



Agenda

Meeting: **Cabinet**
Date: **9 December 2020**
Time: **5.00 pm**
Place: **Zoom - remote meeting**

To: **All members of the Cabinet**

All Councillors for information

The committee will consider the matters, listed below, at the date and time shown above. The meeting will be open to the press and public and streamed live at bit.ly/YouTubeMeetings

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 5 - 6)**

Members of the Council should declare any interests which fall under the following categories:

- a) disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI);
- b) other significant interests (OSI);
- c) voluntary announcements of other interests.

3. **Minutes (Pages 7 - 12)**

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2020.

4. **Oportunitas Progress report 2020/21 (Pages 13 - 36)**

This report provides an update from the Board of Oportunitas Ltd (“the company”) on its financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 and on activities undertaken so far during the 2020/21 financial year,

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Email: committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or download from our
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including a financial statement for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020, in-line with the requirement contained in the Shareholder's Agreement between the company and the Council. The chairman of Oportunitas will be available at the meeting of cabinet to present the report and to address any questions.

5. **Additional Council Tax Support for Kent County Council Care Leavers (Pages 37 - 58)**

This report outlines the proposal to support individuals who have left the care of Kent County Council, who live in the Folkestone & Hythe District with Council Tax until the age of 25.

6. **Budget Strategy 2021/22 (Pages 59 - 80)**

This Budget Strategy sets out the guidelines for preparing the 2021/22 Budget. It supports the Corporate Plan and aligns with the direction and objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Budget Strategy takes account of current and future financial issues, sets out the underlying assumptions and initial budget-setting proposals and provides a timetable for delivering a balanced budget in 2021/22.

7. **Fees & Charges 2021/22 (Pages 81 - 106)**

This report focuses on the proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 which will contribute towards meeting the council's 2021/22 budget objectives and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8. **Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25- Consultation Responses (Pages 107 - 182)**

This report sets out the responses received during the public consultation for the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25. The 8 week period of consultation ended on 2nd October. Subject to the proposed amendments in the report, it is recommended that the Strategy be adopted by the Council.

9. **Exclusion of the Public**

To exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 –

'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). "Financial or business affairs" includes contemplated as well as current activities.'

10. **Waste Project 2021 - Joint working agreement with Dover District Council (Pages 183 - 232)**

The current Joint Working Agreement for the Waste Service with DDC ends in January 2021. It is proposed that the joint working arrangements continue as they have proved successful and effective in the management of the waste contract. DDC have drafted a new agreement for the next contract period largely based on the existing agreement.

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Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

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Minutes

Cabinet

Held at:	Zoom - remote meeting
Date	Wednesday, 11 November 2020
Present	Councillors John Collier, Ray Field, David Godfrey, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee (Vice-Chair), David Monk (Chairman), Stuart Peall, Tim Prater, Lesley Whybrow and David Wimble
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Graham Hammond (Senior Economic Development Officer), Katharine Harvey (Chief Economic Development Officer), Cheryl Ireland (Chief Financial Services Officer), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)

NOTE: All decisions are subject to call-in arrangements. The deadline for call-in is Friday 20 November at 5pm. Decisions not called in may be implemented on Monday 23 November.

47. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Wimble made a voluntary declaration in respect of Minute No 53 (Romney Marsh Employment Hub (Land at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney)), in that he was a Ward Member for New Romney and lived in the area.

48. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

49. **Key Performance Indicators review 20/21 and Half Year performance report (Q1 and Q2)**

The report set out a proposed list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be monitored during 2020/21 in line with the Council's current Corporate Plan strategic priorities and objectives. The report also set out performance data for the first two quarters of the year against these proposed key performance indicators.

The report had been considered by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020. Their comments had been circulated to Cabinet Members prior to the meeting.

A Cabinet Member asked why the target for Fixed Penalty Notices was so specific (Appendix 1), when there was no target for PCNs, and also queried the figures relating to the number of homelessness approaches in Q2, in respect of the outcome for such cases (Appendix 3). The Director of Housing and Operations advised he would provide a written response after the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee;

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/49 be received and noted.
2. That the proposed KPI measurements for 2020/21 in Appendix 1 be approved.
3. That the performance information for Quarters 1 & 2 2020/21 in Appendix 3 be noted.

(Voting figures: 8 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- a) Relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) are essential to provide a 'golden thread' to the delivery of the Corporate Plan strategic objectives.
- b) The Council is committed to monitoring performance across all of its service areas to ensure progress and improvement is maintained.
- c) The Council needs to ensure that relevant aspects of performance is measured, monitored and the results are used to identify where services are working well and where improvement action needs to be taken.

50. **Update to the General Fund budget 2020/21**

The report set out the proposed amendments to the General Fund budget for 2020/21 to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the Councils financial position in year.

The report had been considered by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020. Their comments had been circulated to Cabinet Members prior to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/47 be received and noted.
2. That the virements to the 2020/21 General Fund budget as set out within the report be approved.
3. That the current reserves position and the potential requirement upon them be noted.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

Prior to the debate on this report, Councillor Field arrived at the meeting.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because:

- a) The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires authorities to set a balanced budget. Whilst a balanced budget was set in February for the financial year 2020/21 a number of financial pressures have emerged since due to the global pandemic. This paper seeks to address how the emerging budget gap will be managed.
- b) Cabinet has the authority to approve virements to the in-year budget.

51. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is the Council's key financial planning document. It puts the financial perspective on the council's Corporate Plan priorities, expressing the aims and objectives of various plans and strategies in financial terms over the four year period ending 31st March 2025. It covers both revenue and capital for the General Fund. Also included was the Council's reserves policies. The MTFS is a key element of sound corporate governance and financial management.

The Finance and Performance Sub-Committee had received a presentation, outlining the key points within this report, at their meeting on 3 November 2020. Their comments had been circulated to the Cabinet Members prior to the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Prater; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/51 be received and noted.
2. To recommend to Full Council that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as appended to the report, be adopted.
3. That the Reserves Policy outlined in appendix 2 be adopted.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because:-

- (a) The MTFs is the council's key financial planning document.
- (b) The strategy defines the financial resources needed to deliver the council's corporate objectives and priorities and covers the financial implications of other key strategies.
- (c) The council needs to be able to carry out an early assessment of the financial implications of its approved policies and strategies and also external financial pressures facing the authority to ensure that it has robust budgeting and remains financially viable.

52. Update to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme 2020/21

The report updated the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme for decisions which have occurred since the Council approved the budget on 19 February 2020. It also considers a proposal to provide loan funding met from prudential borrowing to Veolia Environmental Services Limited for the provision of the new fleet and equipment required for the new Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract. Changes to the Capital Programme are required to be submitted to full Council for consideration and approval.

The report had been considered by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 November 2020. Their comments had been circulated to Cabinet Members prior to the meeting.

Members raised concerns with regard to recommendation three, relating to the provision of loan funding to Veolia Environmental Services Limited for the provision of the fleet and equipment required for the new Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract. A Cabinet Member asked it to be noted that lawyers had been instructed to include in the agreement that the council retains a 'lean' on the vehicles, i.e., to safeguard and minimise financial risk to the council.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Peall; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/20/46 be received and noted.**
- 2. That full Council approval to be sought to update the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme for the changes outlined in section 2 of the report.**
- 3. That full Council approval be sought to include a budget of £4,052,000 in the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme to provide loan funding met from prudential borrowing to Veolia Environmental Services Limited for the provision of the fleet and equipment required for the new Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract.**
- 4. That the Director of Place be authorised to incorporate terms within new the Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing Contract to provide funding of the new vehicle fleet in return for contract savings as outlined.**

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet was asked to agree the recommendations because:

- a) It needs to be kept informed of the General Fund Capital Programme position and take appropriate action to deal with any variance from the approved budget.
- b) Proposed changes to the General Fund Capital Programme need to be considered before being submitted to full Council for approval.

53. **Romney Marsh Employment Hub (Land at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney)**

The report outlined the opportunity to complete the Romney Marsh Employment Hub project by bringing forward the remaining five hectares of employment land at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney through constructing an access road and services to be funded by the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' (to be confirmed on 20 November 2020).

Proposed by Councillor Wimble,
Seconded by Councillor Collier; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/20/48 be received and noted.
2. That delegate authority be given to the Director of Place to accept a Getting Building Fund grant offer and associated terms;
3. To proceed with the construction of a road and services to bring forward five hectares of land at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney; and
4. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Director of Housing & Operations, to market, negotiate terms and conclude disposal of development plots for employment purposes.

(Voting figures: 9 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The bringing forward of five hectares of employment land will create serviced plots for development by growing local businesses and inward investors to help diversify the local economy and create alternative employment opportunities.

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This Report will be made public on 1 December 2020



Report Number **C/20/57**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 December 2020
Status: Non-Key Decision
Director: Andy Blaszkowicz, Corporate Director – Housing & Operations
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Monk, Leader of the Council

SUBJECT: OPORTUNITAS PROGRESS REPORT 2020/21 (To 31 October 2020)

SUMMARY: This report provides an update from the Board of Oportunitas Ltd (“the company”) on its financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 and on activities undertaken so far during the 2020/21 financial year, including a financial statement for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020, in-line with the requirement contained in the Shareholder’s Agreement between the company and the Council. The chairman of Oportunitas will be available at the meeting of cabinet to present the report and to address any questions.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:-

- a. Oportunitas Ltd (“the company”) is required to provide regular updates to Cabinet as set out in the Shareholder’s Agreement between the company and the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/20/57.
2. To note the Full Statement of Accounts and Directors’ Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2020.
3. To note the Financial update covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The report sets out the company's financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 and current progress in 2020/21 in relation to its investments and trading activity.
- 1.2 A full Statement of Accounts and Directors' Report for the 2019/20 financial year ending 31 March 2020 is set out in appendix 1 and a financial update for the current year covering the period 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020 is set out in appendix 2 of this report.

2 INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO UPDATE

- 2.1 The company's current property portfolio consists of 38 residential units and 1 commercial unit is summarised in the table below:

Address	Units	Type
Walter Tull Way, Folkestone	5	2 x 1 bed units 2 x 2 bed units 1 x 3 bed unit
2 Grove Terrace, Dover Road, Folkestone	1	1 x 4 bed unit
15 Grace Hill, Folkestone	5	5 x 1 bed units
15 Grace Hill, Folkestone	1	1 x commercial unit
82 - 84 Leyburne Road, Dover	8	8 x 2 bed units
19 Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone	10	9 x 1 bed units 1 x 2 bed unit
84 Sidney Street, Folkestone	4	3 x 1 bed units 1 x 2 bed unit
1 Claremont Road, Folkestone	5	5 x 1 bed units
Total	38	

- 2.3 All properties are currently tenanted with the exception of one unit that will be undergoing repairs at Leyburne Road in Dover and where vacancies have occurred the company's agents have worked hard to minimise void periods. The company uses Smith Woolley as its main managing agent for the property portfolio. However, two properties at Walter Tull Way remain being managed by Reeds Rains as it would not be advantageous to Oportunitas to alter this agreement at this time. Management of all the assets within the company will, however, be kept under regular review.
- 2.4 In the aftermath of compliance issues identified at East Kent Housing, the company introduced a property safety register to document key areas of safety compliance across its property portfolio including, but not limited to, gas, fire, electrical and legionella. The register is continually reviewed with both managing agents and then shared with members of the board on a monthly basis. The latest position of the register in October 2020 identifies no compliance issues within the portfolio.

Rental Arrears

- 2.5 The property portfolio to 30th September 2020 has recorded £21,510 of rental arrears partly, but not entirely due to the impact of Covid-19 on tenants. The recent audit of the company accounts highlighted that this was partly due to the managing agent's approach to debt collection. Meetings have taken place between officers and the managing agent to review and tighten procedures.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the Government has increased the required notice period landlords need to give to their tenants, which has resulted in landlords not being able to start possession proceedings unless tenants have been given 6 months' notice with exception of the most serious cases that include: anti-social behaviour (including rioting), domestic abuse, false statement and where a tenant has accrued rent arrears to the value of over 6 months' rent.

- 2.6. The company has now established a rental arrears register so that all arrears can be monitored on a monthly basis with both the managing agents and the company board. Both managing agents are instructed to notify the Company of any tenants that fall one month behind with their rent to enable the company to decide on an appropriate course of action to recover any arrears through either an established repayment plan or Section 8/Section 21 notices.

The difference between Section 8 and Section 21 are as follows:

- **Section 8 ('Notice to Quit')**: Also known as a "section 8 possession notice" is used to terminate an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement (AST), and can be used at any time during a tenancy. Rent arrears are the most common cause of a section 8 notice.
 - **Section 21 ('Notice of Possession')**: This notice is served to end a tenancy agreement, and requires no other reason for serving the notice other than they want the tenant to vacate.
- 2.7 At the time of writing this report, a total of four properties within the portfolio have arrears, three of which have established repayment plans in place with the managing agent and one property that has been served with a Section 8 notice in January 2020 followed by Section 21 notice in June 2020 for a continual failure to engage with a repayment plan. The application to start possession proceedings with the court is being considered for the one property previously mentioned, however as result of the current COVID legislation guiding the courts, a case for eviction is unlikely to be heard until the New Year at the earliest. The company will continually review its decisions on arrears and evictions in line with the latest legislation.

Royal Victoria Hospital

- 2.6 Cabinet previously approved the Company's business plan covering the period 2020-22 on 16th September 2020 (ref: C/20/32). The business plan demonstrated how the majority of the £6.9 million of additional funding allocated to the company would be utilised over the plan period to acquire 37 units of residential accommodation at the Royal Victoria Hospital development.

2.7 In August 2020, the Company board and officers attended a site visit to review the works being undertaken on phase A of the development and concluded that significant progress has been made during the current financial year against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. The site has also been subject to quarterly inspections from an appropriately qualified member of the Council's estates team to document the project's development progress to provide technical assurance and to ensure the company is satisfied with the works before contractual tranche payments are released against an agreed schedule. Phase A of the development is still on course to complete in summer 2021 as set out in the business plan.

3. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2019/20

3.1 The company's provisional financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2020, subject to Audit, was considered by Cabinet on 16 September 2020 (minute 33 refers). Since then the Board considered and approved the company's audited statement of accounts at its meeting on 16 November 2020. A copy of the full Statement of Accounts and Directors' Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2020 is shown in appendix 1 to this report.

3.2 Two changes have been made to the final Statement of Accounts compared to the provisional financial outturn.

i) A further £6k in property maintenance costs for works completed but where invoices were unpaid at 31 March 2020 has been accrued in the accounts. This has reduced the company's profit after tax from £119k to £112k, including a minor revision in the value of the deferred tax on profit. The increase in the creditor accrual and the reduction in profit after tax are reflected in the revised Balance Sheet.

ii) The draft Balance Sheet treated the deposit of £1.275m paid for the Royal Victoria Hospital site development as an increase to the Investment Assets of the company (Fixed Assets). The Auditor advised the deposit should be classified as a debtor on the Balance Sheet because the company does not yet have legal title to the property and will not until practical completion of each phase of the development. This change is reflected in the revised Balance Sheet and disclosure notes.

3.3 **Audit Opinion** - It is pleasing to note the Auditor has given an unqualified opinion of the company's accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2020.

4. FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR 2020/21

4.1 The company's latest financial update for the current financial year to 31 October 2020 was reported to the Board on 16 November and is shown in appendix 2 to this report.

4.2 In summary, the company's Profit and Loss Account has made a loss of £32k for the period to 31 October 2020. This is £5k less than the original profiled forecast loss for the period. A reduction in housing rental income has been offset by lower than anticipated housing rental expenses. Only a very limited amount of grounds maintenance work has been possible due to the Covid-19

restrictions. There has been a saving of £4k on overhead expenses during the period.

Cabinet will be interested and pleased to note that the company made its half-yearly scheduled repayment of loan interest (£105k) and principal (£14k) to the Council on 30 September 2020.

- 4.3 An initial projected outturn for the financial year to 31 March 2021 shows the loss to the Profit and Loss Account to be in line with the original forecast for the year of a loss of £109k. It should be noted this excludes any change in unrealised property values. The company's property portfolio will be revalued as at 31 March 2021 ahead of finalising the accounts for the financial year.
- 4.4 Three stage payments totalling £539k have been made to the developer undertaking the Royal Victoria Hospital development during the period to 31 October 2020. These payments are for work on phase A of the scheme covering the redevelopment of the former hospital building itself. This means a total of £1.814m has been paid to the developer including the original deposit of £1.275m made in February 2020 covering both phases A and B of the scheme.
- 4.5 The financial benefit to the Council from the company in 2019/20 and projected for 2020/21 is shown in the table below:

	Actual 2019/20	Projected 2020/21
	£'000	£'000
Loan interest	173	209
Loan repayments	-	27
Staff costs - reimbursement	24	23
Members Allowances - reimbursement	9	10
Grounds Maintenance recharge	17	8
Total	223	277

5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

- 5.1 **Legal (NM)** – The power for councils to trade their services for cost recovery only has been in force for many years. The power for councils to establish companies to trade for profit is set out in the Localism Act 2011. The company model provides a mechanism for local councils to operate more commercially and generate profit.

Officers have taken specialist legal advice from Bevan Brittan and will continue to work with these external legal advisers as and when the need arises.

- 5.2 **Finance (LW)** – This report has been prepared in conjunction with Financial Services and there are no further comments to add.
- 5.3 **Equalities (GE)** – There are no diversity or equalities implications arising from this report.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

Lee Walker, Capital & Treasury Senior Specialist

Telephone: 01303 85 3593

Email: lee.walker@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Full Statement of Accounts and Directors' Report for the financial year ending 31 March 2020

Appendix 2: Financial Update 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020

Oportunitas Limited

Appendix 1

**Report and accounts
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Oportunitas Limited Company Information

Directors

Andrew Blaszkowicz (appointed 23 April 2019) (resigned 5 June 2019)
Peter Charles Gane (appointed 11 June 2019)
David Royce Godfrey (appointed 5 June 2019) (resigned 11 June 2019)
Philip Stanley Martin (resigned 5 June 2019)
Connor Andrew Mcconville (appointed 5 June 2019)
Terence William Mullard (appointed 5 June 2019)
Patricia Spencer Rolfe (appointed 5 June 2019)
Carol Sacre (resigned 3 May 2019)
Russell Tillson (resigned 3 May 2019)
Roger James Wilkins (resigned 3 May 2019)

Auditors

Begbies Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
9 Bonhill Street
London
EC2A 4DJ

Bankers

National Westminster Bank
Europa House
49 Sandgate Road
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1RU

Registered office

Civic Centre
Castle Hill Avenue
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 2QY

Registered number

09038505

Oportunitas Limited

Registered number: 09038505

Directors' Report

The directors present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Principal activities

Oportunitas Ltd was incorporated in May 2014, commenced its operations in November 2014 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Folkestone and Hythe District Council providing housing and regeneration services.

Directors

The following persons served as directors during the year and since the balance sheet date:

Andrew Blaszkowicz (appointed 23 April 2019) (resigned 5 June 2019)
Peter Charles Gane (appointed 11 June 2019)
David Royce Godfrey (appointed 5 June 2019) (resigned 11 June 2019)
Philip Stanley Martin (resigned 5 June 2019)
Connor Andrew Mcconville (appointed 5 June 2019)
Terence William Mullard (appointed 5 June 2019)
Patricia Spencer Rolfe (appointed 5 June 2019)
Carol Sacre (resigned 3 May 2019)
Russell Tillson (resigned 3 May 2019)
Roger James Wilkins (resigned 3 May 2019)

Directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare accounts for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the accounts in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the accounts unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these accounts, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each person who was a director at the time this report was approved confirms that:

- so far as he is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware; and
- he has taken all the steps that he ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

Oportunitas Limited

Registered number: 09038505

Directors' Report

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions in Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

This report was approved by the board on 2020 and signed on its behalf by

Patricia Rolfe

Director

Oportunitas Limited
Independent auditor's report
to the member of Oportunitas Limited

Opinion

We have audited the accounts of Oportunitas Limited for the year ended 31 March 2020 which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Changes in Equity and notes to the accounts, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

In our opinion the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2020 and of its profit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out below, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

In accordance with the exemption provided by FRC's Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Audits of Small Entities, we have prepared and submitted the company's returns to the tax authorities and assisted with the preparation of the accounts.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the accounts is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the accounts any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the accounts are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the report and accounts, other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the accounts does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the accounts, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the accounts or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the accounts or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Oportunitas Limited
Independent auditor's report
to the member of Oportunitas Limited

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the directors' report for the financial year for which the accounts are prepared is consistent with the accounts; and
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to prepare the accounts in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the accounts, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the accounts is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Daniel Valentine ACA
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of
Begbies
Accountants and Statutory Auditors

Oportunitas Limited
Profit and Loss Account
for the year ended 31 March 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Turnover	284,526	305,030
Cost of sales	(17,480)	(57,349)
Gross profit	267,046	247,681
Administrative expenses	(150,988)	(110,887)
Profit on investment property revaluation	209,993	132,952
Operating profit	326,051	269,746
Interest payable	(173,754)	(169,086)
Profit before tax	152,297	100,660
Tax on profit	(39,898)	(25,261)
Profit after tax	112,399	75,399

Oportunitas Limited
Registered number:
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2020

09038505

	Notes	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	3		4,852,551		4,563,500
Current assets					
Debtors	4	1,296,414		38,120	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>206,284</u>		<u>47,113</u>	
		1,502,698		85,233	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	(52,303)		(19,992)	
Net current assets			<u>1,450,395</u>		<u>65,241</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>6,302,946</u>		<u>4,628,741</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	6		(4,281,306)		(4,069,399)
Provisions for liabilities			(69,728)		(29,830)
Current assets			<u>1,951,912</u>		<u>529,512</u>
Capital and reserves					
Called up share capital			955		300
Share premium			1,787,796		478,451
Profit and loss account			163,161		50,761
Shareholder's funds			<u>1,951,912</u>		<u>529,512</u>

The accounts have been prepared and delivered in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. The profit and loss account has not been delivered to the Registrar of Companies.

