contrary to the Officer recommendation, they should give justification for doing so, based on clear and legitimate planning reasons and having regard to the relevant

planning policy where appropriate. . Where Councillors are proposing to vote against the Officer recommendations, the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) shall make sure that the reasons are clearly stated before a vote is taken. These reasons must be recorded in the minutes if the officer recommendations are not agreed and a copy placed on the application file. The reasons given by Councillors should be clear, observe the principles of reasonableness, take into account all relevant information (i.e. material considerations) and ignore all irrelevant information (i.e. non material matters). The officer should be given the opportunity to explain the implications of the proposed decision.

63. Councillors must attend meetings with an open mind and shall demonstrate through their conduct at the meeting that they are giving careful, fair and balanced consideration to the applications under discussion. Councillors shall make a decision only after they have considered all the relevant information needed to make a decision.
64. Councillors shall not vote or take part in the meeting's discussion on a proposal unless they have been present to hear the entire debate, including any petition, representations made by the applicant and the officer's introduction to the matter. Councillors who leave the room will be advised by the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) that they cannot vote or take any further part in the discussion. The rules of natural justice mean that planning applications should be determined in an open and fair manner taking account of relevant information and arguments. It is only at Planning Committee meetings that members of the Planning Committee will have, and be able to consider, all the relevant information and arguments about an application. Failure to take account of relevant considerations or to take account of irrelevant considerations is a ground for judicial review in the High Court.

Site Visits

65. Site visits shall be organised by Officers of the Planning Department. All Members of the Planning Committee will be invited to attend the site visit. The site visit will be guided by the Planning Officer who will point out matters of material relevance to the application and answer Councillors' questions. Formal site visits by Members of the Planning Committee should be made only in exceptional circumstances. For example, where the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and any supporting material, including photographs taken by Officers, where the proposal is particularly contentious and where the site cannot adequately be viewed from the road. A record shall be maintained of who attended the site visit and recorded in the minutes.
66. A site visit is not a meeting to discuss the planning merits of the application or to make decisions. The purpose of the inspection is to gather factual information about the site and visually assess the likely or actual impact of the proposal. It is not to debate the merits of the application or the Officers' recommendation. During the formal site visit detailed discussions and/or negotiations must not be conducted with the applicant or third parties by either Councillors or Officers. All discussion and debate should be undertaken at the Planning Committee meeting when the application is presented for formal consideration. Any arguments applicants or third parties wish to put forward can be heard at that stage through the public speaking arrangements. Councillors should be aware of the appearance of bias should they be seen in conversation with an applicant or objector.
67. Members of the Planning Committee are expected to attend the organised site visit. Councillors not attending an organised site visit must sit back from the table and not take part in debate and voting on the matter when it comes up for consideration.

Deferred Applications

68. Applications may be deferred to a future meeting if there are valid reasons for doing so. Consideration must be given to the procedures for public speaking where petitioners and the applicant have addressed the Planning Committee at the previous meeting. There may be occasions when there are a number of petitioners raising different objections to the application and the applicant must have the chance to respond. A judgement has to be made whether it is in the interests of good decision making to re-hear all oral representations again or to restrict the Planning Committee to its constitution at the earlier meeting. That is a decision for the Chair at the Chair's Briefing (or Vice Chair in his/her absence). It may be necessary (in exceptional circumstances such as public disturbance) to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting and re-convene in another room.

Substitutions

69. Substitutions have implications where applications are deferred from a previous Planning Committee meeting. Where the petitioner/s and applicant have previously addressed the Planning Committee and the application is deferred to another meeting, any Councillors substituting on the Planning Committee will not have heard all the representations which will form some part of the basis for the decision. Where the petitioner/s and applicant are given the opportunity to address the Committee a second time, there is not a problem with substitutes since the matter is heard afresh. Where applications are not deferred but a continuation of the earlier meeting no substitutions are permitted. Group Leaders/authorised persons should be informed where substitutions are not to be permitted on a particular item as soon as practicable after the Chair's Briefing. Where applications are deferred into a new municipal year the application may have to be considered afresh and petitioner/s and the applicant given the opportunity to address the Planning Committee again if there is a change in membership of the Planning Committee.

Annual Review of Decisions

70. On an annual basis, arrangements will be made for members of the Planning Committee to review a sample of implemented planning permissions to assess the quality of the decisions made. The Planning Services Manager will arrange for members of the Planning Committee to visit a number of sites where development is either completed or near to completion. As this is part of the continuing programme of training for members no decisions are taken during the visit. A record is kept of the sites visited but no record is kept of any discussions that take place. The Planning Committee will consider the review and decide whether it gave rise to the need to reconsider any policies or practices. Such a review should improve the quality and consistency of decision making, strengthening public confidence in the planning system and can help with reviews of planning policy. It will also assist Planning Committee members to refine their understanding of the impact of their decisions from the visiting of completed developments.

