

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

10th September 2020

COUNCILLOR RICHARD BLUNT - CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT

For the period from 27 June 2020 to 28 August 2020

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Planning Department

Planning applications have recovered quickly, June / July 2020 figures almost mirror June / July 2019 figures.

Planning and discharge of condition applications received



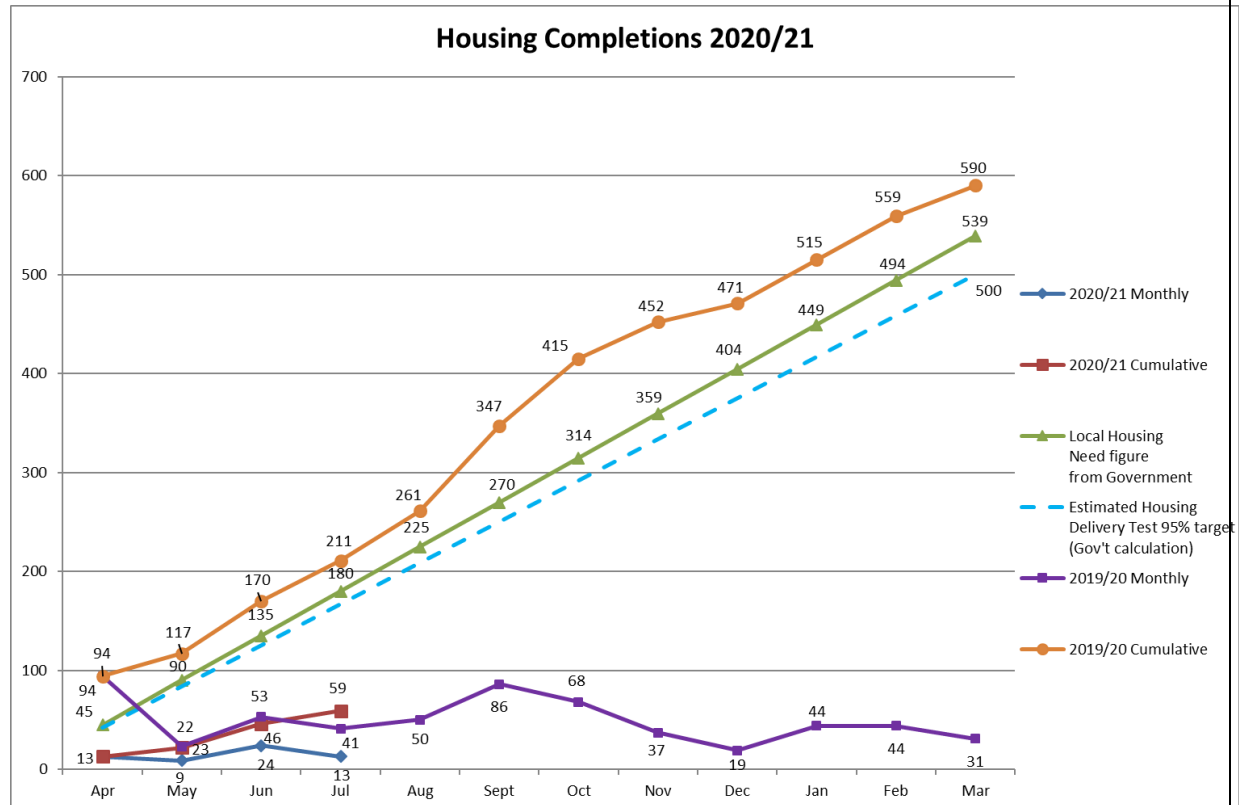
Revenue income

Income for 2020/21

	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Total	Projected Apr - Jul	Variance April - Jul
Total	£112,816	£128,849	£134,168	£89,509	£465,342	£387,883	+£77,459

Housing Completions

Despite construction sites actively building again there continues to be a drop in completions in comparison to the same time last year. 59 completions between April and July compared to 211 for the same period in 2019. At the time of submitting my report there were 8 completions in August. We continue to wait to see if the Government will announce if the Local Housing Need figure will be reduced to reflect the impacts of Covid-19.