Patricia Rolfe
Director

Approved by the board on

Oportunitas Limited
Statement of Changes in Equity
for the year ended 31 March 2020

	Share capital	Share premium	Profit and loss account	Total
	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2018	300	478,451	(24,638)	454,113
Profit for the financial year			75,399	75,399
At 31 March 2019	<u>300</u>	<u>478,451</u>	<u>50,761</u>	<u>529,512</u>
At 1 April 2019	300	478,451	50,761	529,512
Profit for the financial year			112,400	112,400
Shares issued	655	1,309,345		1,310,000
At 31 March 2020	<u>955</u>	<u>1,787,796</u>	<u>163,161</u>	<u>1,951,912</u>
Distributable profit and loss reserve			(316,156)	
Non distributable profit and loss reserve			479,317	
			<u>163,161</u>	

Oportunitas Limited
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2020

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with FRS 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (as applied to small entities by Section 1A of the Standard).

Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable, net of discounts and value added taxes. Turnover includes revenue earned from the rendering of services and the rent of investment property. Turnover from the rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract. Turnover from rent of investment property is recognised by reference to the date rents become payable under tenancy agreements.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulative depreciation and any accumulative impairment losses. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset evenly over its expected useful life, as follows:

Freehold buildings	over 50 years
Leasehold land and buildings	over the lease term
Plant and machinery	over 5 years
Fixtures, fittings, tools and equipment	over 5 years

Investment property

Investment property, which is property held to earn rental income and capital appreciation, is measured using the fair value model and stated at its fair value as at the reporting end date. The surplus or deficit on revaluation is recognised on the profit and loss account.

Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price (which is usually the invoice price), less any impairment losses for bad and doubtful debts. Loans and other financial assets are initially recognised at transaction price including any transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost determined using the effective interest method, save that financial assets recoverable in less than 12 months are not amortised.

Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at transaction price (which is usually the invoice price). Loans and other financial liabilities are initially recognised at transaction price net of any transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost determined using the effective interest method.

Taxation

A current tax liability is recognised for the tax payable on the taxable profit of the current and past periods where appropriate. Deferred tax is recognised in respect of all timing differences between the recognition of income and expenses in the financial statements and their inclusion in tax assessments. Deferred tax is measured using the tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting date. The deferred tax provision currently booked in the accounts relates to latent capital gains on the revaluation of investment properties. Current and deferred tax assets and liabilities are not discounted.

Oportunitas Limited
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2020

Provisions

Provisions (ie liabilities of uncertain timing or amount) are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that economic benefit will be transferred to settle the obligation and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

2 Audit information

The audit report is unqualified.

Senior statutory auditor: Daniel Valentine ACA
 Firm: Begbies
 Date of audit report:

3 Tangible fixed assets

	Investment properties
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2019	4,563,501
Additions	79,057
Surplus on revaluation	<u>209,993</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>4,852,551</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2020	<u>4,852,551</u>
At 31 March 2019	<u>4,563,501</u>
Freehold land and buildings:	
	2020
	£
Historical cost	<u>4,303,506</u>
	2019
	£
	<u>4,224,449</u>

The investment properties were valued by Taylor Riley, Chartered Surveyors, an independent valuer with a recognised and relevant professional qualification and with recent experience in the location and category of the investment properties being valued. The investment properties have been valued on the basis of open market value and using comparable property data, in accordance with the current RICS Valuation Standards by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

4 Debtors

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trade debtors	2,205	2,831
Royal Victoria deposit	1,275,000	-
Other debtors	<u>19,209</u>	<u>35,289</u>
	<u>1,296,414</u>	<u>38,120</u>

Oportunitas Limited
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2020

5 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2020	2019
	£	£
Other loans	27,444	-
Other taxes and social security costs	428	-
Other creditors	<u>24,431</u>	<u>19,992</u>
	<u>52,303</u>	<u>19,992</u>

6 Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	2020	2019
	£	£
Other loans	<u>4,281,306</u>	<u>4,069,399</u>
	<u>4,281,306</u>	<u>4,069,399</u>

7 Loans	2020	2019
	£	£
Creditors include:		
Instalments falling due for payment within one year	27,444	-
Instalments falling due for payment in two to five years	124,019	662,522
Instalments falling due for payment after more than five years	<u>4,157,287</u>	<u>3,406,877</u>
	<u>4,308,750</u>	<u>4,069,399</u>
Secured loans	<u>4,308,750</u>	<u>4,069,399</u>

Amounts payable to Folkestone and Hythe District Council are secured by fixed and floating charges over the company's properties.

8 Events after the reporting date

On 4th August 2020, the company raised capital by a further share issue of 520 shares at a price of £2,000 per share to its sole shareholder and controlling party, Folkestone & Hythe District Council. This is principally intended to fund further payments under the ongoing development contract disclosed in note 9.

9 Capital commitments	2020	2019
	£	£
Amounts contracted for but not provided in the accounts	<u>5,125,000</u>	<u>-</u>

During the year the company entered into a contract with a property developer to agree to purchase residential accommodation over the next two years for a price of £6.4m. A deposit of £1.275m was paid before the year end and this prepayment is included within other debtors in note 8. Under the terms of the contract, the balance of £5,125,000, disclosed as a commitment above, is payable in instalments over the next two years as the development progresses.

Oportunitas Limited
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2020

10 Related party transactions

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 whereby it has not disclosed transactions with its ultimate parent company. Such transactions were on normal commercial terms as part of the company's ongoing investment and operating activities.

11 Controlling party

For the current and previous year, the company was a wholly owned subsidiary of Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

12 Other information

Oportunitas Limited is a private company limited by shares and incorporated in England. Its registered office is c/o Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY.

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Appendix 2

Oportunitas Board Meeting 16 November 2020

Oportunitas Limited – Financial Update for 2020/21

Prepared by Lee Walker

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update to the Board of the company's financial position for the current financial year. It covers the latest trading position to 31 October 2020 reported through the Profit and Loss Account, provides a projection of the outturn for the Profit and Loss Account compared to the original forecast for 2020/21 and summarises the capital expenditure incurred to date.

2. Profit and Loss Account to 31 October 2020

2.1 The summarised Profit and Loss Account to 31 October 2020 compared to the profiled original forecast for the period is shown in the table below:

Profit and Loss Account	Original Forecast to 31 October 2020	Actual to 31 October 2020	Variance Projection to Original Forecast
	£	£	£
Housing Rental			
Rental Income	157,218	143,152	(14,066)
Rental Expenses	(46,918)	(31,102)	15,816
Net	110,300	112,050	1,750
Grounds Maintenance			
Income	8,925	4,673	(4,252)
Expenses	(7,140)	(3,738)	3,402
Net	1,785	935	(850)
Overheads			
Directors Remuneration	(6,627)	(5,641)	986
FHDC Officer Support	(13,566)	(13,566)	0
Operating Expenses	(7,111)	(4,170)	2,941
Total Overheads	(27,304)	(23,377)	3,927
Loan Interest	(121,646)	(121,646)	(0)
P & L Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for period	(36,864)	(32,038)	4,826

- 2.2 The profiled original forecast shown in the table above only reflects income and expenditure due for the period to 31 October 2020. There are costs, particularly for overheads, that are due to be incurred much later in the financial year, such as the loan arrangement fee for the new loan facility, property valuation fees and the Audit fee. These are excluded from the profiled forecast for the period.
- 2.3 The company has generated a net income of about £113k from its trading activities to the end of October with almost all of this coming from its housing rentals. However, after allowing for the interest on its loan to the Council and its operational overheads, the company has made an operational loss of £32k for the period. This loss is £5k lower than the profiled forecast for the period of £37k and the main reasons for the variance are outlined below:

Variances – Period to 31 October 2020		£'000
i)	Housing Rental Income – higher than anticipated void periods for properties being re-let, including one unit being unable to let following a serious water leak	(6)
ii)	Housing Rental Income – increase in rent arrears, in part due to the impact of Covid-19 on tenants. Rent arrears are being actively pursued within the current Government restrictions for recovery and enforcement action.	(8)
iii)	Housing Rental Expenses – a reduction in the cost of managing and maintaining the property stock. The majority of repairs and maintenance to the stock are currently undertaken on a responsive basis and arranged by the two managing agents.	16
iv)	Grounds Maintenance Work – only a limited amount of work was undertaken in the period due to Covid-19 restrictions. This has made little difference to the net income position to the company	(1)
v)	Overheads – the original forecast provided for interest on the working capital facility as well as a general contingency sum, neither of which have been required in the period	4
Total reduction in deficit compared to forecast		5

- 2.4 The company made its half-yearly scheduled repayment of loan interest (£105k) and principal (£14k) to the Council on 30 September 2020.

3 Profit and Loss Account Projected Outturn 2020/21

- 3.1 The table below provides an initial projection of the outturn position for the current financial year compared to the original forecast:

	Original Forecast 2020/21	Latest Projection 2020/21	Variance Projection to Original Forecast
Profit and Loss Account	£	£	£
Housing Rental			
Rental Income	269,516	258,400	(11,116)
Rental Expenses	(91,235)	(84,556)	6,679
Net	178,281	173,844	(4,437)
Grounds Maintenance			
Income	15,300	10,000	(5,300)
Expenses	(12,240)	(8,000)	4,240
Net	3,060	2,000	(1,060)
Overheads			
Directors Remuneration	(11,361)	(9,693)	1,668
FHDC Officer Support	(23,256)	(23,256)	0
Operating Expenses	(47,534)	(43,034)	4,500
Total Overheads	(82,151)	(75,983)	6,168
Loan Interest	(208,535)	(208,535)	0
P & L Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for period	(109,345)	(108,674)	671

3.2 In total, the projected outturn shows an operating loss of almost £109k for the year, very much in line with the original forecast.

3.3 The housing rental income is expected to be about £11k lower than the forecast due to increases in the void periods and arrears, partly offset by increases in rent from new tenancies agreed during the year. There is a projected saving of almost £7k on rental expenses mainly from property maintenance budgets.

3.4 There is a projected saving of about £6k on the company's overheads, including £4.5k for interest on a working capital facility from the Council that will not be required this year.

3.5 A further update on the projection of the outturn for the current financial year will be made to the Board at their meeting, planned for early in 2021.

4 Capital Expenditure – Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) Development

4.3 The table summarises the latest position for capital expenditure incurred on the RVH development.

Date	Description	Amount £
17/02/2020	Deposit – Phases A & B	1,275,000
11/06/2020	Phase A – stage payment no. 1	110,250
07/08/2020	Phase A – stage payment no. 2	220,500
29/09/2020	Phase A – stage payment no. 3	208,250
	Total Paid	<u>1,814,000</u>

4.4 The funding of the capital expenditure incurred has been met from the proceeds of the Council's new equity investment in the company.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The Board note the latest financial position for 2020/21 outlined in this paper.

This Report will be made public on 1 December 2020



Report Number **C/20/56**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 December 2020
Status: Non key
Responsible Officer: Charlotte Spendley, Corporate Service Director
Cabinet Member: Councillor Tim Prater

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FOR KENT COUNTY COUNCIL CARE LEAVERS

SUMMARY: This report outlines the proposal to support individuals who have left the care of Kent County Council, who live in the Folkestone & Hythe District with Council Tax until the age of 25.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To consider proposals to amend the Council's Financial Support Scheme to include additional support for Kent County Council care leavers aged 22 to 25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/20/56.
2. To agree to the proposed change to the Council's Financial Support scheme.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** From 1st April 2020 Kent County Council (KCC), in their role as a Corporate Parent, have funded Council Tax payments where young people who are care leavers are eligible to pay. This would be for young people who are Kent Care Leavers aged 18-21 years, wherever they are living.
- 1.2** The bills for those Care Leavers aged 18 to 21 that are responsible in full for their bill will be paid by KCC.
- 1.3** As identified in Council Extraordinary Meeting, Opposition Business (21 October 2020) there is currently no specific support for care leavers aged 22 to 25 with regards to Council Tax. It was resolved to consider assessing options to consider exempting or significantly reducing the amount of Council Tax due by young people, who have left the care of Kent County Council between the ages of 22-25 who currently reside in the district of Folkestone and Hythe.

2. OPTION FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

- 2.1** The Council currently maintains and administers its local Financial Support Payment (FSP) scheme for residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction but who require further financial support. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability. An applicant would need to be in receipt of Council Tax Reduction to qualify for this payment which would indicate that they are a low earner. This would satisfy the requirement of an applicant requiring further support.
- 2.2** It is proposed that the current scheme is amended to allow for the circumstances that if a care leaver is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, the remaining balance of the annual bill would be covered under the FSP scheme. The applicant would need to apply for the support and provide evidence of their care leaver status.
- 2.3** Changes to the scheme are identified in Part 11 of the scheme (Appendix A).

3. POTENTIAL COST

- 3.1** FSP falls within Section 13A (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme. A pre-requisite to receive an award is that an application for Council Tax Reduction has been made.
- 3.2** Any awards made will be funded through the collection fund. Costs are therefore shared with preceptors. It should be noted that the introduction of the Policy was supported in principle by Kent County Council in their feedback to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation.

- 3.3** Exact data on qualifying care leavers in the district is not held by the Council or readily available. However, some data can be extracted from a KCC report regarding '*Funding for Council Tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers aged 18-21 years*' (Appendix B).
- 3.4** Indications from KCC data available state that of the 201 care leavers aged 22 to 25 that are engaged with the service (working with the KCC care leavers support service), 113 are paying Council Tax with an estimated amount of £85,236.
- 3.5** On these assumptions, if they were evenly split across the county that would place approximately 11 in Folkestone & Hythe District.
- 3.6** Similarly if the estimated cost from KCC was to be divided by 10 this would place the estimated charge for Folkestone & Hythe at £8,523.60 (FHDC share £1,445).
- 3.7** KCC also state that there are a number of care leavers not engaging with their service, however, if a discount was offered many may re engage. Indications from KCC data available state that there are 1,264 former care leavers not currently engaging with them but are eligible to return and receive a service.
- 3.8** Based upon these assumptions, if this was evenly split across the county that would place approximately 126 in Folkestone & Hythe District.
- 3.9** KCC estimate the cost to be £1,261,472 if all of these care leavers were paying Council Tax. If estimations were to be made of the same county split as detailed above and if half of the disengaged care leavers were to receive an award this could cost an additional £63,074 (FHDC share £10,691). If 100% of the estimate were to receive an award this could be £126,147 (FHDC share £21,382).

All figures are estimates as there is no concrete method to estimate levels of interest if such a scheme were to be introduced.

4. ADMINISTRATION

- 4.1** Applications would also be administered by the Council's Welfare Team who would be able to offer further support as required. This would be reviewed annually to ensure that the support is still appropriate.
- 4.2** The time and cost of administration based upon the expectation of KCC's projected numbers is expected to be manageable within the Welfare Team. A new form would need to be designed and published to enable applicants to access the support.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 5.1** These are set out below.

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
100% of care leavers apply for support	Medium	Low	If every care leaver applied for support each case would be reviewed based upon their circumstances. They would need to be on a low income (and in receipt of Council Tax Reduction)

6. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

6.1 Legal Officer's Comments

Under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council has the discretionary power to reduce liability for council tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine where national discounts and exemptions cannot apply.

6.2 Finance Officer's Comments

Council Tax reliefs awarded via Section 13A are charged to the General Fund. There is no current budget provision for the potential costs outlined in this report. If approved any financial implications for 2020/21 would be reported as part of the budget monitoring process and estimated costs for 2021/22 would be factored into the detailed budget setting process.

6.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

This report is beneficial for KCC care leavers.

7. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Andrew Hatcher
 Revenues & Benefits Lead Specialist
 Telephone: 01303 853348
 Email: andrew.hatcher@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed Financial Support Payment scheme

Appendix B:

KCC report – Funding for Council Tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers aged 18-21 years:

**Folkestone & Hythe
District Council
Council Tax
Financial Support Payment
Policy**



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1 Background

- 1.1 A Financial Support Payment Policy has been created by Folkestone & Hythe District Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional hardship'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction but the level of support being paid by the Council does not meet their full Council Tax liability.
- 1.2 Financial Support Payment will be available to any applicant where their daily award of Council Tax Reduction does not meet 100% of their Council Tax liability (less any appropriate discounts and non-dependant deductions).
- 1.3 The main features of the policy are as follows:
- The operation of the policy will be at the total discretion of the Council;
 - The policy will be applied by the Revenues and Benefits department on behalf of the Council;
 - There is no statutory right to awards from the fund although the Council will consider all applications received;
 - Exceptional Hardship falls within Section 13A (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
 - Exceptional Hardship awards will only be available for the current Council Tax year (April – March) and will not be available for any other debt other than outstanding Council Tax;
 - A pre-requisite to receive an award is that an application for Council Tax Reduction has been made;
 - Where a Financial Support Payment award is requested for a previous period, Exceptional Hardship must have been proven to have existed throughout the whole of the period requested and will only be backdated to the start of the financial year in which the application is made;
 - Financial Support Payment awards are designed as short-term help to the applicant only; and
 - All applicants will be expected to engage with the Council and undertake the full application process as required. Failure to do so may mean that no award will be made.

2 Equalities

- 2.1 The creation of a Financial Support Payment Policy facility meets the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Council recognises the impact the changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme will have on our most vulnerable residents and therefore the importance this policy has in protecting those applicants most in need from financial support. It should be noted that a Financial Support Payment Policy

is intended to help in cases of extreme financial hardship and not support a lifestyle or lifestyle choice.

- 2.3 Whilst the definition of 'Exceptional Hardship' is not exactly defined by this policy, it is accepted that changes to the level of support generally will cause financial hardship and any award made will be at the total discretion of the Council. Exceptional Hardship should be considered as 'hardship beyond that which would normally be suffered'.

3 Purpose of the Financial Support Payment Policy

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy document is to specify how Folkestone & Hythe District Council will operate the scheme, to detail the application process and indicate a number of factors, which will be considered when deciding if a Financial Support Payment award can be made
- 3.2 Each case will be treated on its own merits and all applicants will be treated fairly and equally in both accessibility and also decisions made.

4 The Financial Support Payment process

- 4.1 As part of the process of applying for additional support, all applicants must be willing to undertake all of the following:
- Make a separate application in writing for assistance;
 - Provide full details of their income and expenditure;
 - Where a person is self-employed or a director of a private limited company, provide details of their business including supplying business accounts;
 - Accept assistance from either the Council or third parties (such as Citizens Advice Bureau or Money Advice Service) to enable them to manage their finances more effectively - including the termination of non-essential expenditure and assessment of the potential for additional paid employment where applicable;
 - Identify potential changes in payment methods and arrangements to assist them;
 - Assist the Council to minimise liability by ensuring that all discounts, exemptions and reductions are properly granted; and
 - Maximise their income through the application for other welfare benefits, cancellation of non-essential contracts and outgoings and by identifying the most economical tariffs for the supply of utilities and services generally.

In addition a pre-requisite to receive an award is that an amount of Council Tax Reduction must be in payment for any day that a Financial Support

Payment award is requested; the claimant must be in receipt of Council Tax Reduction for the period in which they are applying.

4.2 Through the operation of this policy the Council will look to:

- Allow a short period of time for someone to adjust to unforeseen short-term circumstances and to enable them to “bridge the gap” during this time, whilst the applicant seeks alternative solutions;
- Help applicants through personal crises and difficult events that affect their finances;
- Help those applicants who are trying to help themselves financially; and
- Encourage applicants to contact the Job Centre Plus to obtain and sustain employment

4.3 A Financial Support Payment award will not be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where the full Council Tax liability is being met by Council Tax Reduction;
- For any other reason, other than to reduce Council Tax liability;
- Where the Council considers that there are unnecessary expenses/debts etc and that the applicant has not taken reasonable steps to reduce them;
- To pay for any arrears of Council Tax Reduction caused through the failure of the applicant to notify changes in circumstances in a timely manner or where the applicant has failed to act correctly or honestly; or
- To cover previous years Council Tax arrears.

5 Awarding Financial Support Payment

5.1 The Council will decide whether or not to make a Financial Support Payment award, and how much any award might be.

5.2 When making this decision the Council will consider:

- The shortfall between Council Tax Reduction and Council Tax liability;
- Whether the applicant has engaged with the Financial Support Payment process;
- If a Discretionary Housing Payment has already been awarded to meet a shortfall in rent (where appropriate);
- The personal circumstances, age and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the applicant, their partner any dependants and any other occupants of the applicant’s home;

- The difficulty experienced by the applicant, which prohibits them from being able to meet their Council Tax liability, and the length of time this difficulty will exist;
- Shortfalls due to non-dependant deductions;
- The income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home;
- All income received by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the income may fall to be disregarded under the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- Any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the capital may fall to be disregarded under the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- Other debts outstanding for the applicant and their partner;
- The exceptional nature of the applicant and/or their family's circumstances that impact on finances, and
- The length of time they have lived in the property.

5.3 The above list is not exhaustive and other relevant factors and special circumstances will be considered.

5.4 Applicants are encouraged to make prompt applications as refunds on paid balances are unlikely to be given.

5.5 An award of Financial Support Payment does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the applicant's circumstances have not changed.

5.6 A Financial Support Payment award may be less than the difference between the Council Tax liability and the amount of Council Tax Reduction paid. The application may be refused if the authority feels that, in its opinion, the applicant is not suffering 'exceptional hardship' or where the applicant has failed to comply with the Financial Support Payment process

6 Publicity

6.1 The Council will make a copy of this policy available for inspection and will be published on the Council's website.

7. Applying for a Financial Support Payment award

7.1 An applicant can make an application for a Financial Support Payment award by submitting an application to the Council. The application form can be obtained via the Council's website, the telephone or in person at one of the Council offices.

- 7.2 In some cases the Council may use information held to make an award in the absence of an application form.
- 7.3 Applicants can request assistance with the completion of the form from the Revenues and Benefits department or Customer Services at the Council.
- 7.4 The application form must be fully completed and supporting information or evidence provided, as reasonably requested by the Council. The form must be returned within one calendar month of its issue.
- 7.5 In most cases the person who applies for the Financial Support Payment award will be the person entitled to Council Tax Reduction. However, an application can be accepted from someone acting on another's behalf, such as an appointee, if it is considered reasonable.

8. Duties of the applicant and the applicant's household

- 8.1 A person claiming a Financial Support Payment is required to:
- Provide the Council with such information as it may require to make a decision; and
 - Tell the Council of any changes in circumstances that may be relevant to their ongoing award within 21 days of the change.

9. Changes in circumstances

- 9.1 The Council may revise an award of Financial Support Payment where the applicant's circumstances have changed which either increases or reduces their Council Tax Reduction entitlement.