Training of Members in Planning Law and Procedure

71. Planning decisions are often complex and differ in nature from some of the other decisions taken by the Council. It is crucial that planning decisions are based on legitimate planning grounds. For this reason, Members shall not sit on the Planning Committee or act as a substitute on the Planning Committee without having previously undertaken recent training in planning law and procedures.

72. The Planning Services Manager, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer will arrange suitable training opportunities at regular intervals and will supplement this with written guidance. All Members of the Planning Committee must attend training sessions provided. The Committee Administrator will maintain a register of attendance which will be copied to political group leaders annually. Members of the planning Committee are expected to attend all training sessions but must attend a minimum of two training sessions within each municipal year. If a Councillor has not attended a minimum of two training sessions within the municipal year they will not be allowed to sit on the Planning Committee until they have attended the next quarterly training session to bring their planning training up to date. One to one training will not be provided except in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1

PLANNING APPLICATIONS: DECLARATION OF LOBBYING

- Name of Member making the declaration

- Planning Application Number (where known)

- Application Site / Address

- Name(s) of persons undertaking lobbying and a note of their interest in the application (applicant, objector etc)

- Date of lobbying

- Brief details of the nature of the approach to the Member

Upon completion of this form please submit immediately to the Planning Services Manager at Aquila House to be placed on the planning application file.

Hastings Borough Council

Planning Protocol

Introduction

1. This Protocol replaces and updates that which was adopted by Council on 18th December 2013.
2. Planning has a positive and proactive role to play at the heart of local government. The planning system works best when Councillors, officers and all other parties essential to its effective operation clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and the context and constraints in which they operate. The purpose of this Protocol is to give clear guidance to Councillors about how they should carry out their duties in relation to planning and development proposals. This Protocol seeks to ensure openness, transparency, fairness and consistency in planning decisions and to ensure that the planning process operates properly, legally and effectively. Planning decisions should be made openly, impartially, with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons. The process should leave no grounds for suggesting that a decision has been partial, biased or not well-founded in any way.
3. Planning decisions involve balancing:
 - a. the needs and interests of individual constituents and the community, with
 - b. the need to maintain an ethic of impartial decision making on what can be highly controversial proposals.

This Protocol provides guidance on achieving this balance. It reflects the enhanced role for Councillors as champions of their local communities and recognises their ability to participate in discussions prior to the receipt of a planning application on behalf of their communities. Councillors may be contacted by members of the public and asked to advise them how to make representations on planning applications or if they would address the Planning Committee on their behalf in their role as Ward Councillor. This Protocol provides guidance on how to avoid predetermination or bias in decision making.

4. This Protocol applies to Councillors at all times when involved in the planning process. This includes taking part in decision making meetings of the Planning Committee, or when involved on less formal occasions, such as meetings with officers or the public. It applies equally to planning enforcement matters or the making of compulsory purchase orders.
5. If in any doubt about the application of this Protocol, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer, preferably well before any meeting takes place.

The Relationship to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors

6. This Protocol is a Council Protocol under Part 5 of the Constitution of the Council. Breach of this Protocol could lead to a complaint being made to the Council's Standards Committee.

7. This Protocol supplements the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors (the Code). It is unlikely that there will be any conflict between the two but, if there is, the provisions of the general Code of Conduct will take precedence.
8. Councillors must apply both the general Code of Conduct and this Protocol in dealing with all planning issues. Failure to do so may place the Council at risk of legal challenge or a finding of maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman.

The General Role and Conduct of Councillors and Officers

9. Councillors and Officers have different but complementary roles. Both serve the public but Councillors are responsible to the electorate, whilst officers are responsible to the Council as a whole. Officers advise Councillors and the Council and carry out the Council's work. They are employed by the Council, not by individual Councillors. It follows that instructions may only be given to officers through a decision of the Council or its Cabinet or a Committee. A successful relationship between Councillors and officers can only be based upon mutual trust and understanding of each others positions. This relationship, and the trust which it underpins, must never be abused or compromised.
10. The Code sets out the requirements on Councillors in relation to their conduct. It covers issues central to the preservation of an ethical approach to Council business, including the need to register and declare interests, as well as appropriate relationships with other Councillors, staff and the public.
11. In planning terms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which must be balanced with that of the wider interest. Much is often at stake in this process, and opposing views are often strongly held by those involved. Whilst Councillors should take account of these views, all Councillors should not favour any person, company, group or locality, nor put themselves in a position where they appear to do so.