Appeal Performance – decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate 1/1/20 – 31/7/20

	Dismissed	Allowed
Planning appeals	18	5
	78%	22%
Enforcement appeals	3	0
	100%	0%

The national average for planning appeals allowed is around 34%.

Planning Reforms 2020

1. 'Planning for the Future' White Paper

Proposals in the White Paper

1. Streamline the planning process

- Land to be identified under 3 categories - Growth, Renewal and Protection (areas and sites within the new Local Plan would be annotated and colour-coded in line with their Growth, Renewal or Protected designation, with explanatory descriptions set out in the key and accompanying text, as appropriate to the category.)
- Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.
- Local Plans to contain rules rather than general policies
- Standard templates for Local Plans
- Replacing existing tests of soundness
- 30 months to write a Local Plan (simplified 5 stage process)
- Greater use of data and digital technology

2. Digital-first approach

- More digital engagement for Local Plans and decision-making
- Use of software for planning applications
- New PropTech Innovation Council

3. Focus on design and sustainability

- New climate change mitigation, energy efficiency standards
- Quicker assessment of environmental impact - abolishing the Sustainability Appraisal system, developing a simplified process
- Greater focus on 'placemaking' and 'the creation of beautiful places'
- Automatically permit proposals for high-quality developments where they reflect local character and preferences
- Design guidance and codes - rules for the design of new development - to be produced for a whole local authority area, or for a smaller area or site
- This Autumn the government will publish a 'National Model Design Code' to supplement the National Design Guide. Will complement a revised and

consolidated Manual for Streets

- Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes
- Revive 'pattern books' approach, for local areas
- Local Planning Authorities to have a chief officer for design and place-making

4. Infrastructure delivery

- New 'Infrastructure Levy' to replace S.106 and Community Infrastructure Levy - based on a flat-rate, valued-based charge, set nationally, at either a single rate, or at area-specific rates. Exemption for self and custom-build development to continue
- Under the Infrastructure Levy, authorities would be able to use funds raised through the levy to secure affordable housing
- Remove exemptions for the new Levy

5. More land

- New nationally determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities have to deliver
- Propose to maintain the Housing Delivery Test and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as part of the new system
- Speed up construction by encouraging more phases of development to come forward together
- Encouraging competition amongst developers
- Location of new public building to support renewal and regeneration of town centres

National Planning Policy Framework - to be amended

Neighbourhood Plans

- To be retained
- Content should become more focused to reflect new Local Plan proposals
- Greater use of digital tools and data (new digital co-creation platforms and 3D visualisation technologies to explore proposals within the local context)
- Spread use of NPs in towns and cities
- Scope to extend and adapt the concept for very small areas, such as individual streets
- Role in producing design guides/codes

- Neighbourhood share of the new Infrastructure Levy to be kept

2. Reforms to current system

The Government also published a consultation setting out proposals to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. These cover:

- **The standard method for assessing housing for local plans:** Proposals to revise the standard method to increase the overall number of homes being planned for and achieve a more appropriate distribution.
- **Delivering First Homes:** Following a consultation on the First Homes proposals in February 2020, we have published the Government's response 2 and are now consulting on the detail of the planning proposals. This includes setting a requirement that 25% of all affordable housing secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. We are consulting on options for the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions, and seeking views on transitional arrangements, level of discount, interaction with the Community Infrastructure Levy and how we propose First Homes would be delivered through exception sites.
- **S106 and small sites:** Proposals to temporarily raise the threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing, to up to 40 or 50 units for an 18-month period. In designated rural areas, the consultation proposes to maintain the current threshold. It also seeks views on whether there are any other barriers for SMEs to access and progress sites.
- **Permission in Principle:** Proposals to increase the threshold for Permission in Principle by application, to cover sites suitable for major housing-led development, rather than being restricted to just minor housing development.

Meetings Attended (via Teams Zoom and Youtube)

Portfolio Meetings,
Planning Committee
Planning Committee Sifting
Planning Committee Training
Disability Training Event
Local Plan Task Group
Cabinet
Cabinet Sifting
Corporate Performance Panel
Various Meetings with Officers
Regeneration and Development Panel