10. The award and duration of a Financial Support Payment

- 10.1 Both the amount and the duration of the award are determined at the discretion of the Council, and will be done so on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the application.
- 10.2 The start date and duration of any award will be determined by the Council. The maximum length of the award will be limited to the financial year in which the application is received.
- 10.3 Any Financial Support Payment award will be made direct onto the taxpayer's Council Tax account, thereby reducing the amount of Council Tax payable.

11. Kent County Council Care leavers

- 11.1 If the applicant identifies as being a Kent County Council (KCC) care leaver aged 22 to 25 they would be automatically awarded up to 100% support in Council Tax once Council Tax Reduction has been applied.
- 11.2 The care leaver would need to apply for support each year and this would only be applicable where Council Tax Reduction is awarded. Evidence would need to be received from KCC to show the appropriate care leaver status.

12. Overpaid Financial Support Payment awards

- 12.1 Overpaid Financial Support Payment awards will generally be recovered directly from the applicant's council tax account, thus increasing the amount of council tax due and payable. Overpayments may occur as a result of misrepresentation or a change in circumstances.

13. Notification of an award

- 13.1 The Council will notify the resident of the outcome of their application for an Financial Support Payment award in writing via email or post.

14. Appeals

- 14.1 Financial Support Payment awards are granted under Section 13A (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, as such the normal Council Tax appeal process applies and an appeal can be made at any time. The initial appeal should be made to the Council who will review any decision. Ultimately any decision can be considered by an independent Valuation Tribunal.
- 14.2 The outcome of the appeal will be set out in writing, detailing the reasons for the decision or upholding the original decision.

15. Fraud

- 15.1 The Council is committed to protect public funds and ensure funds are awarded to the people who are rightfully eligible to them.
- 15.2 An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a Financial Support Payment by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under The Fraud Act 2006.
- 15.3 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, this matter will be investigated as appropriate and may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

16. Complaints

- 16.1 The Council's Complaints Procedure (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about the application of this policy.

17. Policy review

- 17.1 This policy will be reviewed in line with any changes in legislation and as a minimum on an annual basis. Minor alterations to the policy will be approved by Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Corporate Director of Organisational Change in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance. Any substantive alterations to the content of the policy will be approved by Cabinet.

December 2020

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From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 10 January 2020

Decision No: 20/00005

Subject: Funding for Council Tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers aged 18-21 years

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This is a proposal for Kent County Council to fund council tax payments for all young people eligible to pay council tax, who are Kent Care Leavers aged from 18 years, up to the age of 21 years.

Recommendation: The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER, ENDORSE** or **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision to:

- a) Agree that Kent County Council will fund the council tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers from the age of 18 years, up to the age of 21 years. All young people will be supported and expected to claim any council tax benefit/discount entitlement that they are eligible for. e.g. singled person, student, severe impairment of mental capacity etc. No back dated payments or arrears will be funded by Kent County Council.
- b) Implement from 1st April 2020 and to be published in the Kent Local Offer for Care Leavers.
- c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 27th March 2019 at the Corporate Parenting Panel, members received a new Challenge Card from our young people's council "**That all Kent Care Leavers living in Kent be exempt from paying Council Tax, up to the age of 25 years where they are still engaging with the service**". Members of

the Corporate Parenting Panel accepted the Challenge Card and officers have supported the work to progress this.

- 1.2 The Children and Social Work Act (2017) implemented on 1st April 2018, placed corporate parenting responsibilities on district councils for the first time, requiring them to have regard to children in care and care leavers when carrying out their functions. Councils have the power to introduce exemptions for council tax for certain groups under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The complication in Kent is that, if an exemption was agreed as part of a district councils offer as a Corporate Parent, it would require agreement and implementation across all 12 District Borough Councils. Research into the administration process and costs for this have resulted in the proposal to support young people by Kent County Council directly funding their council tax bill from the age of 18-21 years.
- 1.3 Corporate Parenting is a statutory function of the Council with the underlying principle that every local authority will seek the same outcomes for children and young people in care that every good parent would want for their own children; for example, successful transition to young adulthood and financial independence.
- 1.4 The children's social care inspectorate, Ofsted, has the 'Experience of Looked After Children and Care Leavers' as a key judgement area in its evaluation of local performance, and expects Councils and children's services to provide clear evidence that it supports its young people leaving care up to the age of 25, in a way that optimises their outcomes.
- 1.5 The Government's care leavers' strategy, *Keep on Caring*, published in July 2016, encouraged councils to consider the role of a corporate parent, '*through the lens of what any reasonable parent does to give their child the best start in life*'. As a further development of this local authorities were encouraged to consider exempting care leavers from council tax using the powers already at their disposal, to be aspirational for care leavers in achieving financial independence.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/fairer-start-for-care-leavers-campaigner-resource-pack.pdf>

2 Kent County Councils Strategic statement

- 2.1 The proposal meets the objectives of 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)' as follows:

- The Strategic Statement underpins the proposal for funding council tax payments in our aim to improve the lives of children and young people by giving them the best start in life. It meets our responsibility of being the best Corporate Parent we can be and being aspirational for our Care Leavers as they transition into adulthood.
- An agreement would improve the outcomes of Care Leavers by ensuring that they are financially supported and give them the best possible opportunities for their futures as adults.

3 Research

3.1 The Children's Society report 'The cost of being care free' published in June 2016 contained several recommendations, one of which was that 'care leavers should be exempt from paying council tax until the age of 25 to avoid them getting into debt after leaving care'.

3.2 The Children's Society's 'Wolf at the Door' report into council tax debt showed that the pace of escalation of debt by local authorities could be frightening for care leavers; what can start out for many young people as falling slightly behind can very quickly escalate to a court summons and enforcement action being taken.

3.3 The Children's Society 'Wolf at the door'.

https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/wolf-at-the-door_council-tax-debt-collection-is-harming-children_PCR027a_WolfAtTheDoor_Web.pdf

The Children's Society report that more than a third of local authorities have introduced measures to exempt care leavers from council tax, to date there are 76. As a leading Local Authority, rated as Ofsted GOOD, Kent would want to be at the forefront of this, to secure an agreement for their Kent Care Leavers and add it to their Local Offer.

3.4 Care leavers can find themselves grappling with the challenges of living independently; managing a household, continuing education or seeking employment, as well as managing their personal finances and paying household bills for the first time, often on a very low income and without the support of family or previous financial education to help them navigate this. This can make care leavers a particularly vulnerable group when it comes to the collection of council tax when moving into independent accommodation.

3.5 Further evidence shows spiralling debt and the threat to their tenancies are amongst the biggest issues in care leaver's lives, often leading to abandonment and tenancy loss, making it extremely difficult for young people to access accommodation at a later stage. This can have a great impact on not only the young person's health and wellbeing but the wider

community i.e. homelessness, health, crime and the prison service. As of 1st July 2018, Kent County Council introduced a guarantor scheme to our Care Leavers to assist them accessing good quality privately rented accommodation. Kent County Council have a pilot scheme for care leavers, in which they will act as a guarantor for them, plus offer a deposit and initial rent scheme. An agreement to fund Council Tax payments would further enhance this offer.

4 Proposal and Eligibility

- 4.1 The scheme for funding Council Tax payments will apply to care leavers who are the responsibility of Kent County Council as their Corporate Parent, living both in Kent and those Kent young people now living outside of the county, aged 18 to 21 years.

All young people who are Kent care leavers will be responsible for:

- Applying for any universal and applicable Council Tax Exemption, discounts or Council Tax Support.
- Paying any historic Council Tax liability.

5 Conditionality:

- The Scheme will cease to be apply when a care leaver reaches the age of 21 years or when the education or training activity being undertaken on the 21st birthday is completed.
- In situations where a care leaver is part of a couple, and where the partner is not a care leaver, 50% of the joint liability (after any Council Tax Exemption or Council Tax Support subsidy has been applied) may be reclaimed.
- Where the care leaver or their partner is a full-time student and therefore one party is exempt from a Council Tax Liability, 50% of the liability will be paid; this approach is taken for ease of administration.
- In situations where a care leaver is part of a couple and both are care leavers, the 100% refund will continue until the oldest care leaver reaches the age of 21 years. Thereafter a 50% approach will be taken, unless the youngest care leaver is a full-time student, in which case eligibility for the Scheme will cease.
- Where the care leaver experiences a change of circumstances and therefore their Council Tax Exemption or Council Tax Support subsidy needs to be reassessed, the care leaver should make sure the adjustment is applied immediately. The Scheme will then pay the new applicable liability or (50% of the liability, if a couple) subject to the care leaver paying the new liability and presenting evidence of the new payment rate (as above, quarterly in arrears).

- Where a care leaver is living in a Staying Put or Supported Lodgings arrangement with a single carer, and the carer loses their 25% single person discount, any increased Council Tax Liability that is accrued by the Staying Put or Supported Lodgings carer will be covered by KCC.
- Where a care leaver is living in a commissioned/private semi-independent placement (aged 18 and over) the Council Tax Liability will be covered in the contract value.

6. Data and Financial Implications in relation to young people aged 18-21 year olds who are Care Leavers

6.1 Data as of 1st December 2019 shows that Kent County Council has 1515 open cases for care leavers aged between 18-21 years. Of this, there are 580 currently paying a council tax liability of either full or part payment of council tax.

Table 1: Young People who are Care Leavers aged 18-21 years open to the service.

Total number of care leavers aged 18-21 years	1515
Number of care leavers living in Kent aged 18-21 years	1017
Number of care leavers living in Medway aged 18-21 years	142
Number of care leavers living out of county aged 18-21 years	356
Number of care leavers aged 18 – 21 years either not currently liable for council tax or claiming entitlements/discounts so no cost	935
Number of care leavers paying council tax aged 18-21 years	580
Estimated Council tax paid by Care Leavers aged 18-21 years	£594,230

6.2 Therefore, the estimated cost implication for Kent County Council paying council tax for Care Leavers aged 18-21 years would be **£594,230** per annum.

7. Data and Financial Implications in relation to young people aged 22-25 year olds who are Care Leavers

7.1 The Children and Social Work Act (2017) introduced a responsibility on Local Authorities to extend duties to support young people up until the age of 25 years, where they are Care Leavers. Since this change on 1st April 2018, there are currently 201 young people between the ages of 22-25 years open to the Care Leavers 18+ Service. This is a combination of young people who have decided at aged 21 years, to continue to receive support, alongside a number

of young people who had previously been closed, that have returned to the service.

Table 2: Young People who are Care Leavers aged 22-25 years open to the service.

Total number of care leavers open to the service aged 22- 25 years	201
Number of care leavers living in Kent open to the service aged 22- 25 years	137
Number of care leavers living in Medway open to the service aged 22- 25 years	12
Number of care leavers living out of county open to the service aged 22- 25 years	52
Number of care leavers open to the service aged 22- 25 years either not currently liable for council tax or claiming entitlements/discounts so no cost	88
Number of Care Leavers aged 22-25 years paying council tax	113
Estimated Council tax paid by Care Leavers open to the service aged 22- 25 years aged	£85,236

7.2 There are currently 1,264 young people aged 22-25 years who are Care Leavers not open or in touch with the service. This is at their choice. For these young people, we are unable to ascertain as to whether they are currently paying council tax. At this age, most of our young people will have finished education and be in some form of employment or eligible for benefits, dependent upon their circumstances.

7.3 For the 1,264 young people KCC are not in touch with, the figures have been estimated using an average figure of £998.00 per annum for council tax. In reality some young people will pay more than this, depending on where they are living and the type of accommodation.

Table 3: Young People who are Care Leavers aged 22-25 years not currently open to the service.

Total number of former care leavers not currently open to the service aged 22- 25 years (eligible to return and receive a service)	1,264
Estimated cost if all former care leavers aged 22-25 years were	£1,261,472

paying council tax	
Estimated cost if half former care leavers aged 22-25 years were paying council tax	£630,736
Estimated cost if one third of former care leavers aged 22- 25 years were paying council tax	£420,490

- 7.4 Therefore, the estimated cost implication for Kent County Council paying council tax for Care Leavers aged 22-25 years if all were liable to pay full council tax would be estimated at **£1,261, 472** per annum.
- 7.5 There is a further financial implication on the Care Leavers 18+ Service, if there was an offer made to 22-25 year olds not currently open to the service. To receive funding for their council tax, each young person would need to be re-opened to the service and allocated a Personal Advisor.
- 7.6 Based on a Personal Advisor having a caseload of 25 young people, there would need to be an additional 50 Personal Advisors within the service, to meet this demand. This would be the equivalent of 6 new teams and require an additional 6 Team Managers to manage the workload, alongside business support staff to support with the administration.
- 7.7 The cost of one Team Manager and 6 Personal Advisors would cost approximately £319,780 excluding business support costs. The cost for 6 new teams would therefore be **£1,918,680**.
- 7.8 The combined cost of paying council tax for young people who are Care Leavers aged 22-25 years old and the staffing resource to do this, would be a cost of **£3,180,152**.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The original challenge card from our Kent young people, was exemption of council tax up until the age of 25 years. As part of the work and research completed, the Care Leavers 18+ Service reviewed the potential impact of offering the funding of council tax payments up to the age of 25 years, as opposed to 21 years, in line with some smaller Local Authorities. Financially this would put considerable pressure on Kent County Council within the Care Leavers 18+ Service budget, as there would likely to be a large number of young people returning to the service, purely to access their council tax being funded. They would need to be allocated to a Personal Advisor which would have significant impact upon caseloads and the capacity to work with our most vulnerable young people.
- 8.2 The majority of our young people have completed their education or training by the age of 21 years and are likely to be more settled and at the start of their paid employment. This would give young people 3 years to qualify or complete training, learn to budget and prepare for taking on their own council tax

payment at the age of 21 years. Those that are more vulnerable and not able to maintain paid employment, are those more likely to be eligible to claim council tax discounts or benefits, so are unlikely to be liable for the full council tax payment. They would therefore still be able to access these entitlements at age 22-25 years.

- 8.3 Within this proposal, Kent County Council have taken into account that due to the numbers of unaccompanied asylum young people, they have much higher numbers of Care Leavers compared to other Local Authorities. Therefore, the proposal for payment for council tax for Kent young people who are Care Leavers aged 18-21 years, is a realistic and balanced offer that would not put Kent County Council at a significant budget risk.

9. Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER, ENDORSE or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision to:

- a) Agree that Kent County Council will fund council tax payments for Kent young people who are Care Leavers from the age of 18 years, up to the age of 21 years.
- b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision.

Lead Director

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This Report will be made public on 1 December 2020



Report Number **C/20/59**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 December 2020
Status: Key Decision
Head of Service: Charlotte Spendley, Director of Corporate Services
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Monk, Leader of the Council

SUBJECT: BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22

SUMMARY:

This Budget Strategy sets out the guidelines for preparing the 2021/22 Budget. It supports the Corporate Plan and aligns with the direction and objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The Budget Strategy takes account of current and future financial issues, sets out the underlying assumptions and initial budget-setting proposals and provides a timetable for delivering a balanced budget in 2021/22.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:

- (i) The Budget Strategy provides the framework for compiling the detailed 2021/22 budgets;
- (ii) The Budget Strategy will support the delivery of the MTFS; and
- (iii) The council's constitution requires approval of such a Strategy at least two months in advance of final budget approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/20/59.
2. To approve the Budget Strategy for 2021/22 set out in this report.
3. To approve the General Fund revenue growth & savings proposals for 2021/22 (Appendix 2).
4. To approve the General Fund capital growth proposals for 2021/22 (Appendix 3).
5. To agree the proposed timetable for preparing 2021/22 budgets (Appendix 4).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Constitution requires that ‘no less than two months before any plan, strategy or budget that forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework needs to be adopted, the Cabinet will publish initial proposals and a timetable to council’.
- 1.2 This Budget Strategy covers those requirements, setting out the initial proposals and a timetable that will be used to inform the setting of the detailed budget for 2021/22. The Budget Strategy is consistent with the direction and objectives of the updated MTFS.
- 1.3 The MTFS and Budget Strategy are aligned with the council’s strategic financial objectives, which are:
- To maintain a balanced Budget such that expenditure matches income from Council Tax, fees and charges, and government and other grants and to maintain that position.
 - To maximise the council’s income by setting fees and charges, where it has the discretion and need to do so, at a level to ensure at least full cost recovery, promptly raising all monies due and minimising the levels of arrears and debt write offs.
 - To ensure a long term sustainable view is taken of any investments and the appropriate risk analysis is provided in considering those.
 - To set a rate for Council Tax which maximises income necessary for the council to deliver its strategic objectives but ensures that government referendum limits are not exceeded. The percentage increase will be reviewed annually.
 - To ensure resources are aligned with the council’s strategic vision and corporate priorities.
 - To consider and take advantage of commercial opportunities as they arise to achieve a commercial return.
 - To maintain an adequate and prudent level of reserves.

2. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

2019/20 General Fund Budget Outturn

- 2.1 The final contribution to the General Fund Reserve was £4.3m. This included a net transfer to Earmarked Reserves of £4.5m compared to a budgeted use of £3.6m.
- 2.2 Over recent years, Folkestone & Hythe has established a good track record of maintaining a healthy reserves position. This enables the council to have greater stability and resilience for dealing with current and future financial challenges and uncertainties.

2020/21 Forecast General Fund Budget Outturn

- 2.3 An update to the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2020/21 was reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 11 November 2020. There is a projected adverse

variance of £712k for the year against the latest approved budget which is primarily due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's ability to collect income and additional spending pressures due to national lockdown restrictions imposed by the government. The report provides detail on proposed operational service budget reductions to address the deficit which has reduced the anticipated year end gap to £162k.

2.4 The Quarter 2 HRA Monitoring was reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2020 and sets out the projected outturn for HRA revenue and capital expenditure for 2020/21. The projections, based on actual expenditure and income to 31 August 2020, show there is a projected decrease in net expenditure of £3.0m on the HRA and an underspend of £3.3m on the capital programme against the £13.8m latest budget.

2.5 The latest projection for the General Fund capital programme in 2020/21 was also reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2020 and it shows a reduction in planned capital expenditure of £22.9m against the latest budget. The main reason for the reduction is the delay of the next phase of the Otterpool Park project, Oportunitas phase 2 capital funding, Greatstone Holiday Lets scheme, Princes Parade Leisure Centre and Biggins Wood Commercial Development until 2021/22.

Government Funding

2.6 In February 2020, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced the final local government finance settlement 2020/21. This announcement followed on from consultation on the provisional settlement.

2.7 The main points of note from the settlement relevant for this council are as follows:

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Settlement Funding			
Revenue support grant	0	0	0
Baseline funding	3,673	3,733	60
Settlement funding assessment	3,673	3,733	60
Reduction in funding compared to 2019/20	n/a	60	1.6%

New Homes Bonus

2.8 The Government committed to retain the top-slice of Revenue Support Grant to fund New Homes Bonus in 2020/21. In addition to funding legacy payments associated with previous allocations, the Government announced a new round of in-year allocations for 2020/21 which will not result in legacy payments being made in subsequent years. The NHB baseline was maintained at 0.4% and only growth above this level will attract NHB payments.

2.9 The council currently receives £1.4m in NHB payments with all of this funding being used to support services. The remaining balance of previous

allocations are set aside within a reserve to fund the additional cost of services.

2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement

- 2.10 The government had intended to hold a Spending Review in 2020, covering the period 2021/22 to 2023/24, delayed from 2019 due to political focus on the Transition from the EU. However, with the unprecedented uncertainty of Covid-19 and to prioritise the response to the pandemic, it was announced that a one-year Spending Review would be conducted covering the financial year 2021/22; and that plans for the Spending Review would be kept under review.
- 2.11 The one-year Spending Review was announced on 25 November 2020 and builds on the support put in place for businesses, families and the economy throughout the current crisis and focuses on three areas:
- providing departments with the certainty they need to tackle Covid-19 and deliver our Plan for Jobs to support employment
 - giving our vital public services enhanced support to continue to fight against the virus alongside delivering first class frontline services
 - investing in infrastructure to deliver our ambitious plans to unite and level up the country, drive our economic recovery and Build Back Better
- 2.12 Local Government's Core Spending Power will increase by £2.1bn (4.5%) in 2021/22 which includes:
- A core Council Tax referendum principle of up to 2% (maintained from 2020/21) with further flexibility for the Adult Social Care precept which will be announced as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement
 - £300m additional grant for adult and children's social care (with confirmation that the £1bn social care grant in 2020/21 will be rolled forward)
 - £200m for indexation which has two elements: inflation for Revenue Support Grant and the effect of cap compensation on business rates income and baselines. These calculations have not been confirmed and remain provisional for now.
 - New Homes Bonus will continue for a further year with no new legacy payments. It is not clear from the Spending Review whether this allows for a further one-off payment in 2021/22 or continuation of previous year legacy payments. Confirmation will be provided in the Local Government Finance Settlement.
 - Small Business Rates multiplier will be frozen in 2021/22 (instead of increasing by CPI) but local authorities will be fully compensated through a section 31 grant.
 - A fundamental review of the Business Rates Retention System will report in Spring 2021.
 - There will be no business rates baseline reset in 2021/22.
- 2.13 Other funding streams announced which relate to local government include:

- Additional £3bn funding for Covid in 2021/22, of which: £1.55bn is for additional spending pressures, £670m is to fund council tax support and £672m to fund 75% of irrecoverable loss of council tax and business rates revenues in 2020/21.
- The Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme will be extended into the first 3 months of 2021/22.
- Further £254m funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping (£103m of this was announced earlier this year for accommodation and substance misuse support).

2.14 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is anticipated to follow the Spending Review announcement in mid-late December. Any financial impacts arising from the announcement will be built into the draft detailed budget papers being presented to Cabinet in January 2021.

3.0 2020/21 FINANCIAL FORECAST

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

3.1 The MTFS is the council's key financial planning document. It links the council's strategic priorities with the financial resources required to deliver them. The MTFS covers a four year period, providing the context and framework within which the Budget Strategy is prepared, and considers the implications of the council's approved priorities. It also takes in to account the uncertainty surrounding the financial climate that the council is working within. The MTFS is updated each year, most recently in November (Cabinet report C/20/51).

3.2 The current MTFS forecasts a cumulative funding gap of £13.7m over the lifetime of this MTFS. This is based on a 2% annual council tax increase for the period of the MTFS. These will be subject to political decisions at the appropriate time. The table below shows the cumulative deficit over the period of the MTFS.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Forecast Deficit	3,456	7,071	10,494	13,691

3.3 The current MTFS forecasts a deficit of £3.5m in 2021/22. This Budget Strategy explains the assumptions underlying this forecast (section 4 below) and proposals for addressing next year's funding gap (section 5 below).