Gifts or Hospitality

12. Councillors shall not accept gifts or hospitality from developers or from any person involved in or affected by a planning proposal, including pre-application proposals. A gift or hospitality might be considered to influence a Councillor's judgment and it is important that there can be no justifiable grounds for suggesting a decision either has been, or appears to have been, influenced or biased in any way. The Code, in any event, requires that the Councillor must within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £50, provide written notification to the Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality. A gift over £50 will constitute a personal interest and be registerable as such. All details will go on the register of gifts and hospitality, which is open to public inspection and will remain on the register for 3 years. Councillors must consider whether any gift or hospitality over the value of £50 constitutes a prejudicial interest.

Registration and Declaration of Interests

13. The Local Government Act 2000 and the national code place requirements on Councillors on the registration and declaration of their interests, as well as the consequences for the Councillor's participation in consideration of an issue, in the light of those interests.
14. Both Councillors and Officers are required to observe codes of conduct and statutory provisions; the aim of which is to ensure the integrity of the Council and individual

Councillors. These require the open disclosure of any personal and/or prejudicial interests in issues being considered by the Council, its Cabinet or any of its Committees. The Code requires that Councillors register their financial or other interests in the Register of Members' Interests held by the Monitoring Officer. This is in addition to the requirement for Councillors to declare any personal interests as defined in the Code. If a Councillor has a personal interest, they should consider whether that interest is prejudicial as defined in the Code.

15. The Council's Monitoring Officer has provided all Members with detailed guidance on the Code and in particular, declaration of interests. This is regularly updated. Members of the Planning Committee must ensure they are familiar with the Code. The requirements must be followed scrupulously and Councillors should review their situation regularly. It is the personal responsibility of individual Members to ensure they comply with the Code and make all appropriate declarations at Planning Committee meetings. Members should take advice early, from the Monitoring Officer or the Solicitor to the Planning Committee, and preferably well before any meeting takes place, if they are in any doubt as to their position.
16. The provisions of the Code are an attempt to separate out interests arising from the personal and private interests of the Councillor and those arising from the Councillor's wider public life.
17. The Register of Members' Interests is maintained by the Monitoring Officer and is available for public inspection. An interest can either be personal, prejudicial or pecuniary. The Code defines these terms and should be referred to for the appropriate detail. If Councillors have an interest in any matter, they must disclose the existence and nature of their interest at any relevant meeting, including informal meetings or discussions with Officers and other Councillors. Councillors are advised to disclose their interest at the beginning of the meeting and not just at the commencement of discussion on that particular matter. Councillors can still declare an interest which only comes to mind or light after declarations of interest have been considered on the agenda at any point prior to discussion of that particular matter. The obligation to disclose the existence and nature of an interest applies to **all Councillors attending the Planning Committee meeting, whether sitting as a Member of the Planning Committee or as a Councillor addressing the Planning Committee or sitting in the public gallery**. The responsibility rests with individual Councillors to ensure that they indicate to the Chair that they have an interest to declare.
18. Where a Councillor has a personal interest in a matter they must always declare the existence and nature of their interest. They can participate in the discussion and be involved in making the decision.
19. If a Councillor has both a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter they must always declare the existence and nature of their interest. They cannot participate in any discussion or be involved in making the decision, either formally or informally and must not seek to influence the decision in any way. They must withdraw from the room during discussion of the matter and cannot remain even as a member of the public. This applies to all Members with a prejudicial interest regardless of whether they are members of the Planning Committee, which is making the decision. A prejudicial interest would require withdrawal of the Councillor from the Committee during consideration of that item.
20. If in any doubt about Registration and Declaration of Interests, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer .

Predetermination, Predisposition or Bias

21. In addition to declaring personal or prejudicial interests, members of a Planning Committee need to avoid any appearance of bias or of having predetermined their view before taking a decision on a planning application. A useful test to determine whether a position or view could be considered to be biased is to think about whether a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility of bias. Predetermination goes beyond predisposition and essentially evades the process of weighing and balancing relevant factors and taking into account other viewpoints.
22. Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced provisions for dealing with allegations of bias or pre-determination where the Councillor had or appeared to have a closed mind when making the decision. The Councillor is considered not to have a closed mind "just because" they had previously done anything relevant to the decision, that directly or indirectly, indicated what view the Councillor took, or would or might take, in relation to a planning decision.
23. The fact that a Councillor may have campaigned for or against a proposal does not automatically mean that they have a closed mind. Councillors will need to be careful to consider, and ensure that it is apparent that they have considered, all relevant considerations and made their decision in accordance with their statutory duty. Councillors must be prepared to change their view right up to the point of making the decision. Councillors can listen to applicants and objectors, and indicate their view, but must not be biased in their consideration of the issues. Councillors can support or oppose an application and represent the views of their constituents in their role as a Ward Councillor. To do so as a Planning Committee Member MIGHT compromise their role on the Committee and Councillors are advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer..

