

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Discretionary	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	YES		
		Need to be recommendations to Council	NO		
		Is it a Key Decision	YES		
Lead Member: Cllr Richard Blunt E-mail: richard.blunt@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Richard Blunt			
		Other Members consulted: Local Plan Task Group			
Lead Officer: Alan Gomm E-mail: alan.gomm@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616237		Other Officers consulted: Management Team			
Financial Implications YES	Policy/ Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications YES	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre- screening	Risk Management Implications YES	Environmental Considerations YES

Date of meeting: 22 September 2020

HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

Summary

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to endorse the Updated Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Borough Council complies with its duties as set out within the NPPF and PPG. The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan is an update of the one which Cabinet endorsed previously. This sets out a series of updated appropriate actions for the Borough Council to consider and explore in the short, medium and long term in an attempt to increase housing supply and delivery.

Background

1. Introduction

1.1 Government, through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), introduced a new test for Local Planning Authorities (LPA's). This is a part of a range of measures the Government has introduced and is considering to enable them to achieve their ambition for 300,000 new

homes to be built every year in England by the mid-2020's. This relatively new test is called the Housing Delivery Test (HDT).

- 1.2 The HDT does exactly what the title infers; it is a measure of how many new homes have been delivered within the LPA's area over the past three years against how many new homes should have been delivered. The results of the HDT are anticipated to be published in November each year by Government. The result is expressed as a percentage.
- 1.3 The result dictates the actions or measures the LPA is either required to undertake or the penalties it faces, for 2019 this is as follows:
 - 95% = A pass
 - Below 95% = An Action Plan needs to be prepared
 - Below 85% = The above and a 20% land buffer in the LPA's five-year housing land supply calculation
 - Below 45% = The above and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged
- 1.4 The results are fixed until the subsequent years' results are published. Moving forward the 'presumption' % rises to 75% for 2020 and for evermore.
- 1.5 The Borough Council's HDT result for 2018 was 91%. This resulted in the preparation and publication of a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (HDTAP). This was endorsed by Cabinet at the time. The HDT result of 2019 is 83%. This means that the HDTAP is required to be updated and in addition a 20% buffer needs to be factored into the 5-year housing land supply calculation.

2. Borough Council Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2

- 2.1 In line with the requirements an updated and revised Action Plan has been developed. This explores the following (summarised):
 - National and local contexts
 - Current five-year housing land supply position
 - Past housing delivery and the borough council's HDT result
 - The many proactive measure the borough council is taking to ensure new homes are delivered
 - Progress with regards to Actions established through the initial HDTAP and if they remain appropriate going forward
- 2.2 Based upon the above the Action Plan sets out a series of revised and updated appropriate actions for the borough council to consider in a positive attempt to increase both the supply and delivery of new homes.

2.3 The initial HDT Action Plan and supporting evidence documents can be viewed in full via the web-link below:

https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20079/planning_policy_and_local_plan/753/housing_delivery_test_hdt_action_plan

2.4 The updated HDT Action Plan is included with this report.

2.5 For convenience a summarised list of the 20 Actions are provided below, note that the Action Plan itself should be consulted for the full details:

1.	Build out of Borough Council sites which are allocated, have planning permission or funding
2.	Continue to proactively work towards bringing forward the West Winch Growth Area
3.	Implement the Actions set out in the Borough Council Custom and Self-Build Action Plan, including providing opportunities for and raising awareness of this method of delivery
4.	Consider reducing the time given to planning permissions in light of the Housing Delivery Test result and future five-year housing land supply positions
5.	Take decisions according to Local Plan and NPPF to provide clarity, certainty and consistency
6.	Continue to provide support for those communities wishing to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and if appropriate support neighbourhood plan allocations
7.	Member Training
8.	Proactively monitor permissions and completions
9.	Local Plan review. Prepare this in a timely fashion and provide the opportunity for a balanced portfolio of sites in terms of size, location and Greenfield / brownfield.
10.	Produce a new Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment (SHMA)
11.	Produce a new whole Local Plan viability study
12.	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework - continue to support this and the strategic housing delivery study
13.	Local Plan Task Group to consider sites which appear to have stalled (rated red)
14.	Borough Council to consider another phase of Rural Exception Sites (affordable housing)
15.	Borough Council to carry out its functions with regard to its established housing company and seek to provide further housing within the Borough
16.	Borough Council to carry out its functions as a Registered Provider and consider direct provision of affordable housing
17.	Review the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan
18.	Borough Council to consider delivering more homes – both on own land and consider other options
19.	Work across the County with other authorities, as part of the