Reserves

3.4 Total General Fund reserves at 1 April 2020 amounted to £24.0m, of which £3.3m was held within the General Reserve. The table below shows projected reserves at 31 March 2021 before any application towards new budget growth or initiatives.

Description of Reserve	Balance 1/4/20 £000	Forecast Balance 31/3/21 £000
General Reserve	3,309	3,147
Earmarked Reserves:		
Business rates	5,699	1,399
Invest to save	366	-
Carry forwards	681	523
IFRS	31	8
Vehicles, equipment and technology	257	207
New Homes Bonus initiatives	2,360	2,342
Corporate initiatives	998	246
Maintenance of Graves	12	12
Leisure	497	546
Otterpool Park	1,570	-
Economic Development	4,384	1,376
Community Led Housing	417	365
Lydd Airport	9	9
Homelessness Prevention	401	401
High Street Regeneration	3,000	2,066
Climate Change	-	4,960
Total Earmarked Reserves	20,682	14,460
Total General Fund Reserves	23,991	17,607

4.0 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

4.1 Appendix 1 explains the changes between the 2020/21 approved budget and 2021/22 budget forecast that have been taken into account in the MTFs. These changes comprise:

	£'000
2020/21 Net Approved Budget (balanced budget)	0
Inflationary Pressures 2021/22 (net)	268
Corporate Funding Changes 2021/22 (net)	877
Service Changes 2021/22 (net)	1,582
Net Movement in Contributions To/(From) Reserves	729
MTFS Forecast 2021/22 Budget Deficit - Before Growth and Savings Proposals	3,456

MTFS Funding Assumptions 2021/22

- 4.2 Income from Business Rates is based on last year's estimates, pending a full review. The MTFS shows a 7.2% decrease compared to 2020/21, largely reflecting the assumption not to budget for a pool benefit in 2021/22 given the uncertainties around business rates growth following the impact of Covid-19. An increase in the small business rates multiplier of 0.5% in 2021/22 has been assumed. This area remains volatile with an uncertain position on growth and outstanding appeals.
- 4.3 A council tax increase of 2% has been assumed pending the final decision by Full Council in February 2021. Further detail in the Spending Review and the Local Government Finance Settlement is awaited to confirm the maximum increase for 2021/22 without requiring a referendum. A council tax base increase of 0.5% and a balanced Collection Fund have been assumed for 2021/22.
- 4.4 Continuation of current New Homes Bonus receipts but no new monies from 2021/22 due to uncertainties around the formula funding review and awaited Spending Review.

MTFS Expenditure and Income Assumptions 2021/22

- 4.5 Additional unallocated net employee costs amount to £158k in 2021/22, covering the estimated costs of a salary award at 3%, salary increments, Transformation savings and the impacts of the local government pension fund valuation.
- 4.6 Contract inflation of £100k has been included in the non-pay budget forecast based on prevailing inflation rates within existing contracts.
- 4.7 An increase of 2% has been assumed in relation to the Internal Drainage Board levy.
- 4.8 Net Interest forecasts an increase of £412k compared to the 2020/21 estimate.
- 4.9 Fees and charges income assumptions are based on current budgets and existing policies, adjusted for proposed changes as detailed in the Fees & Charges 2021/22 report to this meeting of Cabinet.

5.0 2021/22 BUDGET PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The council will continue to use a range of approaches to address the deficit in the short and medium term, including:
- Reviewing the level of council tax
 - An annual review of fees and charges
 - Pursuing alternative income streams
 - Continuing the use of digital technologies to transform services
 - Exploring appropriate commercial opportunities
 - Growing the local economy
 - Reviewing all services to generate efficiencies
 - Containing new budget pressures within allocated resources, and

- Considering the use of reserves to help manage year on year variations in income and expenditure.

Budget Growth 2021/22

- 5.2 Service heads and budget managers were asked to identify any unavoidable budget growth items that were necessary to ensure future service sustainability and address unavoidable budget pressures. These total £0.296m and are detailed at Appendix 2.

Budget Savings and Efficiencies 2021/22

- 5.3 Service heads and budget managers were also asked to identify any savings items and a rigorous review of the 2020/21 base budget and previous years' outturns has been undertaken by departments in liaison with CLT. This review identified net potential savings and efficiencies of £1.048m.

Fees and Charges 2021/22

- 5.4 A review of fees and charges has been undertaken and the outcome has been included in a separate Fees & Charges report to this meeting. The proposed changes to fees and charges are anticipated to increase net income receipts by £65k.

The increase comprises:

Increased income	£
Hythe Pool	2,400
Recycling & Waste	14,800
Building Control	2,400
Planning Application Fees	11,200
Lifeline Charges	7,200
Vehicle Licensing	13,300
Licensing	4,100
Various	9,900
Total	65,300

Forecast Budget Deficit 2021/22

- 5.6 Based on the work undertaken to date, the latest forecast deficit is set out below. Members should note that this position will change as more detail becomes available.

	£'000
Forecast deficit – November 2020 MTFS	3,456
Add: budget growth proposals	296
Less: further savings and efficiencies	(1,048)
Less: increase in income generated	(65)
Revised Forecast Deficit 2021/22	2,639

- 5.7 Options for addressing the forecast deficit for 2021/22 are now being considered in preparation for the detailed budget report to Cabinet on 20 January and will take into consideration:
- Any new factors affecting local government funding arising from the Government funding settlement announcements in late December

- Collection Fund surplus/deficit assumptions, with reference to the latest in-year collection performance
- The outcome of ongoing work to review the revenue budget savings and growth proposals at Appendix 2, and
- The action that is being taken to address the residual budget gap.

6.0 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

- 6.1 This Budget Strategy does not explore the Housing Revenue Account further as the council approved on 19 February 2020 a revised HRA business plan for the period 2020 to 2050. This included the impact of the new rent guidance announced in February 2019 allowing rents to increase by CPI + 1% for 5 years from 2020/21 as well as the continuation of the new build capital programme which was updated to deliver a further 1,000 homes over the ten year period from 2025/26 to 2034/35 and a capital investment of £10m into existing housing stock.
- 6.2 Since the HRA Business Plan was approved the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March 2020 which will have an unforeseen impact on the delivery of the new build programme. In addition the Housing Service was brought back in-house in October 2020. A thorough stock condition survey is being carried out on existing HRA housing stock to inform the Asset Management Strategy and capital programme. It is anticipated that the HRA Business Plan will be updated in early Autumn 2021 once this work is complete.
- 6.3 The detailed 2021/22 HRA revenue and capital budgets that will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2020 will be based on the latest review of the revenue and capital position taking into account known impacts of Covid-19.

7.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 7.1 As part of the Budget Strategy, Cabinet is asked to consider the proposals for new capital schemes to be included in the council's General Fund Capital Programme for 2021/22. Any new capital scheme to be included in the programme will need to contribute to the objectives set out in section 1.3 of this report. New General Fund capital scheme proposals of £2.1m for 2021/22 are shown in Appendix 3 to this report. Additionally the council's General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme (MTCP) will need to be updated to include recurring schemes planned to continue over the 5 year period to 2025/26.
- 7.2 The capital scheme proposals include a £1.2m capital investment for East Cliff landfill protection works which falls under the Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Grounds Charity. The scheme will need to be approved by the Board of Trustees of the Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Grounds Charity and if approved the Trustees will request capital investment from the Council to proceed. All proposed changes to the council's General Fund MTCP are required to be approved by Full Council as part of the budget setting process.
- 7.3 Capital Receipts – the existing MTFs states that a minimum of £500k in capital receipts must be retained as a contingency to meet urgent or

unforeseen capital expenditure. The council's general policy is that only capital receipts received should be earmarked to fund capital projects. The only departure from this is ring-fencing the use of future repaid decent homes loans and home safe loans receipts to be reinvested in further private sector housing improvement loans. The latest position regarding the council's available capital receipts to fund capital expenditure, based on the initial capital budget monitoring for 2020/21, is shown in the following table:

Capital Receipts Position Statement	£'000
Receipts in hand at 31 August 2020	(8,835)
Less:	
Committed towards General Fund capital expenditure	1,948
Committed towards HRA capital expenditure	5,662
Ring-fenced for specific purposes	78
Contingency for urgent or unforeseen capital expenditure	500
Balance available to support new capital expenditure	(647)

- 7.4 Over the term of the MTFs the council expects to receive further capital receipts which it could choose to use to fund its future General Fund capital expenditure plans or retain for investment purposes. This excludes 'Right to Buy' disposals of council dwellings where the retained element of capital receipts are required to be reinvested directly in local social housing initiatives. This also currently excludes any potential future capital receipts that may be generated through the council's current 'invest to save' initiatives.
- 7.5 Other Capital Funding Sources - in addition to the available capital receipts, the council can choose to use its revenue resources (earmarked revenue reserves and balances) or consider prudential borrowing to fund its General Fund capital expenditure plans. Prudential borrowing will incur a revenue cost to the General Fund in terms of interest and a minimum revenue provision charge (MRP). Therefore, prudential borrowing is best suited to capital 'invest to save' projects, such as Otterpool Park, Connect 38 Offices, Oportunitas Ltd and the Biggins Wood Commercial development, that will provide a net long term financial return to the council allowing for these costs. The current approved MTCP requires about £99.6m of prudential borrowing to support it, some of which will be off set in time by external funding.
- 7.6 Any capital scheme included in the approved capital programme requiring external grant funding to support it will only be allowed to commence once a formal funding agreement has been established between the council and the relevant funding body.

8.0 THE BUDGET TIMETABLE

- 8.1 By early March each year the council is required by law to approve its budget (revenue, capital and HRA) and council tax levels for the forthcoming year. The Full Council meets in February to do this. Advance notice is given in the publication of key decisions to be made.

8.2 Detailed guidance on the annual budget preparation process was circulated to officers in September 2020. This guidance covered roles and responsibilities; the links between finance and service planning; expected standards and approach; and the timetable for preparing the 2021/22 Budget.

8.3 The 2021/22 Budget timetable is attached at Appendix 4.

9.0 BUDGET CONSULTATION

9.1 There is a duty under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to consult ratepayers (or bodies appearing to represent ratepayers) about proposed expenditure, including capital expenditure, prior to calculating the council tax requirement under S31a (England) of the Act.

9.2 The objectives for consultation on the 2021/22 budget proposals are to:

- Engage with key stakeholder groups and local residents;
- Seek feedback on specific budget proposals for 2021/22; and
- Seek feedback on general spending and income generation priorities.

This will be achieved through making budget information available to the public, inviting feedback and meeting with representatives from the business community.

10.0 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

10.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
MTFS becomes out of date.	High	Low	The MTFS is reviewed annually through the budget process.
Assumptions may be inaccurate.	High	Medium	Budget monitoring is undertaken regularly and financial developments nationally are tracked. Assumptions are regularly reviewed.
Budget strategy not achieved.	High	Low	The budget making process is controlled closely with regular reconciliations against projections.
Incorrect assessment of Local Government Finance Settlement impact.	High	Low	The Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement will inform latest forecasts.

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Failure to take action to address forecast medium term financial pressures as well as focusing on the 2021/22 budget position.	High	Medium	Ensure that MTFS forecasts are monitored and timely interventions identified and implemented to address future deficits.

11.0 LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

11.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NE)

There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report, subject to the Council ensuring its general fiduciary duties are met, including those of consulting with rate payers and ensuring best value. The Council is required to follow a professional code of practice published by CIPFA and regulations set out by the government, including the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

11.2 Finance Officer's Comments (CI)

The Budget for 2021/22 will be submitted to council in February 2021. This Budget Strategy is the first stage in the detailed budget process and will be used to inform the preparation of budget estimates.

11.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (CS)

The budget report to Full Council in February 2021 will include an Equality Impact Assessment of the budget recommendations for 2021/22.

12.0 CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Cheryl Ireland, Chief Financial Services Officer
 Tel: 07834 150176
 E-mail: cheryl.ireland@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Charlotte Spendley, Director of Corporate Services
 Tel: 07935 517986
 E-mail: charlotte.spendley@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Fees & Charges Report 2021/22

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Movement from 2020/21 Approved Budget to 2021/22 Base

Appendix 2 – General Fund Revenue Growth & Savings Proposals

Appendix 3 – Capital Programme Growth Proposals

Appendix 4 – Budget Timetable

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Budget Strategy - Movement from 2020/21 Approved Budget to 2021/22 Base

	£000
Net Budget - 2020/21	0
Inflationary Pressures	
Net Pay Increase (3% plus increments)	108
Pension Scheme Revaluation 2019	50
Contract Inflation (p.a.)	100
Internal Drainage Board (2%)	10
	<hr/>
	268
Corporate Funding Changes	
Reduced New Homes Bonus	592
Interest	412
Council Tax income	304
Business Rates Collection Fund	270
MRP	12
Financing of Fixed Assets	(653)
Other Non-Service Related Grants	(60)
	<hr/>
	877
Service Changes	
Reduction in income (Covid-19 impact)	967
Waste Contract Renewal 2020	850
Property Maintenance Costs	208
Additional Staffing Resources	157
Staffing recharges to Otterpool LLP	(600)
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	1,582
Net Movement in Contributions To/(From) Reserves	729
Forecast 2021/22 Budget Deficit Before Growth and Savings Proposals	<u>3,456</u>

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Growth Proposals

Portfolio	Description of Proposal	£
Recurring items		
Property Management and Grounds Maintenance		
1	Additional funds to support Coastal Protection Schemes	7,900
2	Improvements to the High Street	15,000
Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud & Corruption		
3	Case Officer (focus on Income Recovery)	30,000
Communities		
4	Contribution to KCC for safeguarding work	1,500
Enforcement Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control		
5	Building Control insurance and registration costs	10,000
6	Increase in Parking Enforcement contract	10,000
7	Licensing Specialist	36,800
8	Environmental Health Officer	44,400
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
9	ICT licence costs	68,760
Total Recurring Revenue Growth Proposals 2021/22		<u>224,360</u>
Non-recurring items		
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
1	ICT improvement costs (Office 365/Microsoft Teams)	71,500
Total Revenue Growth Proposals 2021/22		<u><u>295,860</u></u>

Savings Proposals

Portfolio	Description of Proposal	£
Recurring items		
Property Management and Grounds Maintenance		
1	Decrease in Engineers & Building professional fee costs	(20,000)
2	Decrease in Maintenance Officers material costs	(2,850)
3	Decrease in canal drainage costs	(3,000)
4	Decrease in planned maintenance costs	(28,000)
5	Decrease in various building holding accounts	(45,860)
6	Decrease in Street Furniture costs	(5,000)
7	Decrease in passenger shelter costs	(7,500)
Leader		
8	Decrease in various HR costs-training and advertising costs	(47,000)
9	Decrease in Members training	(7,200)
10	Decrease in various Legal Services costs	(9,500)
11	Decrease in Emergency Planning costs	(9,200)
Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud & Corruption		
12	Increase HB overpayments and Council Tax recovery	(230,000)
Housing, Transport and Special Projects		
13	Decrease in Off-Street Parking costs	(10,000)
14	Decrease in On-Street Parking costs and increase in income	(40,500)
15	Decrease in Temporary Accommodation costs	(12,000)
Communities		
16	Decrease in Hythe Pool contract costs	(20,000)
17	Decrease in Community Grants	(15,000)
18	Increase in Lifeline income	(30,000)
Economy		
19	Decrease in Economic Development & Regeneration professional fee costs	(20,000)
Enforcement Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control		
20	Increase in Household Waste Collection income	(20,000)
21	Increase in garden waste collection income	(90,000)
22	Increase in Household Waste Collection income from KCC for tipping away payments	(150,000)
23	Increase in Pollution Reduction income	(7,500)
24	Increase in Planning Performance Agreement income	(50,000)
25	Increase in Planning application fee income	(92,000)
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
26	Decrease in ICT licence costs	(29,000)
27	Decrease in various Customer Services costs	(20,600)
Total Recurring Revenue Savings Proposals 2021/22		<u>(1,021,710)</u>
Non-recurring items		
Digital Transformation and Customer Services		
1	Temporary vacancy held for Customer Services Advisor	(26,000)
Total Revenue Savings Proposals 2021/22		<u>(1,047,710)</u>

2021/22 Capital Programme Growth Proposals

Service Area	Description of Proposal	2021/22 Capital Growth £
Operations		
1	Provision of 30 beach chalets at Fisherman's Beach, Hythe for lease to generate an additional revenue stream	75,000
2	Provision of 100 beach huts in various locations to generate an additional revenue stream	300,000
3	Replace the Pirate Ship play equipment in the Coastal Park and undertake urgent repairs to the main tower structure to prevent the closure of the facilities on health and safety grounds	62,000
4	Construction of larger purpose built toilet block with adjoining concession in the Coastal Park to ease demand on existing facility and provide a new sustainable revenue stream	150,000
5	Enhancements to staff welfare facilities at Hawkinge Depot and to provide covered storage to protect equipment from the elements	75,000
6	Major refurbishment of units 1-5 Laeroyd Road, New Romney to maintain the existing income stream from leasing units to local businesses	200,000
Council Capital Growth Proposals		<u>862,000</u>

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2021/22 Budget Timetable

Date	Details
25 November 2020	Full Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24
9 December 2019	Cabinet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Strategy 2021/22 • Fees and Charges 2021/22. <p>Budget consultation begins</p>
December 2020 (TBC)	Provisional local government finance settlement 2021/22 announced by Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities.
12 January 2021	Finance & Performance Sub-Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 • HRA revenue and draft Capital Budget 2021/22 • General Fund Draft Medium Term Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26
20 January 2021	Cabinet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 • HRA revenue and Capital draft Budget 2021/22 • General Fund Draft Medium Term Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26
Early 2021 (TBC)	Final Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed.
14 th January 2021	Budget consultation with Folkestone & Hythe Parish Councils Joint Committee
1 February 2021	Budget consultation ends
24 February 2021	Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund Budget & Council Tax 2021/22 • HRA Budgets and Rents 2021/22 • General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26.
24 February 2021	Full Council : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund Budget & Council Tax 2021/22 • HRA Budgets and Rents 2021/22 • General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26.

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This Report will be
made public on
1 December 2020

Report Number **C/20/58**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 December 2020
Status: Key Decision
Head of Service: Charlotte Spendley, Director of Corporate Services
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Monk, Leader

SUBJECT: FEES AND CHARGES 2021/22

SUMMARY: This report focuses on the proposed fees and charges for 2021/22 which will contribute towards meeting the council's 2021/22 budget objectives and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Council's Fees and Charges Policy was revised and agreed by Cabinet on 15 November 2017 (Report C/17/54).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet agreed the recommendations set out below because the fees and charges are essential to support the delivery of the MTFs and Budget Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report C/20/58.
2. To approve:
 - (i) The 2021/22 fees and charges which are set at the discretion of the council for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, as outlined in Appendix 2;
 - (ii) The parking charges in Appendix 3;
 - (iii) The statutory charges subject to discretionary charges in Appendix 4.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fees and Charges Policy sets out the Council's charging framework. The Policy is outlined within Appendix 1 in full. It is felt that the policy remains relevant and no changes to the policy are proposed at this time.
- 1.2 The proposal for 2021/22 is to apply the CPI rate at June 2020 (0.8%) as the benchmark for price increases. There are exceptions to this principle where an inflationary increase is anticipated to have an adverse impact on demand or where it would place the charge out of line with comparable services in neighbouring councils.
- 1.3 Due to Covid-19, Central Government announced the introduction of a Sales, Fees & Charges (SCF) income compensation scheme in 2020/21 and announced as part of the Spending Review 2020 on 25th November that this scheme will be extended into the first 3 months of 2021/22.
- 1.4 The proposed discretionary fees and charges for 2021/22 are detailed at Appendices 2 to 4.

2. DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES – APPENDIX 2

2.1 Governance and Law

- 2.1.1 Legal Fees – proposed increases are broadly in line with inflation however, some fees have been split out into a more detailed breakdown such as licences for alterations and leasehold administration fees (post Right to Buy matters) to ensure the charging schedules are clearer.
- 2.1.2 Hythe Pool – proposed increases are broadly in line with inflation, however some charges remain unchanged due to current fees being in line with other leisure providers, or in some cases more.
- 2.1.3 Waste & Recycling – to enable full cost recovery it is proposed to increase the bulky household collection for 1 item from £24.99 to £30 and the bulky waste additional items, which are collected on the same visit, from £6 to £8.
- 2.1.4 Waste & Recycling – it is proposed to merge the fee for the supply and delivery of the 660 litre wheeled bins with the 660 litre wheeled bins (recyclables) to be £252 and to merge the fee for the supply and delivery of the 1100 litre wheeled bins with the 1100 litre wheeled bins (recyclables) to £259 to simplify the charging structure.
- 2.1.5 Waste & Recycling – in line with the new waste contract and the new schedule of rates it is proposed to increase the food waste collections for kerbside container and kitchen caddies, the new property container offer, black and purple box recycling containers.

2.2 Housing Services

- 2.2.1 Leaseholder Services – it is proposed to introduce a new fee of £75 for arrears administration, for stage 3 arrears cases, and introduce a major works service charge management fee of 10% per major work. These are included within the leaseholders lease but previously hasn't been charged for.
- 2.2.2 All HRA resident charges to be increased by inflation rate in line with the agreed policy. Rent setting will be considered separately through the January HRA Cabinet paper and is not subject to these inflationary increases.

2.3 Operations

- 2.3.1 Hire of Land – all fees and charges to remain the same except for the administration fee for arranging TPC road closures which is proposed to increase from £25 to £30 and the cleaning and re-stocking charge for use of the toilets used by event organisers from £133 to £138. This is in line with other local authorities.
- 2.3.2 Allotments – to enable full cost recovery it is proposed to increase the Full Plot allotments from £41.80 to £43 and the Half Plot allotments from £20.90 to £22.
- 2.3.3 Private Lifeline - no increases are proposed so that our charges remain competitive when compared with other providers, apart from the Warm Homes contract we have with KCC, which is proposed to increase from £2 to £2.40 per call, this has been negotiated with KCC.