Predisposition

24. A distinction is drawn by the Courts between a Councillor having clearly expressed an intention to vote in a particular way before a meeting (pre-determination) and a predisposition to an initial view. Where the Councillor is clear they have an open mind and are willing to listen to all the material considerations presented at the Planning Committee before deciding on how to exercise their vote, there is no predetermination.

Predetermination

25. If a Planning Committee Member has been lobbied by friends or others and wishes to promote or oppose a planning application, they will need to carefully consider whether this has become a personal interest or not. In addition, they also need to consider if their view is likely to be regarded as predetermined. In other words whether they have already made up their mind and are not prepared to listen to the material considerations presented at the Planning Committee before making their decision. If a Councillor has predetermined their position they should not take part in the decision making for that application as to do so will be a breach of the Code of Conduct and leave the decision open to legal challenge by way of judicial review.

Bias

26. Councillors should not participate in the consideration of a planning application if to do so would give the appearance of bias. The test for bias is: "Would the fair-minded observer, knowing the background, consider that there was a real possibility of bias?" It is not the Councillor's view of whether they are biased that is relevant but the view of

the independent observer. Perception is important and can lead to judicial challenge in the High Court. If a Councillor believes that their participation would lead a fair-minded observer to consider that there is a real possibility of bias, they should not participate in making the decision and should withdraw from the room. The Courts have held that it is primarily a matter for the Councillor to judge whether to withdraw, but given the scope for challenge the Councillor should always err on the side of caution. Whilst not every application will raise the question of bias, there will be occasions when a member of the public in possession of all the facts might consider that there is a real risk of bias. In these circumstances, the Councillor should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer..

27. Councillors do not have to have a personal interest in order to come within the definition of bias. There may not be specific consequences for the Councillor who has failed to acknowledge and respond to their bias, as opposed to failing to declare a personal or prejudicial interest under the Code. Councillors must be aware that in failing to consider the issue of bias there are consequences for the decision, which may be challenged on the grounds of bias in the High Court.
28. If in any doubt about the issue of bias, take immediate advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer..

Development Proposals Submitted by Councillors and Council Development

29. . Planning applications submitted by the Council are considered by the Planning Committee in a public meeting rather than by Officers under delegated authority in accordance with the Council's Standing Instructions to Authorised Officers.

30.

Planning applications submitted by Councillors can easily give rise to suspicion of impropriety. Whilst it is perfectly legitimate for such proposals to be submitted it is vital to ensure they are handled in such a way that gives no grounds for accusations of favouritism. All proposals submitted by Councillors are for this reason determined by the Planning Committee. Current Councillors who submit their own proposals or act as agents for people pursuing planning matters, should not play any part in the decision making process for those proposals.

31. The consideration of a proposal from a Councillor in such circumstances would be considered as a prejudicial interest under the Code, and as such the Councillor would be required to withdraw from any consideration of the matter. The Code also provides that the Councillor should "not seek improperly to influence a decision about the matter". It is important to emphasise that "improperly" does not imply that a Councillor should have any fewer rights than a member of the public seeking to explain and justify their proposal to an officer in advance of consideration by a Committee.
32. A Councillor submitting a planning application has a prejudicial interest but may address the Planning Committee where members of the public enjoy the same public speaking rights i.e. as the applicant. The Councillor should consider whether it would be wise to address the Planning Committee given all the circumstances of the case, which could include the nature of the prejudicial interest and the relationship of the Councillor with the remainder of the Planning Committee. If the Councillor as an applicant decides to address the Planning Committee they must leave the room once they have made their presentation.

Lobbying of and by Councillors

33. Lobbying of Councillors for or against proposals is a normal part of the planning process. Those who may be affected by a planning decision will often seek to influence it by approaching their elected Ward Councillor or a Member of the Planning Committee. Lobbying can lead to the impartiality and integrity of a Councillor being called into question, unless care and common sense is exercised by all the parties involved.
34. It is important in maintaining the integrity of individual Councillors and the Council as a whole that Members of the Planning Committee (or Members who may end up acting as substitutes on the Planning Committee) should take care about expressing an opinion that may be taken as indicating that they have already made up their mind on the issue before they have been exposed to all the evidence and arguments. In such situations, Councillors should:-
 - a. If lobbied, explain that, whilst they can listen to/receive viewpoints from residents or other interested parties, they cannot decide or indicate before the relevant Planning Committee meeting which way they intend to vote as it would prejudice their impartiality. They should also explain that it is necessary for them to hear all the arguments both for and against the proposal before making up their mind.
 - b. Avoid giving members of the public planning advice except in relation to general planning procedures and often it may be wise to direct any such request to an appropriate Planning Officer.
 - c. If approached by residents or other interested parties, they should be referred to the appropriate Planning Officer in order that advice can be given and their opinions can be included in the Officers report to the Planning Committee. Copies of any correspondence or other written material received by a Member should be forwarded to the Planning Officer without delay.
35. Councillors should be aware of the need to act fairly and without bias towards every application. Councillors must keep an open mind upon an issue upon which they will be asked to vote, up until the moment that they vote upon it. Failure to keep an open mind may result in an application for judicial review of the decision reached. Any interested party may apply for judicial review of a planning decision. One of the grounds being that a Councillor who voted in favour of the decision to approve or refuse the application had approached the issue with a closed mind, and so had failed to take all relevant considerations into account. Failure to maintain an open mind may invalidate the entire decision-making process.