	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and through any follow up work that arises from the NSPF Housing Delivery Study
20.	Once the Local Plan review has been adopted commence work on a new Local Plan

- 2.6 There is a requirement for LPA's to be able to demonstrate at least 5 years' worth of land supply. Failure to do so results in the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' being engaged as per the NPPF. This could result in policies within the Local Plan carrying less/limited weight and therefore development taking place in less desirable locations. The updated Action Plan provides an update to the 5-year housing land supply position. The factors in the requirement for a 20% buffer due to the HDT result being 83%. This confirms that the land supply position is 6.97 years' worth, which clearly in excess of the minimum requirement.

3. Options Considered

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to comply with the NPPF and PPG. However, this would make examination of the Local Plan, any challenges to housing delivery, and any challenges to the five-year housing land supply position very difficult. Therefore, it isn't really an option not to prepare one. The test is relatively new; the thresholds are high and the penalties (higher land supply target & the possibility of the Local Plan policies relating to housing supply carrying less/limited weight in the decision-making process as the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is engaged.) severe.

4. Policy Implications

- 4.1 As stated above there is a requirement to comply with the test and requirements based upon the results of the test. The HDT Action Plan is not a policy document; as such it does not contain planning policies however, it does contain a series of appropriate actions for the borough council to consider and explore going forward in positive way in an attempt to increase housing supply and delivery.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The overall aim of the HDT Action Plan is to put actions in place in an attempt to increase the levels of housing completions within the Borough in a sustainable manner. Housing completion levels in recent times have been below those required (i.e. those covered by the HDT). Should under-delivery continue there is the potential for less Council Tax, Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus funding to be collected than there potentially could be.

6. Environmental Considerations

- 6.1 It is vital that the Borough Council takes its responsibilities in attempting to ensure that enough homes are delivered within the Borough seriously in order to meet the housing need in a sustainable way.
- 6.2 The Local Plan provides a plan-led approach to planning at the local level and ensures that the pattern and quantum of development happens at appropriate and sustainable locations.
- 6.3 If the Borough Council does not provide a framework through the HDT Action Plan for enough homes to come forward, as established by the Local Plan, and to be delivered this could lead to the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' as set out in the NPPF being engaged.
- 6.4 This could potentially lead to far more housing than is actually required and that development could be built in locations which are seen as less desirable than those identified within the Local Plan, as either specific housing allocations or as indicated by a settlement's development boundary for example. Hence, environmentally it is important that the Borough Council plays their part in ensuring a sufficient supply and delivery of homes is achieved.

7. Personnel Implications

- 7.1 None.

8. Statutory Considerations

- 8.1 The Housing Delivery Test has been introduced by Government through updated versions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). All Local Planning Authorities are subject to this relatively new annual test and the requirements/penalties then placed upon each authority as dictated by the result.

9. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1 Pre-screening report attached.

10. Risk Management Implications

- 10.1 The HDT Action Plan is designed to mitigate the risk against being in a position where the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is engaged and therefore the housing supply policies in the borough council's Local Plan carry less/limited weight, so that development could take place in less desirable locations. It needs to be recognised that the Plan and its Actions whilst they will mitigate the risk, they will



not eliminate the risk as many of the factors involved are outside the control of the borough council. This ranges from a site owner's desire/priorities in building out, how much a land owner is financially asking for their site, right through to the wider political and financial climates of which the housing development industry operates.

11. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

11.1 None

12. Background Papers

12.1 Borough Council Housing Trajectory 2019/20 (electronic copy attached)

12.2 The National Planning Policy Framework:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

12.3 The Housing Delivery Test measurement rule book:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>

12.4 The Housing Delivery Test: 2019 measurement:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2019-measurement>

Name of policy/service/function	Housing Delivery Test Action Plan				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	Existing				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Relatively new test implemented by Government as part of the new NPPG & PPG for Local Planning Authorities. Results of the test dictates the actions required to be taken and sanctions installed upon the authority.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			√	
	Disability			√	
	Gender			√	
	Gender Re-assignment			√	
	Marriage/civil partnership			√	
	Pregnancy & maternity			√	
	Race			√	
	Religion or belief			√	
	Sexual orientation			√	
Other (eg low income)			√		
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No				
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	Actions:			
		Actions agreed by EWG member: Claire Dorgan			
Assessment completed by: Name Alex Fradley					
Job title: Principal Planner (Policy)	Date 03/09/2020				

Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.