2.4 Place

- 2.4.1 Cemeteries – the proposed increases are broadly in line with inflation however, some fees have remained the same and some have increased slightly above inflation to enable full cost recovery.
- 2.4.2 Vehicle Licensing - proposed increases are broadly in line with inflation however, it is proposed to increase the Private Hire Driver licence from £135 to £312 and the Dual Driver fee from £185 to £312. Our current fees for these are extremely low and the increase would make us more in line with other local authorities.
- 2.4.3 Vehicle Licensing – it is proposed to introduce a more detailed charging structure for Private Hire Operator Licences, which will fall into 2 distinct categories. The single vehicle operator fee will increase from £63 to £120 and the multiple vehicle operator (more than 1 vehicle) fees will increase from £63 to £943.
Vehicle operators with more than one private hire vehicle require considerably more work than a single vehicle operator and this includes, but is not limited to, additional record checks, examination and assessment of a variety of documents and complaint investigations in accordance with the current Department of Transport Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

These increases would make us more in line with other local authorities and the fees have been benchmarked across 8 other Kent local authorities and can be split and paid over a 4 year period.

2.4.4 Market fees – to encourage activity it is proposed to reduce the stall charge to £1 per foot per day for regular stall holders and to £2 per foot per day for casual stall holders for both Sandgate Road and Guildhall Street. It is proposed to introduce a new fee structure for New Markets that are set up relating to the number of stalls (5-20 and 21+) and to be split out by the maximum number of days (14 days, 15-52 days, 53+ days).

2.4.5 Miscellaneous Licensing – it is proposed to introduce a new personal licence fee of £10.50 for the change of details to licence that does not require an officer visit. This is to enable full cost recovery.

3. PARKING CHARGES 2021/22 – APPENDIX 3

3.1 It is not proposed to apply inflationary increases across the parking charges schedule for 2021/22.

4. STATUTORY CHARGES SUBJECT TO DISCRETIONARY FEES – APPENDIX 4

4.1 Local Land charges – proposed increases are broadly in line with inflation however, it is proposed to increase the official search of local land charges register fee from £20 to £25, which is line with other South East Kent authorities.

5. 2021/22 GENERAL FUND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The following budget changes have been proposed though the Budget Strategy document also being considered at this meeting in respect of income budgets. Additionally there are a few smaller income adjustments reflected in the Budget Strategy position through the base budget review. Several of these adjustments however are reflective of current trends rather than proposed changes to the fees & charges schedules.

The increase comprises:

	£
Increased income:	
Hythe Swimming Pool	2,400
Recycling & Waste	14,800
Building Control	2,400
Planning Application Fees	11,200
Lifeline	7,200
Vehicle Licensing	13,300
Licensing	4,100
Various	9,900
	<hr/>
Net	<hr/> £65,300 <hr/>

6. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FEES AND CHARGES

Charges for Wastewater Treatment Works and Pumping Stations

- 6.1 The 2020/21 Fees and Charges report highlighted that the HRA subsidises the cost of this service. As in previous years, Cabinet agreed to limit increases on the charge for this service for existing users to annual increases of 8% in 2020/21 where users of the service were already paying the maximum charge of £945 per property. Users whose charge was lower than this would continue to pay the actual cost of the service up to the capped maximum amount. Cabinet has also previously agreed that new purchasers of properties, who buy under the 'Right to Buy' scheme, pay the actual cost of wastewater treatment works and cesspools.

The increase to the capped charge takes it from £1,020 in 2020/21 to £1,100 in 2020/21 and will reduce the HRA subsidy to £1,000 from £2,000.

Cesspools

- 6.2 In 2020/21 the same principle of the council recovering its costs up to a maximum of £1,020 for each household has previously been approved for the 7 council-owned properties which drain to cesspools. This produces annual income of £7,140. The cost of the service in 2019/20 was £12,753 and if the cost is about the same in 2020/21 the HRA would be subsidising the service by approximately £5,613. In line with the above, it is recommended that the cap remains at the already approved figure of 8% per annum for 2021/22 taking the annual charge to £1,100.
- 6.3 Charges to tenants for garages, parking, room hire, etc. are to be increased by 0.8%.
- 6.4 The budget implications of these changes will be reflected in the Housing Revenue Account and Capital Original Budget 2021/22 report to Cabinet in February 2021.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 7.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Income targets are not achieved resulting in a budget deficit	High	Medium	All fees and charges and income budgets are reviewed in detail each year to ensure that they are reasonable and achievable.

8. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

8.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NE)

As a general rule, the Council is under a duty to act fairly in its decision-making, including exercising its discretion to increase relevant fees and charges. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a wide ambit of power to charge for its services and section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives the Council capacity to charge for relevant services; on the basis it is doing so without 'trading' (or making a profit).

8.2 Finance Officer's Comments (LH)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

8.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

The budget report to Full Council in February 2021 will include an Equality Impact Assessment of the budget recommendations for 2021/22.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting.

Leigh Hall, Case Management Lead (Corporate Services)
Tel: 01303 853231
E-mail: leigh.hall@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Budget working papers

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Fees and Charges Policy

Appendix 2 - Discretionary Fees and Charges Schedule

Appendix 3 – Parking Schedule

Appendix 4 - Statutory Fees Subject to Discretionary Charges Schedule

General Fees and Charges Policy

All fees and charges are subject to the following general policy.

1. There shall be full cost recovery so that general council taxpayers are not subsidising the costs of an optional service. Any exceptions to this rule can only be agreed by cabinet. Where there is a substantial change between the current charge and the full cost recovery amount, the increase can be staggered over a period of up to three financial years.

In addition:

2. Fees and charges are increased by the current rate of inflation (generally rounded up to the nearest 10p).

The main exceptions to this rule are:

- Court fees
- Room bookings at the civic centre – voluntary organisations
- Car parking – as subject to review in the Car Park Strategy
- Building control – subject to full cost recovery of building control chargeable element.
- Contract charges with other organisations which are subject to separate negotiations
- Commercial activities - where fees and charges need to respond to market conditions or their ability to compete effectively for tenders. These will be discussed with the relevant portfolio holder at the appropriate time but will be on the basis of covering all costs at a minimum.
- Statutory charges - over which the council has no control and will be introduced as per the respective guidance and will not be subject to this policy

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Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY OS Outside the scope of VAT
S Standard Rated 20%
E Exempt

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
GOVERNANCE & LAW						
Freedom of Information Act 2000						
FOI requests exceeding 18 hours of Officer work		OS	450.00	450.00	450.00	450.00
Continued work on FOI requests after 18 hours of Officer work exceeded (per hour)		OS	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
FOI requests deemed to be vexatious (per hour)		OS	n/a	n/a	25.00	25.00
Environmental Information Regulations						
EIR requests deemed to be manifestly unreasonable (per hour) (disbursements eg. photocopying and postage will be charged separately)		OS	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Data Protection Act 2018						
Requests deemed to be manifestly unfounded or excessive (per hour)		OS	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Requests for further copies of previously disclosed information (per hour)		OS	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Legal Fees						
Development/planning agreements	First 10 hours	OS	715 to 4,080	715 to 4,080	720 to 4,110	720 to 4,110
Hourly rate thereafter		OS	110.00	110.00	111.00	111.00
Commercial property / lease	Hourly rate if applicable	OS	460 to 870	460 to 870	464 to 877	464 to 877
Transfer of miscellaneous land		OS	560 to 765	560 to 765	564 to 771	564 to 771
Lease renewals		OS	255 to 510	255 to 510	257 to 514	257 to 514
License to assign		OS	410 to 870	410 to 870	413 to 877	413 to 877
Licences for alterations		OS	n/a	n/a	413 to 877	413 to 877
Licenses for land		OS	255 to 870	255 to 870	257 to 877	257 to 877
Easements		OS	360 to 820	360 to 820	363 to 827	363 to 827
Land enquiries - abortive transaction fee		OS	155.00	155.00	156.00	156.00
Deed of surrender		OS	410 to 870	410 to 870	413 to 877	413 to 877
Deed of novation		OS	410 to 870	410 to 870	413 to 877	413 to 877
Leaseholder matters/post RTB Matter		OS	155 to 310	155 to 310	see below (separate charging section)	
Discharge of mortgages		OS	125.00	125.00	126.00	126.00
Rent reviews		OS	155.00	155.00	156.00	156.00
Supplying copies of deed/misc land documents per A4 photocopying charge		OS	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Hourly rate for providing services to external organisations or hourly rate to be applied in complex property/development transactions		S	110.00	132.00	111.00	133.20
<i>Leasehold administration fees (post Right To Buy matters)</i>						
Standard management information for pre-assignments		OS	n/a	n/a	200.00	200.00
Additional pre-assignment enquiries (questions outside of the standard pack)		OS	n/a	n/a	50.00	50.00
Notice of transfer / charge		OS	n/a	n/a	150.00	150.00
Notice of re-mortgage		OS	n/a	n/a	60.00	60.00
Deed of covenant		OS	n/a	n/a	100.00	100.00
Alteration/ improvements request		OS	n/a	n/a	150.00	150.00
Retrospective alteration/improvement consent		OS	n/a	n/a	250.00	250.00
Deed of Variation or Rectification		OS	n/a	n/a	150.00	150.00

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY

OS
S
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Standard Rated
Exempt

20%

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
COMMUNICATIONS						
<i>Below are the advertised rates, but discretionary discounts could be considered.</i>						
Advertising space in Your District Today	1/4 Page	S	295.00	354.00	297.00	356.40
Advertising space in Your District Today	1/2 Page	S	495.00	594.00	500.00	600.00
Advertising space in Your District Today	Full Page	S	850.00	1,020.00	857.00	1,028.40
Advertising space in Your District Today	Back Page	S	995.00	1,194.00	1,003.00	1,203.60
Advertising space in Your District Today	Inside Front/Back cover	S	900.00	1,080.00	907.00	1,088.40
Waste & Recycling						
Bulky household collection (1 item)		OS	24.99	24.99	30.00	30.00
Bulky waste additional items (collected on the same visit)		OS	6.00	6.00	8.00	8.00
Abortive visits (including scheduled collections not cancelled 1 working day in advance)		OS	24.99	24.99	25.20	25.20
Cancelled visits - (including scheduled collections not cancelled 1 working day in advance)		OS	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Garden waste sacks individual		OS	1.30	1.30	n/a	n/a
Garden waste sacks (roll of 10 sacks)		OS	11.70	11.70	n/a	n/a
Purple sacks (restrictions apply) - individual		OS	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
Purple sacks (restrictions apply) - roll of 13 sacks		OS	30.50	30.50	30.75	30.75
Supply & delivery of 140 litre wheeled bin		OS	36.70	36.70	36.70	36.70
Supply & delivery of 180 litre wheeled bin		OS	50.99	50.99	51.40	51.40
Supply & delivery of 240 litre wheeled bin		OS	48.90	48.90	49.30	49.30
Supply & delivery of 360 litre wheeled bin		OS	77.50	77.50	78.10	78.10
Supply & delivery of 660 litre wheeled bin		OS	239.70	239.70	252.00	252.00
Supply & delivery of 660 litre wheeled bin (recyclables)		OS	249.90	249.90	See above	See above
Supply & delivery of 1100 litre wheeled bin		OS	257.00	257.00	259.00	259.00
Supply & delivery of 1100 litre wheeled bin (recyclables)		OS	265.00	265.00	See above	See above
Bin authorisation fee (2 wheeled bin)		OS	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Bin authorisation fee (4wheeled bin)		OS	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Food waste collections, kerbside container		OS	10.15	10.15	15.00	15.00
Food waste collections, kitchen caddy		OS	6.70	6.70	10.00	10.00
New property container offer (Up to 2WB, 2 Food + Box) Price capped at		OS	86.65	86.65	100.00	100.00
Black box recycling container		OS	10.15	10.15	15.00	15.00
Purple box recycling container		OS	10.15	10.15	15.00	15.00
Green waste collection - contribute towards purchase		OS	30.50	30.50	30.70	30.70
Green waste collection - annual subs.		OS	48.00	48.00	48.40	48.40
Green waste collection - direct debit		OS	48.00	48.00	48.40	48.40
Street Naming and Numbering						
Changing a property address		OS	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00
Registering a new property		OS	135.00	135.00	136.00	136.00
New Street/Building (2-10 units)		OS	280.00	280.00	282.00	282.00
New Street/Building (11-19 units)		OS	390.00	390.00	390.00	390.00
New Street/Building (>20 units)		OS	390.00	390.00	393.00	393.00
Additional unit		OS	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Changing a street name		OS	735.00	735.00	735.00	735.00
Provision of historical information		OS	245.00	245.00	247.00	247.00

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY

OS
S
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Outside the scope of VAT
Standard Rated 20%
Exempt

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
HOUSING						
Housing Revenue Account						
Garages let to SDC tenants	Per week	OS	11.90	11.90	12.00	12.00
Garages let privately	Per week	S	11.93	14.30	12.00	14.40
Parking spaces let to SDC tenants	Per week	E	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Parking spaces let privately	Per week	S	3.50	4.20	3.50	4.20
Stores	Per week	E	17.90	17.90	18.00	18.00
Hire of scooter store	Per week	E	2.45	2.45	2.45	2.45
Lounge hire - sheltered accommodation	Per hour	E	14.90	14.90	15.00	15.00
Guest rooms - sheltered accommodation	Per night	E	17.85	17.85	18.00	18.00
Lifeline for Council tenants (VAT is zero rated for clients with disabilities)	Per week	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
Long lease renewals						
Administrative fee		S	214.20	257.00	216.00	259.20
Valuation fee		S	384.50	461.40	388.00	465.60
Plan fee		S	102.00	122.40	103.00	123.60
Supporting People						
- Full Sheltered	Per week	E	11.40	11.40	11.50	11.50
- Semi Sheltered	Per week	E	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80
Shed	Per week	E	3.98	3.98	4.01	4.01
RTB - management fee	Annual	E	220.00	220.00	221.80	221.80
RTB - reference for purchase		E	45.90	45.90	46.30	46.30
RTB - service charges enquiry		E	80.60	80.60	81.20	81.20
Sale of land - administration fee		S	268.25	321.90	272.42	326.90
Housing						
Non-Statutory Inspection fee	Per inspection	S	120.00	144.00	120.81	145.00
Leasehold Services						
Arrears administration fee	Stage 3 arrears cases	E	0.00	0.00	75.00	75.00
Major works service charge management fee	Per major works	E	0%	0%	10%	10%

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

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Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
OPERATIONS						
Parking Services						
Provision of white 'access' road markings (outside premises or private drive): Analysis and survey work	per application	E	121.00	121.00	122.00	122.00
Installation and maintenance (10 years)	per application	E	158.00	158.00	159.00	159.00
Hire of Land						
Refundable deposit - non-commercial events(minimum of £100) - sliding scale		OS	up to £500.00	up to £500.00	up to £500.00	up to £500.00
Small non-commercial events (excluding Boot Fairs) - hire charge		OS	143.00	143.00	143.00	143.00
Charitable/Community events - hire charge		OS	41.00	41.00	41.00	41.00
Boot Fairs		OS	280.00	280.00	280.00	280.00
Commercial events hire charge (per day)		OS	1,210.00	1,210.00	1,210.00	1,210.00
Refundable deposit - commercial events (minimum of £500) - sliding scale		OS	up to £1,000.00	up to £1,000.00	up to £1,000.00	up to £1,000.00
Arranging TPC road closure (admin fee)		OS	25.00	25.00	30.00	30.00
Cleaning & restocking charge for use of WCs used by event organiser (some exemptions available on request)		S	110.83	133.00	115.00	138.00
Public Toilets						
Dymchurch Sea Wall toilets		OS	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Radar keys		S	2.24	2.70	2.25	2.70
Outdoor Sports and Recreation						
Outdoor Sports and Recreation						
These activities are subjected to standard VAT unless there is a block booking of 10 or more sessions by schools, clubs or associations, then it is treated as an exempt activity.						
Cricket – Shorncliffe		S	62.63	75.20	63.17	75.80
Cricket – Shorncliffe (Concession)		S	26.11	31.30	26.33	31.60
Football – Sports Ground (Cheriton)		S	67.83	81.40	68.33	82.00
Football – Sports Ground (Cheriton) (concession)		S	46.92	56.30	47.33	56.80
Mini Soccer - Sports Ground (Cheriton)		S	15.10	18.10	15.25	18.30
Football - 9v9 Sports Ground (Cheriton Rd and North Rd)		S	30.30	36.40	30.58	36.70
Football – Stadium (Cheriton)		S	57.43	68.90	57.92	69.50
Football – Stadium (Cheriton) (concession)		S	36.52	43.80	36.83	44.20
Royal Military Canal:						
Allotments (Green Lane) Full Plot		OS	41.80	41.80	43.00	43.00
Allotments (Green Lane) Half Plot		OS	20.90	20.90	22.00	22.00
Shingle Extraction						
Annual Fee up to 120,000 cubic metres		OS	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fee per cubic metre over 120,000 cubic metres		OS	1.04	1.04	1.06	1.06
Beach Huts						
Hythe	per annum		800.00	800.00	Various	Various
Sale of Documents						
Sale of miscellaneous documents - Building Control		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

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E Exempt

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
Private Lifeline Charges						
<i>Equipment subject to VAT but client has option to complete VAT exemption form.</i>						
Lifeline unit (per week)	per week	S	3.50	4.20	3.58	4.30
Bogus caller alarm		S	31.00	37.20	n/a	n/a
CO2 fall & flood detector	Quarterly charge	S	34.50	41.40	34.83	41.80
GPS Footprint	per week	S	5.30	6.40	5.33	6.40
Universal sensor	Quarterly charge	S	17.20	20.60	17.33	20.80
Epilepsy sensor	per week	S	6.70	8.00	6.75	8.10
Pull cord		S	2.00	2.40	n/a	n/a
Property exit sensor		S	2.20	2.60	2.20	2.60
Bed occupancy sensor	Quarterly	S	81.25	97.50	81.25	97.50
Bed sensory pad	per week	S	1.50	1.80	1.50	1.80
PR / fault visits		S	39.00	46.80	40.00	48.00
Safe socket		S	31.00	37.20	31.00	37.20
Smoke detectors	per week	S	2.30	2.80	2.33	2.80
Telephone extension lead		S	6.00	7.20	6.00	7.20
Electrical extension lead		S	9.00	10.80	9.00	10.80
Pendant		S	72.50	87.00	72.50	87.00
Pendant rental	per week	S	1.50	1.80	n/a	n/a
Replacement pendant (used)		S	40.00	48.00	40.00	48.00
Lost units (replacements)		S	138.00	165.60	139.00	166.80
GSM (mobile phone lifeline)	per week	S	6.70	8.00	n/a	n/a
Care assist	per week	S	3.30	4.00	3.33	4.00
Care assist for existing clients with faulty line		S	44.00	52.80	44.42	53.30
Replacement power supply	per unit	S	36.00	43.20	n/a	n/a
Big button phone	per unit	S	17.50	21.00	17.50	21.00
Minuet pendants	per unit	S	85.00	102.00	85.00	102.00
ADSL filters	Unit price +10%	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
Installation charge		S	40.00	48.00	40.00	48.00
Out of area installation charge		S	69.50	83.40	69.50	83.40
RSL monitoring income shown as an hourly rate		S	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.13
Wristband set up charge		S	35.00	42.00	35.00	42.00
Wristbands (per annum)		S	20.00	24.00	20.00	24.00
Telehealth monitoring		S	1.85	2.20	n/a	n/a
Warm Homes		S	1.55	1.55	2.00	2.00
Lone Worker scheme set-up	per person	S	5.50	6.60	5.50	6.60
Lone Worker scheme part-time	per week	S	0.90	1.10	0.92	1.10
Lone Worker scheme full-time	per week	S	1.20	1.40	1.17	1.40
Data holding and contract holding	per week	S	0.60	0.70	n/a	n/a
Donated Units (per week)	As per supporting people grant	S	2.20	2.60	2.17	2.60
Daily Check Calls	per quarter	S	14.60	17.50	14.72	17.70
Daily Check Calls	per annum	S	58.40	70.10	58.92	70.70

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

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PLANNING						
Planning Pre-Application Charging Schedule						
Householder application - written advice only		S	44.63	53.60	45.00	54.00
Householder application - up to 1 hour meeting with written advice		S	133.89	160.70	135.00	162.00
Equestrian development (domestic) - written advice only		S	44.63	53.60	45.00	54.00
Equestrian development (domestic) - up to 1 hour meeting with written advice		S	133.89	160.70	135.00	162.00
Replacement dwellings						
Single dwelling/flat/holiday let/self contained annexe, incl change of use - written		S	133.89	160.70	135.00	162.00
Single dwelling/flat/holiday let/self contained annexe, incl change of use - up to 1 hour meeting with written advice		S	223.13	267.80	224.91	269.90
2 - 9 dwellings/flats/holiday lets incl HMOs, self contained units with care - written advice only		S	221.09	265.30	222.83	267.40
2 - 9 dwellings/flats/holiday lets incl HMOs, self contained units with care - up to 1 hour meeting with written advice		S	374.85	449.80	377.83	453.40
10 - 20 dwellings/flats/holiday lets incl HMOs, self contained units with care - up to 2 hour meeting with written advice		S	580.13	696.20	584.75	701.70
21 - 49 dwellings/flats/holiday lets incl HMOs, self contained units with care - up to 2 hour meeting with written advice		S	758.63	910.40	764.67	917.60
50 - 199 dwellings/flats/holiday lets incl HMOs, self contained units with care - up to 2 hour meeting with written advice. (Planning Performance Agreement if appropriate for cost recovery of officer time and consultant costs)		S	892.50	1,071.00	899.67	1,079.60
Strategic development 200 units and over - Planning Performance Agreement for cost recovery of officer time and consultant costs		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
External alterations requiring planning permission - all uses		S	44.63	53.60	45.00	54.00
Listed Buildings where no associated planning permission required - written advice only		S	66.91	80.30	67.42	80.90
Listed Buildings where no associated planning permission required - 30 minute meeting with written advice		S	133.89	160.70	135.00	162.00
Listed building work also requiring planning permission - relevant pre application planning fee.		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Advertisements (initial one hour advice meeting and letter)						
Businesses - further work following initial advice and all other business/commercial with a floor space 500m ² and below		S	44.63	53.60	45.00	54.00
Businesses - further work following initial advice and all other business/commercial with a floor space above 500m ² - £525 plus £1,000 per 500m ² thereafter		S	446.25	535.50	449.83	539.80
All Other operations and developments including changes of use		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Sale of Documents						
Sale of miscellaneous documents - Planning Policy		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Sale of miscellaneous documents - Development Management		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Charging for monitoring legal agreements		S	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan	Hard Copy	S	74.97	90.00	76.50	91.80
Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan	Saved Policies	S	96.29	115.50	98.25	117.90
Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan - concessionary rate for local residents, Town and Parish Councils	Hard Copy	S	53.55	64.30	54.58	65.50
	with Saved Policies	S	74.97	90.00	76.50	91.80
Self-Build and Custom Build Housing Projects Register						
First time applicants		S	25.50	30.60	26.00	31.20
Annual renewal		S	12.75	15.30	13.00	15.60