Pre-application Discussions

36. Discussions between a potential applicant and Hastings Borough Council prior to the submission of an application can be of considerable benefit to both parties.
37. With the recognition of the need to allow and encourage Councillors to be champions of their local communities it is now accepted that Lead Councillor and Ward Councillor engagement in pre-application discussions on major development is necessary to allow Councillors to fulfill this role. Councils have not previously involved Councillors in pre-application discussions for fear of them being accused of predetermination when the subsequent planning application came before the Planning Committee for determination. In order to avoid perceptions that Councillors might have fettered their

discretion in any pre-application discussions, all Councillors should enter into such discussions within clear guidelines, and include:

- a. Clarity at the outset that any discussions will not bind the Council to make a particular decision and that any views expressed are personal and provisional.
 - b. Advice given by Officers should be consistent and based on the Development Plan and material considerations. Officers should be present where practicable when Councillors attend any pre-application discussions. Councillors should not become drawn into any negotiations and should ask Officers to deal with any necessary negotiations to ensure that the Council's position is co-ordinated. Councillors should complete the attached form following any pre-application discussion which will be attached to the Planning file in the interests of openness and transparency.
 - c. Pre-application discussions should be arranged by Officers where practicable. A written note should be made by Officers of all meetings and the matters discussed should be confirmed by letter which should be placed on the file as a matter of public record. If there is a legitimate reason for confidentiality regarding the proposal, a note of the non-confidential issues raised, or advice given, should be recorded on the file in the normal manner.
38. If Councillors are invited to, or asked to arrange, a formal meeting with applicants, developers or groups of objectors (for instance, residents' associations) or supporters, they should inform the case officer dealing with the application. This applies to meetings at all stages of the planning process, including the pre-application stage.

Presentations of Development Proposals

39. The Council does, on occasion, allow presentations of development proposals. Presentations are to keep Councillors informed generally on matters, which appear to have or are likely to have strategic importance for the Borough. Presentations will not be allowed in relation to any matter which is the subject of a current planning application to the Council. At such presentations Councillors must try to maintain an impartial role, listening to what is said and asking appropriate questions but not expressing a fixed opinion, and keeping an open mind on the issues at all times. This applies to pre-application public consultation meetings arranged by Developers in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Pre-Application Consultation Forum

40. The Council has introduced a Pre-Application Consultation Forum to consider significant major developments, prior to them being submitted as planning applications. Significant development proposals are defined as residential schemes of 30 units or more, employment/industrial scheme of 5,000 m² or more, retail schemes of 2,500 m² or more and leisure schemes of 1,000 m² or more. The Council reserves the right to seek wider community involvement on other applications which do not fall within these thresholds if they consider that they are likely to be particularly sensitive or will have a very significant impact on the local community.
41. A Forum is a meeting held in public where a developer is able to explain proposals directly to Councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage about a development site. The purpose of the Forum is to:-
- a. enable the developer to explain development proposals directly to Councillors, the public and key stakeholders at an early stage.

- b. identify any issues that may be considered in any formal application.
 - c. inform Councillors and the public of a development proposal at an early stage in the pre-application process.
 - d. inform officer pre-application discussions with the developer.
 - e. enable the developer to shape an application to address community issues.
42. The Chair of the Forum is the relevant **Lead Member** or their nominated substitute, who is not a member of the Planning Committee, who will introduce the Forum and explain who is going to speak. The planning officer will provide a background to the proposal. The developer explains the proposal (this may involve contributions from several people). Those persons specified in paragraph 44, then have the opportunity to speak and raise any issues, observations and comments. The developer has an opportunity to respond to what has been said by invited speakers. Councillors present at the Forum may ask questions of the developer. The planning officer summarises the main points raised during the Forum, which is then closed by the Chair of the Forum
43. Forum meetings will be held in public, but only those invited to speak on behalf of recognised key stakeholder groups will be able to raise issues at the Forum. Groups invited to ask questions and express their views at the Forum will be restricted to properly constituted residents' groups covering the area of the proposed development, traders' groups for the immediate area, local campaign groups that have emerged specifically to comment on the development (only one of this type of group will be allowed to ask questions although more than one representation may be received) and properly constituted Borough wide bodies which could include business organisations.
44. Properly constituted is defined as those groups with a published constitution, has an open membership and a democratic election of officers. In addition, registered social landlords will be allowed to ask questions. Individuals do not have an automatic right to speak at the Forum unless invited to do so. Attendees can then make written comments to officers who will forward any comments received to developers. The Forum will not affect any rights to make representations when a formal planning application is submitted. All Councillors are invited to attend the Forum, including those who are on the Planning Committee.
45. 4. After the Forum, the main points will be recorded and passed to the developer for their consideration during further pre-application discussions with officers and in putting the application together. A copy will be passed to all interested parties and placed on the planning application file. The Planning Committee will in due course consider an application based on the facts, issues and advice and nothing said at the Forum will prejudice that consideration.

Chair's Briefings

46. 46. The purpose of Chair's Briefings will be to brief the Chair and Vice Chair on applications to be brought to the next meeting of the Planning Committee.. The purpose of the Briefing is for Officers to explain the forthcoming agenda, consider whether a site visit is required in respect of a particular application and consider administrative arrangements. Chair's Briefings are not to discuss the planning merits of the application or to make decisions **Officer Reports to Committee**
47. All matters requiring a decision by the Planning Committee should be the subject of a written report from Officers, which should be accurate and cover all relevant planning issues. In particular, it should include a clear outline of the site history, the relevant

development plan policies, the response of consultees and the nature of objections (electronic links to objection letters and correspondence will be provided to Councillors prior to the Planning Committee Meeting). The report shall include a clear recommendation with a technical appraisal justifying it. Any objections or other relevant issues arising after the report is published shall be reported verbally to the Planning Committee at the meeting. Councillors shall not put improper pressure on Officers to make a particular recommendation and should not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the officers' impartiality.

48. The Courts and Ombudsman have advised that officer reports on planning applications must have regard to the following points:
 - a. Reports should be accurate and cover the substance of any objections and the views of those consulted.
 - b. Relevant information should include a clear exposition of the Development Plan; relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); site or related history; and any other material considerations.
 - c. Reports should have a written recommendation of action. Oral reporting (except to update a report) should be avoided and carefully minuted when it does occur.
 - d. Reports should contain technical appraisal which clearly justify a recommendation.
 - e. If the reports recommendation is contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, the material considerations which justify the departure must be clearly stated.
 - f. Any oral updates or changes to the Report should be recorded.
49. It is important that the report covers these points, not only as a matter of good practice, but because failure may constitute maladministration or give rise to judicial review on the grounds that the decision was not taken in accordance with the Development Plan and the Council's statutory duty under Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (see paragraph 66 below).
50. Officers must always act openly and impartially and provide consistent professional advice, in accordance with the rules of their professional body, based on planning policies and procedures, ensuring Councillors are aware of all relevant material planning considerations before decisions are made.
51. Councillors shall give due regard to recommendations and professional advice given by Officers. Councillors are not bound to follow recommendations or advice received, but may depart from this where there is justification to do so, based on clear and legitimate planning grounds which must be recorded in full when making the decision having regard to the relevant planning policy where appropriate.

Public Speaking at Planning Committee

52. Members of the Planning Committee shall not allow members of the public to discuss planning applications with them during the course of the Meeting itself other than through the procedure for public speaking. The procedure for public speaking set out below does not apply to the Pre-Application Consultation Forum.
53. All planning matters will be considered in public session, unless there are specific reasons for dealing with an item as exempt under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in which case the public will be asked to leave the

room. Whilst this will be rarely exercised it may be necessary for example in consideration of enforcement matters.

Petitions

54. The procedures for public speaking allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee where a petition of objection against the recommendation of the planning officer is received **at least three clear working days** before the Planning Committee considering the item is due to sit. A standard form of petition is available to view on the Council's website. Petitions must contain a minimum of ten signatories.. Each page of the petition must clearly state the planning application to which it is referring, giving the address and the reasons for the objection. Petitions must contain names, addresses and signatures. Petitions submitted must be the original document as photocopies are not accepted. Electronic petitions are not acceptable.
55. Where there is a petition against the proposed development the lead petitioner is invited to attend the Planning Committee meeting. Petitions should clearly state who the lead petitioner is and provide their full name and contact details. They (or their representative) will be invited to address the Planning Committee. Where the lead petitioner (or their representative) fails to attend the scheduled Planning Committee meeting the Chair will ask if there is anyone else present in the public gallery who wishes to address the Planning Committee on behalf of the petition. The applicant or their agent has a right to speak in response to the petition. Each person making representations may speak for up to a maximum of five minutes and may be asked questions by Members of the Planning Committee.
56. The procedure for public speaking allows for an applicant (or their agent) and a petitioner to speak for and against the application respectively. . If two petitions are received and petitioners are making similar points, the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) will exercise his/her discretion and preference will be given to petitions from the immediate locality of the neighbourhood. Where the petitions are making different points the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) may exercise his/her discretion and allow both petitioners to speak. Each person may speak for up to a maximum of five minutes. Where there are two petitioners, the applicant may speak for up to a maximum of ten minutes in the interests of natural justice.