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

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Exempt

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
PLACE						
Hythe Swimming Pool						
<i>These activities are subjected to standard VAT unless there is a block booking of 10 or more sessions by schools, clubs or associations, then it is</i>						
Swimming – Adult		S	3.60	4.30	3.70	4.40
Swimming – Junior		S	2.25	2.70	2.30	2.80
Swimming – Senior		S	2.25	2.70	2.30	2.80
Swimming – Off Peak		S	2.75	3.30	2.75	3.30
Swimming – Disabled		S	1.75	2.10	1.80	2.20
Swimming – Carer		S	1.75	2.10	1.80	2.20
Organised Groups – Adults		S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
Organised Groups – Junior		S	1.95	2.30	1.95	2.30
Family ticket (2 adults & 2 juniors or 1 adult & 3 juniors)		S	9.30	11.20	9.50	11.40
Aqua Aerobics/Fit		S	4.50	5.40	4.60	5.50
Aqua Zumba		S	4.50	5.40	4.50	5.40
Spectator Admission		S	0.80	1.00	0.80	1.00
Gym		S	4.60	5.50	4.70	5.60
Adult lessons – course of 10 (45 minute lessons)		E	81.50	81.50	81.50	81.50
Adult (front crawl) training - per session		E	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40
Junior lessons – course of 10 (30 minute lessons)		E	56.00	56.00	56.00	56.00
Pool hire per hour (includes 1 lifeguard and upto 30 people)		S	95.00	114.00	95.80	115.00
Teaching Pool hire per hour		S	34.42	41.30	34.75	41.70
Club hire (Monday-Saturday)		E	69.40	69.40	70.00	70.00
Club hire (Sunday)		E	63.20	63.20	63.80	63.80
Lifeguard for clubs		E	11.95	11.95	12.10	12.10
Adult blue voucher book (12 tickets)		S	35.80	43.00	36.70	44.00
Senior voucher book (12 tickets)		S	22.50	27.00	23.30	28.00
Junior voucher book (12 tickets)		S	22.50	27.00	23.30	28.00
Disabled Voucher book (12 tickets)		S	17.50	21.00	18.30	22.00
Aqua Aerobics yellow voucher books (12 tickets)		S	45.00	54.00	45.80	55.00
School swimming teacher - per half hour		S	7.25	8.70	7.35	8.80
Schools non exclusive – per child per half hour		S	1.85	2.20	1.90	2.30
School exclusive pool hire – per half hour (maximum 20 children)		S	29.00	35.00	30.00	36.00
School exclusive pool hire – additional children		S	1.25	1.50	1.35	1.60
Private lessons per half hour – 1 child		E	13.50	13.50	13.70	13.70
Direct debit - annual advance payment		S	175.00	210.00	175.00	210.00
Direct debit - monthly payment on a minimum 12 month contract		S	15.30	18.40	15.30	18.40
Direct debit monthly payment - open contract (no minimum term can be cancelled at any time) subject to a joining fee see next line		S	19.70	23.60	19.70	23.60
Joining fee for open contract direct debit		S	13.70	16.40	13.70	16.40

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY

OS
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Outside the scope of VAT
Standard Rated
Exempt

20%

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2021/22	Charges for 2021/22
			Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £	Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £
Taxi Licensing						
Drivers Single Licence Deleted in 21-22.		OS	135.00	135.00	-	-
Private Hire Driver		OS	-	-	312.00	312.00
Drivers Dual Licence Deleted 21-22.		OS	185.00	185.00	-	-
Dual Driver		OS	-	-	312.00	312.00
Knowledge Test		OS	62.00	62.00	62.50	62.50
Vehicle Licence – Annual		OS	273.00	273.00	275.00	275.00
Vehicle Licence – Transfer		OS	96.00	96.00	97.00	97.00
Vehicle Licence - Change of Ownership (no plates)		OS	45.00	45.00	45.40	45.40
Vehicle Plate replacement		OS	21.00	21.00	21.20	21.20
Driver Badge replacement		OS	21.00	21.00	21.20	21.20
Private Hire Operator Licence (Per vehicle) - deleted 21-22	5 years renewal	OS	63.00	63.00	-	-
Private Hire Operator Licence (Small) 1 - 3 vehicles per operator	5 years renewal	OS	-	-	120.00	120.00
Private Hire Operator Licence (Large) 21 + vehicles	5 years renewal	OS	-	-	943.00	943.00
Refund Processing Fee (surrendered Licence)			25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Copy of Paper Licence			10.50	10.50	10.50	10.50
Amend Paper Licence (change of address details)			10.50	10.50	10.50	10.50
Miscellaneous Licensing						
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1964 & 1970	Every Two years	OS	428.50	428.50	428.50	428.50
Boarding in Kennels for Dogs Boarding For Cats (Part A)			184.50	184.50	184.50	184.50
Selling Animals As Pets (Part A)			184.50	184.50	184.50	184.50
Homeboarding for Dogs (6 or more animals), Dog Day Care, Homeboarding Agent (Part A)			166.50	166.50	166.50	166.50
Homeboarding for Dogs (5 or less animals) (Part A)			148.50	148.50	148.50	148.50
Breeding of Dogs (Part A)			166.50	166.50	166.50	166.50
Keeping/Training Animals for Exhibition (5 or less animals) (Part A)			148.50	148.50	148.50	148.50
Keeping/Training Animals for Exhibition (6 or more animals) (Part A)			184.50	184.50	184.50	184.50
1 year Licence (Part B)			113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00
2 year Licence (Part B)			176.00	176.00	176.00	176.00
3 year Licence (Part B)			229.00	229.00	229.00	229.00
Hiring of Horses (Part A)			166.50	166.50	166.50	166.50
Other Charges						
Request for Variations						
- administrative amendment only			20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
- inspector visit (if required)			80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00
Request for re-inspection (for all licences) plus vet fees if applicable			80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00
Zoo Licence Act 1982						
Application Fee			604.20	604.20	604.20	604.20
LA Inspector per hour			26.30	26.30	26.30	26.30
Veterinary fees (all animal licences) - recharged at cost.			0.00	N/A	0.00	N/A
Street Trading Consent/Licence (Annual)		OS	295.00	295.00	297.00	297.00
Street Trading Consent (3 month)		OS	120.00	120.00	121.00	121.00
Non mobiles > 25 feet in length		OS	803.00	803.00	809.00	809.00
Stall per foot- Sandgate Road	March to December	OS	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Stall per foot- Sandgate Road	January and February	OS	1.80	1.80	1.00	1.00
Stall per foot- Guildhall Street	March to December	OS	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Stall per foot- Guildhall Street	January and February	OS	1.35	1.35	1.00	1.00
Stall per foot per day - Sandgate Road and Guildhall Street - regular stall holders		OS	-	-	1.00	1.00
Stall per foot per day - Sandgate Road and Guildhall Street - casual stall holders		OS	-	-	2.00	2.00
Street Trading Licence (Lanterns) - per stall per day	per foot	OS	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY

OS
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Outside the scope of VAT
Standard Rated
Exempt

20%

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2021/22	Charges for 2021/22
			Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £	Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £
New Markets:						
Number of stalls 5 -20	Max of 14 days	OS	-	-	140.00	140.00
	15 - 52 days	OS	-	-	520.00	520.00
	53 + days	OS	-	-	1,040.00	1,040.00
Number of stalls 21 +	Max of 14 days	OS	-	-	210.00	210.00
	15 - 52 days	OS	-	-	780.00	780.00
	53 + days	OS	-	-	1,560.00	1,560.00
Canoe - annual		OS	29.50	29.50	29.50	29.50
Canoe - seasonal		OS	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50
Boat - annual		OS	48.00	48.00	48.00	48.00
Boat - seasonal		OS	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Scrap Metal Licensing						
Grant of site licence		OS	513.00	513.00	517.00	517.00
Renewal of site licence		OS	481.00	481.00	485.00	485.00
Collectors licence		OS	300.00	300.00	302.00	302.00
Variation of licence		OS	65.80	65.80	66.30	66.30
Change of details		OS	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00
Personal & Premises Licences						
Personal - Acupuncture, ear piercing, electrolysis & semi-permanent ink		OS	193.00	193.00	193.00	193.00
Personal - Tattooing Registration		OS	308.00	308.00	308.00	308.00
Personal - Sex Shop Consent		OS	2,067.00	2,067.00	2,067.00	2,067.00
Personal - Change to Registration		OS	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00
Personal - change of detail to licence that does not require an officer visit		OS	-	-	10.50	10.50
Premise Licence Pre-Application Schedule						
Written advice (basic) following letter/submission received		S	21.00	25.20	21.00	25.20
Premises Licence Pre-application Advice Meeting 90 mins		S	79.50	95.40	79.50	95.40
Dog Control						
Kennelling per night		OS	19.90	19.90	20.00	20.00
Out of hours dog collection		OS	52.20	52.20	52.60	52.60
Veterinary fees at cost		OS	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Microchip fee		OS	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Flea treatment (dependant on size of the dog)		OS	8.00 to 12.00	8.00 to 12.00	8.00 to 12.00	8.00 to 12.00
Worming (dependant on size of the dog)		OS	8.00 to 13.00	8.00 to 13.00	8.00 to 13.00	8.00 to 13.00
Vaccination charge		OS	25.00	25.00	25.20	25.20
Pollution Environmental Health						
Contaminated land search fee		OS	153.00	153.00	154.00	154.00
Hourly fee for works in default (returning seized goods and removal of fly posting)		OS	15.30	15.30	15.40	15.40
Food and Safety						
Certificate for voluntary surrender of unfit food (Including 1 hour officer time)		OS	94.00	94.00	94.00	94.00
Plus officer time per additional hour		OS	43.00	43.00	43.00	43.00
Food export certificate		OS	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00
Plus additional charge per consignment where inspection is required			90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00
Food Hygiene course - fee per person		E	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00
Food Hygiene Scheme - re-rating	per application	E	130.00	130.00	130.00	130.00

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

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Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2020/21	Charges for 2021/22	Charges for 2021/22
			Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £	Net of VAT if applicable £	with VAT if applicable £
Private Water Supply Sampling						
Risk assessments(If carried out by contractor)	per hour	OS	52.50	52.50	52.90	52.90
Risk assessments(If carried out by SDC staff)	per hour	OS	26.30	26.30	26.50	26.50
Mileage	per mile	OS	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Sampling	per visit	OS	56.30	56.30	56.80	56.80
Analysis and courier (first sample)	first sample	OS	16.30	16.30	16.40	16.40
Additional sample	each	OS	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Caravan Site Licensing						
New application	Band A (single pitch)	E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
New application	Band B (2 - 10 pitches)	E	538.00	538.00	538.00	538.00
New application	Band C (11 - 25 pitches)	E	626.00	626.00	626.00	626.00
New application	Band D (26 - 50 pitches)	E	772.00	772.00	772.00	772.00
New application	Band E (51 - 100 pitches)	E	1,041.00	1,041.00	1,041.00	1,041.00
New application	Band F (101 - 200 pitches)	E	1,596.00	1,596.00	1,596.00	1,596.00
New application	Band G (201 - 400 pitches)	E	2,690.00	2,690.00	2,690.00	2,690.00
New application	Band H (401 - 800 pitches)	E	4,878.00	4,878.00	4,878.00	4,878.00
Annual fee	Band A	E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Annual fee	Band B	E	319.00	319.00	319.00	319.00
Annual fee	Band C	E	407.00	407.00	407.00	407.00
Annual fee	Band D	E	552.90	552.90	552.90	552.90
Annual fee	Band E	E	823.20	823.20	823.20	823.20
Annual fee	Band F	E	1,377.00	1,377.00	1,377.00	1,377.00
Annual fee	Band G	E	2,471.50	2,471.50	2,471.50	2,471.50
Annual fee	Band H	E	4,660.40	4,660.40	4,660.40	4,660.40
Transfer	Band A	E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Transfer	Band B to Band H	E	59.00	59.00	59.00	59.00
Amendment	Band A (single pitch)	E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Amendment	Band B to Band H	E	82.60	82.60	82.60	82.60
Site rules	Band A (single pitch)	E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Site rules	Band B to Band H	E	39.50	39.50	39.50	39.50
Cemeteries						
Purchase fees						
Children not exceeding 12		OS	247.00	247.00	250.00	250.00
Person over 12 –purchase fee		OS	611.00	611.00	614.00	614.00
Burial and Plot Fees (now included within above)		OS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Green Burials (Hawkinge Only)		OS	1,008.00	1,008.00	1,010.00	1,010.00
Plot purchase, first interment & right to erect						
Garden of remembrance (Lydd, Double Plot)		OS	610.00	610.00	610.00	610.00
Garden of remembrance (New Romney, Double Plot)		OS	610.00	610.00	610.00	610.00
Garden of remembrance (New Romney, Single Plot)		OS	382.00	382.00	382.00	382.00
Digging Fees						
Children stillborn - No charge		E				
Person over 12 – single depth digging		OS	587.00	587.00	592.00	592.00
Person over 12 – double depth		OS	872.00	872.00	879.00	879.00
Person over 12 – triple depth		OS	1,168.00	1,168.00	1,177.00	1,177.00

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY OS Outside the scope of VAT
S Standard Rated 20%
E Exempt

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
Other Fees						
Exhumation Fee (at cost)		E	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Internment of ashes		OS	147.00	147.00	150.00	150.00
Late internment		OS	140.00	140.00	143.00	143.00
Spreading of ashes		OS	50.00	50.00	55.00	55.00
Scattering of ashes under turf		OS	147.00	147.00	150.00	150.00
Re-open fee		OS	89.00	89.00	90.00	90.00
Add. inscription		OS	75.00	75.00	77.00	77.00
Use of chapel		OS	145.00	145.00	147.00	147.00
Memorials – 6 X 3		OS	251.00	251.00	253.00	253.00
Vases		OS	96.00	96.00	98.00	98.00
Kerbs		OS	446.00	446.00	448.00	448.00
Laying down unsafe memorial		OS	127.00	127.00	127.00	127.00
Standard cost of a donated memorial bench, new plaque and 10 years mtce		OS	1,591.00	1,591.00	1,604.00	1,604.00
Standard cost of a refurbished donated memorial bench, new plaque and 10 years mtce		OS	936.00	936.00	943.00	943.00
Standard cost of a refurbished donated memorial bench, existing plaque and 10 years mtce		OS	822.00	822.00	829.00	829.00
Deed of grant		E	41.00	41.00	42.00	42.00
Transfer of Deed of Grant		E	105.00	105.00	106.00	106.00
Maintenance		E	99.00	99.00	100.00	100.00
Reserved plot surcharge on use		OS	82.00	82.00	83.00	83.00
Reservation fee		OS	82.00	82.00	83.00	83.00
Family History Request - per request up to 3 names		E	31.00	31.00	32.00	32.00
Family History Request - per request more than 3 names		E	61.00	61.00	64.00	64.00
Replacement headstones - administration fee		E	51.00	51.00	52.00	52.00
Burial where ashes are added - administration fee		E	51.00	51.00	52.00	52.00
Mixing of two ashes - administration fee		E	51.00	51.00	52.00	52.00
Public Health Funerals			300.00	300.00	303.00	303.00
Hiring of council meeting rooms for all non Folkestone & Hythe District Council meetings/functions						
<i>KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) and relevant voluntary/Charity organisations 100% discount</i>						
Council Chamber	Basic Hourly rate	E	35.80	35.80	36.10	36.10
Council Chamber	Hourly rate after 9pm week day evenings & Saturday (including Civic Warden fee)	E	60.60	60.60	61.10	61.10
Council Chamber	Hourly rate for Sundays & Bank Holidays (including Civic Warden fee)	E	67.60	67.60	68.10	68.10
Boulogne and Middleburg Room	Basic Hourly rate	E	26.60	26.60	26.80	26.80
Boulogne and Middleburg Room	Hourly rate after 9pm week day evenings & Saturday (including Civic Warden fee)	E	51.90	51.90	52.30	52.30
Boulogne and Middleburg Room	Hourly rate for Sundays & Bank Holidays (including Civic Warden fee)	E	58.50	58.50	59.00	59.00
Other meeting rooms	Basic Hourly rate	E	15.30	15.30	15.40	15.40
Other meeting rooms	Hourly rate after 9pm week day evenings & Saturday (including Civic Warden fee)	E	40.60	40.60	40.90	40.90
Other meeting rooms	Hourly rate for Sundays & Bank Holidays (including Civic Warden fee)	E	47.20	47.20	47.60	47.60

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY

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Standard Rated
Exempt

20%

APPENDIX 2

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
Use of drinks machine for non Folkestone & Hythe District Council meetings/functions						
Per drink - Up to 30 persons		S	0.94	1.10	0.97	1.20
30 Persons or more		S	28.15	33.80	29.00	34.80
Lost/Unreturned ID cards						
Charge to staff		E	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
Charge to contractors		E	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
FINANCE, STRATEGY & CORPORATE SERVICES						
General sale of documents / photocopying						
Photocopying	per A4 sheet (black & white)	S	0.12	0.15	0.12	0.15
Photocopying	per A4 sheet (colour)	S	0.16	0.20	0.16	0.20
Photocopying	per A3 sheet (black & white)	S	0.28	0.35	0.28	0.35
Photocopying	per A3 sheet (colour)	S	0.32	0.40	0.32	0.40
Photocopying	per A1 sheet (black & white)	S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
Photocopying	per A1 sheet (colour)	S	3.50	4.00	3.50	4.00
Photocopying	per A2 sheet (black & white)	S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
Photocopying	per A2 sheet (colour)	S	3.50	4.00	3.50	4.00
Providing electronic copies (PDF or equivalent)	per sheet	S	0.83	1.00	0.83	1.00
Court Costs						
Summons & Liability Order - council tax		E	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Summons & Liability Order - business rates		E	174.00	174.00	174.00	174.00
Failure to submit Completion of Means Enquiry Form		E	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00

Car Parking Fees and Charges 2021/22

VAT KEY	OS	Outside the scope of VAT	
	S	Standard Rated	20%
	E	Exempt	

Appendix 3

Service	Further Information	VAT Category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
<i>Charges apply 8am - 6pm unless otherwise indicated</i>						
FOLKESTONE						
SHORT STAY Upper Payers Park, Shellons St., Foresters Way, Playdell Gardens						
Hourly charge with linear per minute charging.	30 mins	S	0.50	0.60	0.50	0.60
Minimum stay 30mins and maximum stay 3 hours	1 hour	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
	3 hour	S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
LONG STAY Tram Road and Harbourside						
Hourly charge with linear per minute charging	1 hour	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
	All day	S	6.67	8.00	6.67	8.00
LONG STAY Sandgate Road Car Park (formerly Leas Cliff Hall)						
	Up to 2 hours	S	1.25	1.50	1.25	1.50
	Up to 4 hours	S	2.08	2.50	2.08	2.50
	Up to 5 hours	S	2.92	3.50	2.92	3.50
	All day	S	3.75	4.50	3.75	4.50
OTHER FOLKESTONE & HYTHE AREAS						
SHORT TERM						
Hythe:						
Mount Street:	Hourly					
charge with linear per minute charging	Up to 30 mins	S	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minimum stay 1 hour and maximum stay 3 hours	Up to 1 hour	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
	Up to 2 hours	S	Linear per minute charging	0.00	Linear per minute charging	0.00
	Up to 3 hours	S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
New Romney:						
Church Road:	Up to 1 hour	S	0.83	1.00	0.83	1.00
Hourly charge with linear per minute charging.	Up to 2 hours	S	Linear per minute charging		Linear per minute charging	
Minimum stay 1 hour and maximum stay 3 hours	Up to 3 hours	S	2.50	3.00	2.50	3.00
LONG TERM						
Sandgate: Lower Sandgate Road West (Seasonal - 1st April-30th September) 8am-8pm						
	Up to 1 hour	S	2.50	3.00	2.50	3.00
	Up to 4 hours	S	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00
	Up to 12 hours	S	16.67	20.00	16.67	20.00
Sandgate: Lower Sandgate Road West (Seasonal - 1st October-31st March) 8am-6pm						
	Up to 1 hour*	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
Hythe: Military Road, The Paddocks						
	Up to 2 hours **	S	Linear per minute charging		Linear per minute charging	
Dymchurch: Martello, High Knocke, Central						
	Up to 3 hours	S				
Greatstone: Jolly Fisherman						
	Up to 4 hours	S				
Littlestone: Coast Drive						
	Up to 5 hours	S				
New Romney: West Street * £1 for first hr; ** 2hrs £2.40						
	Up to 6 hours	S				
	Up to 12 hours	S	6.67	8.00	6.67	8.00

Hythe: Battery Point, Twiss Fort, Seapoint Hourly charge with linear per minute charging, minimum stay 1 hour, all day £6	Up to 1 hour	S	0.83	1.00	0.83	1.00
	Up to 2 hours	S	Linear per minute charging		Linear per minute charging	
	All day	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
Sandgate, Castle Road; Wilberforce Road	Up to 2 hours	S	0.83	1.00	0.83	1.00
	Up to 4 hours	S	2.50	3.00	2.50	3.00
	Up to 5 hours	S	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	All day	S	4.15	5.00	4.15	5.00
Cheriton: Broomfield Road, Elham: Pound Lane; Lyminge: Station Road	ALL DAY - Free	S	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Folkestone: East Cliff Pavilion; The Coastal Park	1 hour	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
	All day		Linear per minute charging		Linear per minute charging	
	All day		6.67	8.00	6.67	8.00
Folkestone: Golden Valley; Sports Grounds,	ALL DAY - Free		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lydd: The Lade, Coast Drive (east of), Lydd on Sea	Per hour	S	1.00	1.20	1.00	1.20
	All day (6hrs+)		6.67	8.00	6.67	8.00
Sandgate: Gough Road	ALL DAY - Free	S	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

COACH PARKING

Littlestone: Coast Drive	Up to 5 hours	S	6.33	7.60	6.33	7.60
	Up to 10 hours	S	11.67	14.00	11.67	14.00
Dymchurch: Central	ALL DAY - Free		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