Ward Councillors addressing the Planning Committee

57. If a Ward Councillor wishes to address the Planning Committee about a matter in their ward being considered at the Planning Committee they should advise the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) and the Committee Administrator prior to the meeting itself and will be entitled to speak after the petitioner and applicant have addressed the Committee. Ward Councillors should comply with the procedure for declaration of interests if they speak at a Planning Committee meeting in the same way as members of the Committee. A Ward Councillor may address the Planning Committee for a maximum of five minutes but may not be asked questions by Members of the Planning Committee. County Councillors should direct any County related queries they have in respect of a planning application to East Sussex County Council. Where the Ward Councillor has a prejudicial interest they may only address the Planning Committee if they are the applicant or lead petitioner and must withdraw from the room once they have made their representations.

Submission of Documentation

58. Documents must be submitted **at least three clear working days** before the Planning Committee meeting. For example if the Planning Committee was held on a

Wednesday, documents should be received by the Council by 3pm on the previous Friday. Any late documents should not be circulated to the Planning Committee as all parties may not have time to react to the submissions, and members of the Planning Committee may not be able to give proper consideration to the matter. Officers may not be able to provide considered advice on any material considerations arising. This must be made clear to those who intend to speak. Members of the Planning Committee should not read emails or correspondence received after the deadline for submission of documents. The acceptance of circulated material could imply a willingness to take the necessary time to investigate any issues raised and lead to the need to defer the application or risk a complaint about the way the material has been considered. This care needs to be taken to avoid the perception of external influence or bias.

Decision Making

59. A decision on a planning application must not be made before the Formal Planning Committee Meeting scheduled to determine the application. **Political group meetings shall not be held prior to a Committee Meeting**, as Group Meetings can give the appearance of bias. The fair-minded observer may perceive that Group Meetings behind closed doors are likely to affect the decisions of those Members attending. The holding of Group Meetings may therefore give rise to judicial challenge. The use of political whips to seek to influence the outcome of a planning application is likely to be regarded as maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman. Councillors will be seated alphabetically and shall not sit according to their political groups in order to avoid the appearance of group decision-making. Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If the Officer's report recommends a departure from the Development Plan the justification for this must be contained in the report. Such applications must be advertised in the local paper in advance of consideration by the Committee.

60. Decisions must be made on planning merits and the reasons for making a decision should be clear and supported by material planning considerations. The reasons for refusing an application shall always be recorded, as should any conditions attached to an approval. If the Planning Committee wish to refuse an application contrary to Officer recommendations or impose additional planning conditions the reasons for doing either must be clearly stated when this is proposed.⁶¹ Councillors are advised to take the following steps before making a decision which differs from the officer recommendation:

- a. Discussing the areas of difference and the reasons for that with planning officers prior to the Planning Committee meeting.
 - b. Recording the detailed reasons as part of the mover's motion.
 - c. Adjourning for a few minutes for those reasons to be discussed and then agreed by the Planning Committee.
62. If a Member of the Planning Committee proposes to refuse or grant an application contrary to the Officer recommendation, they should give justification for doing so, based on clear and legitimate planning reasons and having regard to the relevant planning policy where appropriate. . Where Councillors are proposing to vote against the Officer recommendations, the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) shall make

sure that the reasons are clearly stated before a vote is taken. These reasons must be recorded in the minutes if the officer recommendations are not agreed and a copy placed on the application file. The reasons given by Councillors should be clear, observe the principles of reasonableness, take into account all relevant information (i.e. material considerations) and ignore all irrelevant information (i.e. non material matters). The officer should be given the opportunity to explain the implications of the proposed decision. .63. Councillors must attend meetings with an open mind and shall demonstrate through their conduct at the meeting that they are giving careful, fair and balanced consideration to the applications under discussion. Councillors shall make a decision only after they have considered all the relevant information needed to make a decision.

64. Councillors shall not vote or take part in the meeting's discussion on a proposal unless they have been present to hear the entire debate, including any petition, representations made by the applicant and the officers' introduction to the matter. Councillors who leave the room will be advised by the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence) that they cannot vote or take any further part in the discussion. The rules of natural justice mean that planning applications should be determined in an open and fair manner taking account of relevant information and arguments. It is only at Planning Committee meetings that members of the Planning Committee will have, and be able to consider, all the relevant information and arguments about an application. Failure to take account of relevant considerations or to take account of irrelevant considerations is a ground for judicial review in the High Court.