CAR PARK SEASON TICKETS

All Long Stay Car Parks						
Valid 7 days per week	Annual	S	547.50	657.00	547.50	657.00
	6 month	S	274.17	329.00	274.17	329.00
	3 months	S	137.50	165.00	137.50	165.00
Valid 6 days per week	Annual	S	466.67	560.00	466.67	560.00
	6 month	S	233.33	280.00	233.33	280.00
	3 months	S	116.67	140.00	116.67	140.00
Valid 5 days per week	Annual	S	390.00	468.00	390.00	468.00
	6 month	S	195.00	234.00	195.00	234.00
	3 months	S	97.50	117.00	97.50	117.00
Valid 4 days per week	Annual	S	311.67	374.00	311.67	374.00
	6 month	S	155.83	187.00	155.83	187.00
	3 months	S	78.33	94.00	78.33	94.00
Valid 3 days per week	Annual	S	233.33	280.00	233.33	280.00
	6 month	S	116.67	140.00	116.67	140.00
	3 months	S	58.33	70.00	58.33	70.00
Valid 2 days per week	Annual	S	155.83	187.00	155.83	187.00
	6 month	S	78.33	94.00	78.33	94.00
	3 months	S	39.17	47.00	39.17	47.00
Valid 1 days per week	Annual	S	78.33	94.00	78.33	94.00
	6 month	S	39.17	47.00	39.17	47.00
	3 months	S	20.00	24.00	20.00	24.00

HOTEL GUEST PERMITS

S	1.67	2.00	1.67	2.00
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RESIDENT PERMITS

Folkestone & Hythe District Car Park Resident Permits	12 months	S	50.00	60.00	50.00	60.00
On Street Parking Waiver	Daily	E	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
On Street Parking Waiver	Weekly	E	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00
Parking permissions for Window Cleaners, pharmacists,	Annual	E	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00

FOLKESTONE CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES

1st Resident Permit		E	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
2nd Resident Permit		E	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Resident Visitor Permit (5 sessions)		E	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20
Business Permit		E	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00
Replacement Permit		E	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20
Special Permit - Free Health & Care Workers and Emergency services		E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Trade Permits (All Zones) (Yearly)		E	416.00	416.00	416.00	416.00
Trade Permits (All Zones) (6 monthly)		E	208.00	208.00	208.00	208.00

ON STREET CAR PARKING**Linear per minute**

Folkestone Town Centre CPZ A1 and A2	Min 30mins Max 3 hours	E	1.20	1.20	1.40	1.40
Folkestone Seafront Zone C2	Min 1 hour Max 5 hours	E	1.20	1.20	1.40	1.40
The Leas Bandstand- Zone H	Min 1 hour Max 5 hours	E	1.20	1.20	1.40	1.40
Princes Parade, Hythe	Minimum 30 minutes	E	0.50	0.50	0.70	0.70
	6 hours + (all day)	E	7.20	7.20	8.40	8.40
Parking Suspensions		E	£100 admin charge plus £12 per day per 6 metres		£100 admin charge plus £12 per day per 6 metres	

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Statutory Charges Subject to Discretionary Fees 2021/22
VAT KEY

 OS
S
E

 Outside the scope of VAT
Standard Rated
Exempt

20%

Appendix 4

Service	Further Information	VAT category	Charges for 2020/21 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2020/21 with VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 Net of VAT if applicable £	Charges for 2021/22 with VAT if applicable £
HOUSING						
Licensing Application for Houses in Multiple Occupation Fees(renewals)	Properties with 2 - 8 units of accommodation	OS	579.00	579.00	584.00	584.00
	Additional fee per unit over 8 units	OS	35.00	35.00	36.00	36.00
Licensing Application for Houses in Multiple Occupation Fees(new applications)	Properties with 2 - 8 units of accommodation	OS	708.00	708.00	714.00	714.00
	Additional fee per unit over 8 units	OS	35.00	35.00	36.00	36.00
PLANNING						
High Hedge Complaints	level of fee discretionary		400.00	400.00	400.00	400.00
PLACE						
Local Land Charges						
Official search of the Local Land Charges Register (LLC1)		OS	20.00	25.00	25.00	30.00
Basic Research Fee (CON29)		S	95.00	114.00	99.17	119.00
Optional questions (CON29 Part II optional enquiries of local authority)		S	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00
Search of Building Control database		S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
Search of Planning database		S	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00
Additional parcels (An extra parcel of land in separate occupation or separately rated at the time of the search)		S	13.00	15.60	14.17	17.00
Additional parcels where submitted as part of an LLC1 only		OS	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Submitted via NLIS						
Official search of the Local Land Charges Register (LLC1)		OS	20.00	20.00	25.00	25.00
Basic Research Fee (CON29)		S	85.00	102.00	85.00	102.00
Optional questions (CON29 Part II optional enquiries of local authority)		S	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00
Additional parcels (An extra parcel of land in separate occupation or separately rated at the time of the search)		S	13.00	15.60	13.00	15.60
Additional parcels where submitted as part of an LLC1 only		OS	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

CON29 Individual Questions

1.1 a-i Planning	S	9.00	10.80	9.10	10.90
1.1 j-l Building Regulations	S	6.50	7.80	8.25	9.90
1.2 Planning Designations & Proposals	S	4.00	4.80	4.00	4.80
2.1 a-d, 3.4 & 3.6 Roadways, Footways & Footpaths	S	26.00	31.20	26.00	31.20
3.1 - 3.3 Land Required for Public Purposes/to be acquired for road works/drainage matters/road schemes	S	3.00	3.60	3.00	3.60
3.5 Nearby Railway Schemes	S	2.00	2.40	2.50	3.00
3.7 Outstanding Notices	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
3.8 Contravention of Building Regulations	S	6.50	7.80	6.58	7.90
3.9 Notices, Orders, Directions and Proceedings under Planning Acts	S	3.00	3.60	3.33	4.00
3.10 Community Infrastructure Levy	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
3.11 Conservation Area	S	2.00	2.40	2.83	3.40
3.12 Compulsory Purchase	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00
3.13 Contaminated Land	S	6.50	7.80	6.58	7.90
3.14 Radon Gas	S	6.50	7.80	6.58	7.90
3.15 Assets of Community Value	S	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00

This Report will be made public on 1 December 2020

Report Number **C/20/54**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9th December 2020
Status: Key Decision
Responsible Officer: Andy Blaszkowicz, Director- Housing and Operations
Cabinet Member: Councillor David Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects & Councillor Jennifer Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Communities

SUBJECT: Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25- Consultation Responses

SUMMARY:

This report sets out the responses received during the public consultation for the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25. The 8 week period of consultation ended on 2nd October. Subject to the proposed amendments in the report, it is recommended that the Strategy be adopted by the Council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) The Homelessness prevention Strategy is the Council's key tool for planning how the Council and its partners intend to respond to homelessness and related issues in the district.
- b) The Homelessness Act 2002, requires all local housing authorities to produce an effective homelessness strategy for their area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Receive and note report C/20/54.
2. Note the consultation responses received and the proposed amendments to the draft strategy set out in section 2.2.
3. Agree that the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy be formally adopted by the Council, subject to the amendments set out this report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002, requires local authorities to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on a review of homelessness and related provision in their area.
- 1.2 The draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy for this district is set out in Appendix 2 of this report, and the detailed homelessness review completed by officers is set out in Appendix 3.
- 1.3 The draft strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14th July 2020 and it was agreed that the strategy would be made available for an eight week consultation period.
- 1.4 The consultation period ran from 3rd August to the 2nd October 2020.

2. Summary of Consultation Outcomes

- 2.1 The Council received 9 responses to the consultation. The responses were received from the following organisations/individuals:

Type of Organisation	Responses
Local Authority Employee or Member	27%
Provider of Homelessness Services	18%
Members of the Public	55%

- 2.2 Overall the respondents thought that the priorities identified in the strategy are correct for the district. The table below sets out the responses received and the proposed response.

Comments	Response
The need for more emphasis on Hidden Homeless in the district.	No action required. The Strategy has been developed following the completion of the detailed homelessness review which has identified the key needs in the district. The Council provides a homelessness and housing advice service to meet the needs of all clients approaching the service. The Council will continue to review housing need in the district to ensure that all needs are properly addressed.
The draft needs to be proof read.	Proof reading completed.
A concern that the priorities are not in the right order.	No action required. Each of the priorities is of equal importance and they are in no particular order.
A concern that we should have an aim related to long-term housing options for young people.	A specific action has been added to the strategy under Priority 3, the fourth Point in the second column (in Appendix 2, page 26). Also on the same page, under the

	same aim & in the third column, a fourth point has been added in relation to monitoring this aim (in Appendix 2, page 26).
A concern regarding the lack of services for people with complex needs.	A specific paragraph about the recently announced Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding award has been added to the strategy (in Appendix 2, page 18). Under the first aim of Priority 1 the fourth action has been amended to include the NASP funding and how it will be used to deliver the service in the district (in Appendix 2, page 20). The strategy commits to exploring the delivery of long-term housing for this client group.
A concern that the strategy is not ambitious enough and needs more detail.	No action required. The strategy is considered realistic and deliverable. The needs identified through this strategy were identified through the comprehensive review process. The Council will continue to explore all other potential funding opportunities as they arise.
The strategy should contain more that is specifically related to victims of domestic abuse.	The government is due to issue new guidance in relation to assisting households fleeing domestic abuse with housing options. The Council will closely monitor this and review the service and current provision accordingly. A new action has been added at point 4 under the second aim of Priority 2 (in Appendix 2, page 24).
The policy appears well thought through and to offer a good prospect of the achievement of good outcomes to reduce homelessness provided sufficient resources in terms of funding and personnel are available to meet the enormous challenge presented by this problem.	No action required
I am pleased something is being done.	No action required.
The need to acknowledge that not all homeless individuals wish to be housed. Need to achieve a balance in the Strategy.	No action required. The strategy acknowledges the difficulties that exist when working with people with a significant history of rough sleeping. Our outreach service will continue to keep contact with the people who are refusing to access local services.

- 2.3 The consultation responses received are set out in full in Appendix 1 of this report. The draft strategy has been reviewed and amended to reflect the responses received. The strategy is considered robust and fully deliverable.
- 2.4 The overall response rate to this consultation is in line with the response rates received in the past for similar consultations. All key local and regional partners were contacted and advised and encouraged to respond to the consultation. A further reminder was provided during the Homelessness Forum meeting at the start of the consultation period in September. Details of the consultation were also promoted on the Council's website.
- 2.5 A detailed Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. No negative impacts were identified during the assessment process. The full impact assessment document is set out in Appendix 4 of this report.

3. The Proposed Way Forward

- 3.1 Subject to the proposed amendments set out in section 2.2 of this report, Cabinet is requested to agree that the Draft Homelessness prevention Strategy 2020/25, be adopted by the Council.
- 3.2 Going forward it is proposed that the strategy should be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to take full account of local needs and any future changes to the national policy framework for homelessness. Details of the review and progress against the detailed actions set out in the Action Plan, will be reported to Members.

4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

- 4.1 **Legal (NE)** – The Homelessness Act 2002 and parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996, place a variety of obligations on the Council towards homeless people. These include, homelessness prevention, housing advice, the provision of temporary accommodation and the provision of permanent accommodation for homeless people who are deemed to be owed a full duty under the legislation. These duties were further enhanced in 2018 through the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. S1 (1) of the Homelessness Act 2002, requires a Local Authority to review homelessness in its area and to produce a strategy under s1 (3). Section 1(4) requires that the strategy is reviewed and updated every 5 years.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25 describes how the Council will comply with its statutory duties. Failure to produce an up-to-date strategy will leave the Council open to legal challenge”.
- 4.3 **Finance (LH)** – There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.
- 4.4 **Equality (AH)** – No equality or diversity issues have been identified during the preparation of the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The detailed assessment document is set out in Appendix 4 of this report.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

Adrian Hammond
Lead Housing Specialist
adrian.hammond@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
Tel: 01303 853392

Kimba Layton
Housing Strategy and Initiatives Officer
Kimba.layton@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
Tel: 01303 853283

Appendices

1. Homelessness Prevention Strategy Consultation responses & recommended amendments
2. Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25
3. Homelessness Prevention Strategy Review
4. Equalities Impact Assessment – Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Appendix 1

Feedback provided by:		What they said:
1.	Local Authority Officer/Member	There needs to be more emphasis on the "hidden homeless "
Response & Recommendation: No amendment or addition to the strategy required		
<p>Many homeless people are hidden as they are dealing with their situation informally by staying with family & friends – sofa surfing. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that some households helping these individuals have asked them to leave and the Council has provided temporary accommodation in the first instance with a view to securing longer term accommodation as set out on page 7 of the strategy.</p> <p>However, there are still friends and families who are providing accommodation to people, and whilst research around the “hidden homeless” has been undertaken by charities, there is no way of knowing the extent of this issue locally or nationally. As outlined under the strategies priority of “Early Intervention, Prevention & Support”, the Council is committed to providing tailored advice & information to anyone who approaches the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p>		
Feedback provided by:		What they said:
2.	Local Authority Officer/Member	That the draft needs to be proofread.
Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required		
Proofing completed		
Feedback provided by:		What they said:
3.	Local Authority Officer/Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with those few cases that refuse multiple offers of accommodation that somehow seem to be sought out by 1 individual who lives in the ward I represent and goes to extraordinary lengths to find such people in other wards and fill councillors email boxes with complaints & appeals.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we get the balance right. Too little and we will be castigated by homeless charities and some individuals. Too much and we will attract more people to the district who declare as homeless. We already know the south coast is an attractive location for the homeless and I am concerned that other inland authorities will actually encourage them to move here.
Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required		
Please see response to the feedback in section 9 below.		
Feedback provided by:	What they said:	
4. Local Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients with multiple complex needs at risk - homeless - multiagency strategy needed I notice with interest the desire to move towards Housing First and Community led Housing projects. One major change over recent years from our perspective has been the increase in multiple complex needs in the rough sleeping homeless community. There is a distinct need for housing provision for high needs clients and that this intervention is lacking. I would hope that either through the Rainbow Centre or other community project that there would be the support for community initiatives. Also noted is the desire for a social enterprise business providing training and employment opportunities. Creation and maintenance of employment opportunities is the main route to prevent and tackle poverty whilst also generating self-worth and personal motivation. 	
Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see response to the feedback in section 9 below. Through the joint working required to develop Housing First and Social Enterprise projects a multi-agency approach will evolve and the multi-agency groups set up to drive the projects forward will have Terms of Reference that will include principles, aims and goals attached to these projects. Progress will be reviewed regularly and a multi-agency strategy will be developed if it is required. The Council has also receive specific funding from Central Government through the Next Steps programme to deliver specific accommodation and support for the most vulnerable rough sleepers in the district. 		

- A specific paragraph about the recently announced Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) Funding award has been added (highlighted in Appendix 2, page 18). Also under the first aim of Priority 1 the fourth action has been amended to include the NASP funding and how it will be used to deliver the service in the district (highlighted in Appendix 2, page 20).

Feedback provided by:	What they said:
<p>5. Member of the Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there's a bit of a discrepancy between the levels of priorities. For example "End rough sleeping" feels like it would be better framed around the "Housing/Home First" language and the priority being that no one should be without a home. I like the early intervention emphasis of the second priority and that it is highlighted - I'd be making this the top priority For maximising access to suitable accommodation, again the language just feels really cold and it could be framed in a more human way around "right homes for the right people at the right time" reflecting people's accommodation needs change around their personal circumstances and helping the actions to reflect this a bit better. • Wasn't sure if I should say yes or partially, but one thing that struck me while reading the strategy and needs analysis was the high proportion of people evicted by landlords, evicted by family and the young age profile of people at risk of homelessness. It made me think that the priorities at the moment are maybe too high level and that the strategy could be far more targeted at these groups. • Overall this felt a bit of a cookie cutter strategy when there is a chance to be far more bold/ambitious and far more targeted. It really feels like locally younger adults are at greater risk of eviction and the housing stock for younger adults is really low as well, so crafting something that is very specifically targeted at this challenge would make a lot of sense, and that would help with creative problem solving e.g. there are lots of big houses in the district with lots of spare rooms, could there be strand about unlocking this capacity for younger single adults perhaps (HomeShare schemes) and what would be the strategy for rallying the local population around this. It'd be really nice to paint a picture of F&H in 2026 where no-one is rough sleeping/at risk of homelessness and try and inspire people to think on and act on how to achieve this.
<p>Response: One additional aim to be added to Priority 3 of the strategy</p>	

- Whilst the strategies priorities are numbered no one priority is more important than the other, they are inter-linked. In the strategy the aim to develop a Housing First Project is one of the ways the Council proposes to reach the goal of ending rough sleeping, particularly for the most complex and entrenched rough sleepers.
- It is recognised that evictions by private landlords is a main cause of being threatened with homelessness nationally, followed by eviction by family. Under the Priority 2 “Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Action Plan” the Council aims to develop ways to identify households early, whose issues may lead to being threatened with homelessness in the future, to provide targeted early intervention support and reduce incidences of homelessness or being threatened with homelessness.
- The following action has been added to the strategy as part of the way the Council will achieve the second Aim of Priority 3 (highlighted in Appendix 2, page 26):
 - To explore further long-term housing solutions with Kent County Council’s Adolescent Team” for young people at risk of homelessness.
- The following has been also been added to the same section about how the Council will measure the success of this (highlighted in Appendix 2, page 26):
 - Development of more long-term housing options for young people

Feedback provided by:		What they said:
6.	Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifics for victims of domestic violence who have to move out • End bed and breakfast in shared accommodation as an interim answer for families with children of DV...offer short stay accommodation with their own front door.
Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Options Team are trained and informed on how to support victims of Domestic Abuse, who have fled, and to offer a range of housing options appropriate to their current needs. 		

- The Council does has not used Bed & Breakfast accommodation for families for several years. The accommodation used for families is all self-contained, unless an emergency and the family would be moved to self-contained accommodation as soon as it becomes available.
- The government is due to issue new guidance in relation to assisting households fleeing domestic abuse with housing options. The Council will closely monitor this and review the service and currently provision accordingly. A new action has been added at point 4 under the second aim of Priority 2 (highlighted in Appendix 2, page24).

Feedback provided by:**What they said:**

7. Member of the Public I'm pleased something is being done

Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required

No response required

Feedback provided by:**What they said:**

8. Member of the Public The policy appears well thought through and to offer a good prospect of the achievement of good outcomes to reduce homelessness provided sufficient resources in terms of funding and personnel are available to meet the enormous challenge presented by this problem.

Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required

No response required

Feedback provided by:**What they said:**

9. Member of the Public (identified themselves as a Council Housing Tenant)

- I think you should realise that not all homeless wish to be housed because of their own views and wishes and i think that you should also look at mini campers or push along that are secure and they can be moved to where they want to sleep and live.

		<p>I think you need to provide a building where there are individual showers and laundry facilities and the person in charge can also talk and befriend them, where information can be given out. Because there are still people who move all over the country and do not wish to settle but need a shower, somewhere to wash their clothing perhaps a room with clothing, boots, toiletries and tinned food .</p>
<p>Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required</p>		
<p>The Council recognises that being homeless and living without shelter is not easy, but that for some it does provide autonomy. Shelters & supported accommodation have rules, including curfews, key-working, no alcohol & smoking, and what is & is not acceptable behaviour. This has practical benefits of keeping residents and staff safe but it does not appeal to some homeless individuals; similarly nor do the responsibilities that come with permanent accommodation, such as household bills, as well as the change in social environment – leaving their current social scene to move on can be a lonely and isolating experience. The freedom that comes with living without accommodation appeals to some people.</p> <p>Additionally, many homeless individuals may have lived in some sort of supported accommodation before, or other institutional settings such as children’s homes, hospitals, or prison etc.; their lack of success from these past experiences only reinforces their doubts about changing the way they live.</p> <p>The Council’s outreach services will continue to maintain contact clients in the district who do not wish to engage with local services.</p> <p>The Housing First (Under Priority 3 of the Strategy) concept should primarily be available to people experiencing ‘chronic’ homelessness and severe forms of multiple disadvantage, with complex needs. Housing First is not only about unconditional affordable long-term accommodation, but also involves the provision of unlimited intensive support that is provided until an individual no longer requires it. Outreach workers will continue to build relationships with the most entrenched rough sleepers to house them if possible whilst Housing First is developed within the district.</p> <p>Local partner such as the Rainbow Centre, do provide day centre services, wash facilities and areas for people to meet and talk.</p>		

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Homelessness Prevention Strategy

2020-2025

DRAFT

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2020-2025

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every local authority to carry out a review of homelessness in their district every 5 years and to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the findings of the review. The legislation emphasises the importance of working strategically with social services and other statutory, voluntary and private sector partners in order to tackle homelessness more effectively. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018 states that the strategy must set out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness, and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be, available for people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Throughout each person's life there are situations that could combine to lead to homelessness for a variety of reasons. Loss of employment, financial issues, relationship breakdowns, domestic abuse, harassment, bereavement are just some of the reasons people may find themselves with nowhere reasonable and secure to live. Whilst rough sleeping is the most extreme situation, homelessness is more than this. Individuals and families may find themselves staying with friends or family, or "sofa-surfing" with people they barely know, moving from one place to the next night after night with no solution to their housing problem in sight. The impact of homelessness can be far reaching and also affect the local community, impressions of community safety, appearance of town centres, confidence of local businesses and the perception of visitors.

It is important to continue to work closely with partners and agencies, in the statutory and community sectors, but to also involve local people in exploring and developing housing solutions for all those in need of assistance. Evidence suggests that the longer people are homeless the more complex their support needs become and the harder it can be to get their lives back on track. This is why Folkestone & Hythe District Council's key priority is to prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible.

2. Key Facts and Figures

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness approaches have increased by 25% since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

From the 1st Jan 2019 to the 31st Dec 2019:

- 1427 households approached the Council for housing assistance:
 - 498 of these households were prevented from becoming homeless through initial advice or a Personal Housing Plan and,
 - The Council relieved the homelessness of another 263 households.
- 60% of the 1427 approaches were from single person households:
 - Of the 60% of single person households approaching 33% were women, and 48% were aged 35 years or under.
- The number of young people aged 16-18 years approaching the Council for housing assistance increased by 55% on the previous year's figures in 2019.