Site Visits

65. Site visits shall be organised by Officers of the Planning Department. All Members of the Planning Committee will be invited to attend the site visit. The site visit will be guided by the Planning Officer who will point out matters of material relevance to the application and answer Councillors' questions. Formal site visits by Members of the Planning Committee should be made only in exceptional circumstances. For example, where the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and any supporting material, including photographs taken by Officers, where the proposal is particularly contentious and where the site cannot adequately be viewed from the road. A record is maintained of who attended the site visit and recorded in the minutes.

66. A site visit is not a meeting to discuss the planning merits of the application or to make decisions. The purpose of the inspection is to gather factual information about the site and visually assess the likely or actual impact of the proposal. It is not to debate the merits of the application or the Officers' recommendation. During the formal site visit detailed discussions and/or negotiations must not be conducted with the applicant or third parties by either Councillors or Officers. All discussion and debate should be undertaken at the Planning Committee itself when the application is presented for formal consideration. Any arguments applicants or third parties wish to put forward can be heard at that stage through the public speaking arrangements. Councillors should be aware of the appearance of bias should they be seen in conversation with an applicant or objector.

67. Members of the Planning Committee are expected to attend the organised site visit. Councillors not attending an organised site visit are expected to sit back from the table and not take part in debate and voting on the matter when it comes up for consideration.

Deferred Applications

68. Applications may be deferred to a future meeting if there are valid reasons for doing so. Consideration must be given to the procedures for public speaking where petitioners and the applicant have addressed the Planning Committee at the previous meeting.

There may be occasions when there are a number of petitioners raising different objections to the application and the applicant must have the chance to respond. A judgement has to be made whether it is in the interests of good decision making to re-hear all oral representations again or to restrict the Planning Committee to its constitution at the earlier meeting. That is a decision for the Chair at the Chair's Briefing (or Vice Chair in his/her absence). It may be necessary (in exceptional circumstances such as public disturbance) to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting and re-convene in another room.

Substitutions

69. Substitutions have implications where applications are deferred from a previous Planning Committee meeting. Where the petitioner/s and applicant have previously addressed the Planning Committee and the application is deferred to another meeting, any Councillors substituting on the Planning Committee will not have heard all the representations which will form some part of the basis for the decision. Where the petitioner/s and applicant are given the opportunity to address the Committee a second time, there is not a problem with substitutes since the matter is heard afresh. Where applications are not deferred but a continuation of the earlier meeting no substitutions are permitted. Group Leaders/authorised persons should be informed where substitutions are not to be permitted on a particular item as soon as practicable after the Chair's Briefing. Where applications are deferred into a new municipal year the application will have to be considered afresh and petitioner/s and the applicant given the opportunity to address the Planning Committee again as there may be a change in membership of the Planning Committee.

Annual Review of Decisions

70. On an annual basis, arrangements will be made for members of the Planning Committee to review a sample of implemented planning permissions to assess the quality of the decisions made. The Planning Services Manager will arrange for members of the Planning Committee to visit a number of sites where development is either completed or near to completion. As this is part of the continuing programme of training for members no decisions are taken during the visit. A record is kept of the sites visited but no record is kept of any discussions that take place. 71. The Planning Committee will consider the review and decide whether it gave rise to the need to reconsider any policies or practices. Such a review should improve the quality and consistency of decision making, strengthening public confidence in the planning system and can help with reviews of planning policy. It will also assist Planning Committee members to refine their understanding of the impact of their decisions from the visiting of completed developments.

Training of Members in Planning Law and Procedure

59. Planning decisions are often complex and differ in nature from some of the other decisions taken by the Council. It is crucial that planning decisions are based on legitimate planning grounds. For this reason, Members shall not sit on the Planning Committee or act as a substitute on the Planning Committee without having previously undertaken recent training in planning law and procedures.

60. The Planning Services Manager, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer will arrange suitable training opportunities at regular intervals and will supplement this with written guidance. All Members of the Planning Committee must attend training sessions provided. The Committee Administrator will maintain a register of attendance which will be copied to political group leaders annually. Members of the planning Committee are expected to attend all training sessions but must attend a minimum of

two training sessions within each municipal year. If a Councillor has not attended a minimum of two training sessions within the municipal year they will not be allowed to sit on the Planning Committee until they have attended the next quarterly training session to bring their planning training up to date. One to one training will not be provided except in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1

PLANNING APPLICATIONS: DECLARATION OF LOBBYING

- Name of Member making the declaration

- Planning Application Number (where known)

- Application Site / Address

- Name(s) of persons undertaking lobbying and a note of their interest in the application (applicant, objector etc)

- Date of lobbying

- Brief details of the nature of the approach to the Member

Upon completion of this form please submit immediately to the Planning Services Manager at Aquila House to be placed on the planning application file.

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