There has been a significant decrease in the use of temporary accommodation. Since 2017 the Council has reduced the use of temporary accommodation by 71%.

Almost 50% of all households approaching the Council for housing assistance have been issued with a Section 21 Notice to leave their private rented sector properties by the landlord; this reflects the same situation in the private rented sector nationally.

HOUSING

- There are approximately 5300 units of social housing in the Folkestone & Hythe District; with housing associations providing approximately 1900 of this total.
- On average there are 1250 households on the housing list for social housing.
- The average wait for a 2 bedroom social housing property through the housing list is 356 days and the longest wait for this size property is 2 years.
- Since 2014 the Council and partners have created 351 new affordable homes.
- 122 empty homes were brought back into use between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- The Council is committed to delivering an additional 300 Council homes for rent and shared ownership purchase in the period 2015/16 to 2025/26. As at 31/3/20, the Council has delivered 100 homes with a further 70 homes due to start on site or be acquired during 2020/21.
- The Council has also committed to delivering a further 1000 Council homes for rent and shared ownership purchase in the period 2025 to 2035.

3. Summary of the Homelessness Review findings

HEADLINE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW FINDINGS

The full Homelessness Review and findings are contained in Appendix 1 of this strategy.

- Homelessness is a growing national issue and the 25% increase in approaches for housing assistance to the Council since 2017 is just under the overall national increase reported to date of 27.5%.
- Private rental prices increased by 1.5% in England in the 12 months to January 2020.
- The April 2020 uplift in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates has reduced the difference in Folkestone between the Average Mean Private Rent per month and the LHA Rates from 31% to 11%. The biggest difference is between the Average Mean Private Rent per month for 4 to 5 bed properties at £1215.00 and the LHA for this size property at £899.99pcm.
- Welfare Reform and rising rents continue to make all but a small percentage of private rented properties unaffordable for most low income households in the district.
- Almost 50% of households approaching the Council for housing assistance are being evicted from private rented sector properties; and almost half of these evictions are “No Fault Evictions”.
- The extra funding received from the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to end rough sleeping has already helped the Council implement services that have, in the first year of funding, reduced the number of individuals identified as sleeping rough in the district. The Council also funds an outreach service for people who are rough sleeping, together with a Prevention Plus service, focused upon providing support to prevent homelessness before it occurs.
- Further funding from the MHCLG has been secured for 2020/2021, through to 2022/23.

Note: For further statistical information relating to homelessness within the district and the FHDC Housing Options Services see Appendix 1, the FHDC Homelessness Review 2020.

4. Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 placed new legal duties on councils to ensure that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance.

- If an applicant is threatened with homelessness, the council must take reasonable steps to help them avoid becoming homeless. This is known as ‘The Prevention Duty’ and once triggered will continue for up to 56 days.
- If an applicant is homeless, the council must take reasonable steps to help all homeless eligible applicants, who have a local connection, to secure accommodation for at least six months. This is known as ‘The Relief Duty’ and once triggered will continue for 56 days.
- This is the first homelessness strategy to be informed by the new ways of working outlined in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and measured by the latest system of collecting Statutory Homelessness statistics (H-CLIC – see Section 2.11 of the FHDC Homelessness Review 2020 in Appendix 1 of this Strategy).
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018, provided by the MHCLG, advises local authorities on how they should exercise their homelessness functions in accordance with the HRA.

Note: For further details about the HRA see Section 2.7 of the FHDC Homelessness Review 2020 in Appendix 1 of this Strategy.

5. Equality Act

Under the Equality Act 2010, public bodies such as FHDC must have due regard of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Homelessness, unsuitable and insecure housing, have adverse effects on the overall health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Housing inequality also impacts on other factors such as income, education, health, wellbeing and life experiences. Folkestone & Hythe District Council has a strong commitment to promoting equality and tackling disadvantage.

6. COVID-19

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 Emergency has placed considerable pressure on local homelessness services provided by the Council and its partners. In line with guidance from the MHCLG, the Council has provided emergency accommodation for people sleeping rough in the district and others made homeless following eviction by their families, friends and employers, due to the pandemic. Going forward we are working to find long-term housing solutions for the people affected, and also planning to ensure the Council is able to effectively respond to any increase in homelessness as the emergency restrictions (including restrictions on evictions) are removed.

Next Steps Accommodation Programme

Earlier this year the Council worked in partnership with Dover District Council to submit a bid under the government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). The NSAP is part of the government's landmark commitment to end rough sleeping for good and is intended to help councils respond to homelessness issues caused by the COVID-19 emergency, and also assist people who are entrenched rough sleepers with the most complex needs. The government has now confirmed that Folkestone & Hythe District Council will receive the additional funding to assist people who are rough sleeping or currently accommodated by the council.

The funding that Folkestone & Hythe District Council has been awarded breaks down as follows:

- £520k to assist with the purchase of accommodation to assist rough sleepers with complex support needs.
- £53K to support the delivery of a Winter Shelter service, to be delivered by the Rainbow Centre – the service is to be delivered through bed and breakfast accommodation due to current COVID-19 guidance.
- £25K to assist the council with some of the costs of placing rough sleepers in accommodation during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The following funding has been awarded jointly to Folkestone & Hythe and Dover District Councils'.

- £198k to provide high level support to people accommodated.

The Council is working closely Dover District Council and with local partners to progress these initiatives.

7. Our Strategic Priorities

End Rough Sleeping

- Further develop Outreach Services and the support work begun by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding first provided by the MHCLG in 2019.
- Continue to develop an early intervention support service for those with no accommodation to go to, such as care leavers, people leaving prison and hospitals to reduce the number of new rough sleepers.
- Continue to work with partners and local agencies to develop a holistic approach to supporting rough sleepers in relation to mental health, social care and substance misuse.
- Work with partners and agencies to increase the range of housing solutions & support available to rough sleepers, including development of a Housing First Project.

Early Intervention, Prevention & Support

- To work closely with partners & agencies to improve identification of households at a very early stage, who are experiencing issues that could lead to homelessness, to ensure prevention work is targeted.
- Focus on tenancy sustainment, wherever possible, ensuring advice and information about homelessness & housing issues, welfare reform, local and national support services are up-to-date, relevant and accessible.
- Continue to seek and maximise new funding opportunities for prevention initiatives, including supporting funding submissions by local agencies.
- In partnership with local agencies, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, explore the feasibility of developing a social enterprise to increase training and re-skilling opportunities, and employment prospects for homeless/threatened with homelessness people.

Maximise Access to Affordable & Suitable Accommodation

- Continue to develop and grow Folkestone & Hythe's Property Solutions Service, engaging with, and supporting private rented sector landlords.
- Actively seek innovative opportunities to maximise homes in the district with a range of accommodation options to meet the diverse needs of our residents, such as supporting Community-led Housing projects.
- Increase the supply of social or other affordable housing, including building more council owned properties, informed by research and evidence on the affordability of housing for our residents.

Priority 1 - End Rough Sleeping Action Plan

WHAT WE WILL BE DOING	HOW WE WILL DO IT	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS
<p>Further develop Outreach Services and the support work begun by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding first provided by the MHCLG in 2019.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the second instalment of RSI funding for 2020/21 (awarded jointly to FHDC & DDC) to continue and enhance the rough sleeper services currently being delivered by agencies via a contract. • Continue to submit funding applications to MHCLG and other relevant funders as appropriate to enhance services. • Continue facilitating multi-agency meetings to encourage joint working, help services identify the most vulnerable, and prevent doubling up of assistance. • Deliver the Council’s homelessness recovery plan as part of our response to the COVID-19 Emergency. This will be delivered in line with guidance from the MHCLG utilising Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous reduction in numbers of individuals sleeping rough. • Reduction in number of people becoming entrenched rough sleepers (e.g. they have been seen sleeping rough for 31 nights or more in a 3 month period). • Evidence of timely and proactive adaption of rough sleeper services to meet changing needs. • Rough sleepers placed in temporary accommodation during COVID-19 are supported into long-term, safe accommodation. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & voluntary sector partners</p>
<p>Develop early an intervention support service for those with no accommodation to go to, such as care leavers, people leaving prison and hospitals to reduce the number of new rough sleepers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain the direct lines of communication with local Prisons Discharge Teams, Probation Services, 18+ Care Teams and Hospital Discharge Teams. • Complete a feasibility study to assess the need for dedicated FHDC Hospital, Prison and Care Homeless Discharge Navigator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of people being discharged from care, health and detention services with “no fixed abode” (NFA) to go to. • A drop in the number of individuals identified as new to rough sleeping <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & other statutory partners</p>

<p>Continue to work with partners and local agencies to develop a holistic approach to supporting rough sleepers in relation to mental health, social services care and substance misuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share good practice through the FHDC Homelessness Forum, the FHDC Rough Sleeper Forum, Kent Housing Options Group (KHOG) and Kent wide partnerships. • Resume and adapt the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper Service (MARSS) to identify individuals needing one-to-one support from treatment and support services, in the form of a bespoke wrap-around provision. • Continue to implement case conference arrangements to provide individual homeless solutions for the most vulnerable. • To consider the impact of drug and alcohol misuse in relation to homelessness. • Continue to fund the dedicated Mental Health Outreach Worker post through the RSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FHDC Homelessness Forum to meet quarterly and to include representation from all key partners, with minutes taken to track actions and progress. • FHDC Rough Sleeper Forum to meet regularly and to include representation from rough sleeper outreach and support services, with minutes taken to track actions and progress • Listen to Rough sleepers' feedback about whether services are being more flexible, making access easier. Whether adjustments are made to allow for the difficulties of keeping appointments when sleeping rough. • Improved access and sustained engagement with treatment services, particularly mental health services, by rough sleepers. <p>Responsibility: FHDC & statutory and voluntary partners</p>
<p>Work with partners and agencies to increase the range of housing solutions and support available to rough sleepers, including development of a Housing First Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter. Assist the partnership to review the service delivered. • Develop the first units in the district of Housing First (see page 9 for details) accommodation in partnership with local agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the set-up of at least 2 units of Housing First accommodation by 2025. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & statutory and voluntary partners</p>

Ending Rough Sleeping

People sleeping rough remain one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The number of people recorded as sleeping rough during the last annual Folkestone & Hythe District Rough Sleeper Count in November 2019 was 10, which was a 55% reduction from the number identified the previous year. Whilst the number of people rough sleeping can vary considerably throughout the year, with some rough sleeper's also spending time sofa-surfing, this result is encouraging and demonstrates that the additional rough sleeper services provided through the MHCLG Funding are having a positive effect. The Council will ensure that these services are developed and adapted to keep it relevant to the changing numbers of rough sleepers and their ongoing need for support once housed.

The 'Housing First' Approach

Housing First is a housing and support approach which:

- Gives people who have experienced homelessness, chronic health and social care needs a stable home to rebuild their lives.
- Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended.
- Places no conditions on individuals; although, they should have a desire to have a tenancy for the approach to be successful.

The Housing First approach was first developed in America in 1992 and has since been widely adopted across the USA, Canada, Denmark, Finland and France, with widespread success. Since 2010 a growing number of local areas in England have established Housing First services to meet an identified need¹. Whilst the outcomes from established Housing First projects are very positive, it can be challenging to set up this kind of project in the current housing market. Additionally, the support provided to individuals must be intensive for the project to be successful. This support needs substantial funding and is more costly up front but more positive and economical for all involved in the long-run; less health issues for the individual, less ambulance call outs, less visits to the doctor, less police involvement, less substance misuse in town centres, less crime (shoplifting for example), and a significant reduction in the cost of repeatedly housing individuals only for them to be evicted again in the future (for rent arrears and/or anti-social behaviour for example). FHDC is committed to continuing to work with local partners to explore ways a Housing First project can be set up and funded within the district.

¹ Homeless Link Website <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first>

Priority 2 Early Intervention, Prevention and Support Action Plan

WHAT WE WILL BE DOING	HOW WE WILL DO IT	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS
<p>To work closely with partners and agencies to improve identification of households at a very early stage, who are experiencing issues that could lead to homelessness, to ensure prevention work is targeted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely work with local partners and services to prevent homelessness amongst vulnerable households. • Explore ways of gathering multi-agency intelligence, internal and external, to identify households who are at risk of becoming homeless in the future. • Utilise the Kent & Medway Information Sharing Agreement, which is in line with the GDPR² and the DPA³ to identify vulnerable households for the Housing Options Team to offer early intervention too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased early identification of vulnerable households and a reduction in the homelessness approaches to the Council. • Increased number of successful homelessness preventions completed, including assisting households to remain in their current accommodation if it is suitable and affordable or, if not, to move to appropriate accommodation before an eviction takes place. <p>Responsibility: FHDC & statutory and voluntary partners</p>
<p>Focus on tenancy sustainment, wherever possible, ensuring advice and information about homelessness and housing issues, welfare reform, local and national support services are up-to-date, relevant and accessible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all housing and homelessness related information contained in factsheets, handouts and the Council’s website, which assist people to resolve their own housing issues, are up-to-date at all times and are accessible for households. Work to increase community awareness of homelessness issues. • Using evidence and good practice guidance to develop PHP’s⁴ that are person centred, suit each household’s capabilities and needs, reflect FHDC’s Housing Options service provision and local support service delivery, to ensure they are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the amount of visits to the homelessness advice webpages of the Council’s website, and the number of times Housing Factsheets are downloaded. • Monitor the number of hardcopies of Housing Factsheets & advice leaflets are collected from the Civic Centre and other community agencies, such as the libraries (incl. mobile library). • That the PHP template has evolved from the standard template to a local template that reflects the district’s housing issues, and the housing

² General Data Protection Regulation

³ UK Data Protection Act 2018

⁴ Personal Housing Plans

	<p>meaningful and helpful to the districts households.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide specific tailored support to all homeless or threatened with homelessness households, especially those fleeing domestic abuse or harassment, or experiencing physical and/or mental health issues. 	<p>options and homelessness service provision in the area.</p> <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & statutory and voluntary partners</p>
<p>Continue to seek and maximise new funding opportunities for prevention initiatives, including supporting funding submissions by local agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding options in addition to government provision, and strengthen applications by making joint application with partners to promote combined multi-agency working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased funding received and development of more multi-agency service provision for homeless and threatened with homelessness households. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC and voluntary sector partners</p>
<p>In partnership with local agencies, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, explore the feasibility of developing a social enterprise to increase training and re-skilling opportunities, and employment prospects for homeless/threatened with homelessness people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a working group made up of the Council, local businesses, education establishments and homelessness support services to look into the creation of a social enterprise business that can provide training and employment opportunities to services users of homelessness agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful creation of a social enterprise scheme that focuses on up-skilling/re-skilling of homeless or threatened with homelessness households, which can evidence that the experience gained leads to improved long-term employment prospects. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & statutory and voluntary partners</p>

Early Intervention, Prevention and Support

Given the challenges around increasing homelessness it is critical that homeless prevention continues to be at the centre of everything the Council does. A person-centred housing and support solution approach will be adopted, to ensure effective advice and information is available at every stage to maximise the positive outcomes for those who are, or may face, homelessness. In 2019 the Council prevented 35% of all households that approached for assistance that year from becoming homeless. Prevention is the best way to tackle homelessness; stopping it happening in the first place is both cost effective and the best outcome for the people affected. Moving forward the Council will also focus on, and address the needs of, people falling into homelessness when they are discharged from the care system, hospitals and prisons.

Social Enterprise Scheme

Social enterprise schemes are defined as businesses with social objectives, whose profits are reinvested into the business or the community, to create positive social change. There are many social enterprise projects in communities and high streets around the UK, from coffee shops, restaurants, catering companies, to pubs and cinemas, which involve people who are, or have been, homeless, ex-offenders or have issues with alcohol and/or substance misuse. The Folkestone and Hythe District has some very creative and successful business entrepreneurs, great further education establishments, as well as committed and experienced homeless support agencies. The Council plans to bring people from these different fields together, with some people who are, or have, experienced homelessness, to explore the potential for creating a social enterprise project in the area. The project would be for the benefit of those with housing issues that have been unemployed for long periods of time and need opportunities to build up confidence and gain further skills to broaden their employment prospects and stabilise their lives in order to maintain their accommodation.

Priority 3 - Maximise Access to Affordable and Suitable Accommodation Action Plan

WHAT WE WILL BE DOING	HOW WE WILL DO IT	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS
<p>Continue to develop and grow Folkestone and Hythe's Property Solutions Service (PPS), engaging with and supporting private rented sector landlords.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to have one main point of contact for PRS⁵ landlords and a yearly landlord event due to the positive impact this has had on the Council's relationship with the PRS. Ensure the PPS Service is up to date on landlord and tenant law at all times. Develop webpage/s on the Council's website to provide landlords with useful information, legislation updates, and signposting for tenants. Set up a Tenancy Sustainment Course for households housed through the PPS Scheme; to ensure they can maintain their tenancy and give landlords more confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of landlords that join the scheme continue to increase. Monitor the number of tenancies secured through the PPS Scheme that are renewed, or continue, when the first tenancy issued to a household comes to an end. Development of webpage/s useful to local landlords. Monitor the number of landlords that register to receive updates. Successfully set-up an in-house Tenancy Sustainment Course. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC</p>
<p>Actively seek innovative opportunities to maximise homes in the district with a range of accommodation options to meet the diverse needs of our residents, such as supporting Community-Led Housing (CLH) projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to bring empty homes back into use. The Council is committed to bringing at least 70 long-term empty homes back into use each year from 2018 to 2023. Launch the CLH Grant Scheme, complete procedures for the scheme, promote the scheme and develop webpages on the Council's website. Support any CLH groups within the district to progress their project. To explore further long-term housing solutions with Kent County Council's Adolescent Team for young people at risk of homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to meet the Empty Homes targets set in the Healthier Housing Strategy Successful promotion of the Council's CLH Grant Scheme and Support Programme. That there is at least one CLH project progressing to site and/or building stage. The development of more long-term housing options for young people. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & housing association partners</p>

⁵ Private Rented Sector

<p>Increase the supply of social or other affordable housing, including building more council owned properties, informed by research and evidence on the affordability of housing for our residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is committed to continuing to build affordable homes. In addition to the targets set out in the Healthier Housing Strategy the Council has committed to delivering a further 1000 Council homes for rent and shared ownership between 2025 - 2035. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the number of new affordable homes created against set targets. <p><u>Responsibility:</u> FHDC & housing association partners</p>
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Maximise Access to Affordable and Suitable Accommodation

Between 2014 and 2019 the Council and its partners created 351 new affordable homes within the district and 332 empty homes were brought back into use. The private rented sector has continued to grow, and it is more important than ever that low income households, and those experiencing housing issues, are able to access affordable accommodation. The Property Solutions Service was launched in 2018 and is growing steadily, the second year saw a 35% increase in properties obtained through the scheme on the previous year. The Council continues to respond to the current pressures in the housing market by working with housing providers to enable the provision of new affordable accommodation for those that are unable to access market housing.

Community-Led Housing

Community-Led housing (CLH) is a growing movement where local people can take action to address their own and the local communities housing need. It allows communities to have more of a say over what they want to build and where they want to build it, and it then continues to be controlled and in some cases owned by a community-led organisation or enterprise. FHDC received a grant from the MHCLG intended to provide seed funding to local CLH and cohousing projects whose aim is to deliver a community housing scheme. The grant makes funding available for groups in the first stages of coming together to enable them to pay for training, research, visits to other successful projects, and costs related to becoming a formalised group. Slightly larger amounts of funding are also available for groups that are ready to progress to the next stage when they have identified a possible site for their project. This is to help with the cost of developing a business case, feasibility and design work, paying for professional input, planning applications and project management in the lead up to applications for capital funding.

Community led housing offers something for everyone:

- Properties must be affordable for low income households
- Projects can be aimed at specific groups of people; for example they can be for older people living in the private rented sector struggling with rent costs in retirement or people with support needs, or a more mixed community.

- Properties can be new built homes or purchase and refurbishment of an existing building.
- Because the project is led by the community, for the community, the end result is often a very well established community environment.
- This type of housing often deals with issues of isolation, anti-social behaviour, unemployment and inactivity.
- The properties created tend to use space imaginatively and are often environmentally friendly.

There are many inspired community-led housing projects around the country. These projects do take time and commitment, however, the Council is committed to supporting any community group who would like to develop this type of housing.

8. How the Council's Housing Options and Homelessness Services are Funded

The statutory housing and homelessness services that the Housing Options Team deliver are mainly funded through the allocation of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) and Homelessness Reduction Grant (HRG) provided by the MHCLG to each local housing authority. The service also receives funding through the Council's General Fund. In addition to this funding FHDC's has submitted successful joint bids with Dover District Council to the MHCLG's Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund for the last two years, and invested this funding directly into services to help individuals currently rough sleeping and to prevent others from becoming homeless and sleeping rough on the streets.

9. Governance and Delivery of the Strategy

The objectives in this Strategy will be delivered through our action plan, which identifies the main task needed to tackle and prevent homelessness over the next five years. The actions will be delivered by the Council and our multi-agency partners. We will closely monitor our performance and the outcomes of this key Strategy will be reported on an ongoing basis to members and our partner agencies.

The Council is also required to report ongoing performance to the MHCLG. Going forward the MHCLG has indicated it intends to link future grant funding to a new Assurance Framework to ensure that all grant funded initiatives are fully outcome focused.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Homelessness Review 2019

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HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of Review

The purpose of this review is to set out relevant national and local information relating to homelessness and service provision within the district. It is also to provide an overview of the current circumstances, identify any service gaps and the priorities for the Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC) Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025.

1.2. Homelessness

Homelessness as a term refers to a range of different people and experiences. In law, it means that a person or household does not have accommodation that is:

- Available for them to occupy
- That they have a legal right to occupy, and
- That it is reasonable for them to continue to occupy.

This includes families, people who sleep rough, people living in hostels, shelters, domestic abuse refuges, and hidden homeless households who rely on friends or family for accommodation in unreasonable circumstances. Local housing authorities are legally obliged under the Housing Act 1996 to house many homeless people/households as a result of their needs, for example those who are pregnant or already have children in their household, and those who are vulnerable as a result of their health⁶ (Section 2.4 & 4.3).

2. Legal Context

2.1. Requirement for Review and Strategy

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness and related provision in their district. The Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has also said that all local housing authorities must develop new homelessness strategies to take into account the changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (Section 2.7).

This review has sought to set out the national context in relation to homelessness, the current circumstances within the Folkestone & Hythe District and assess the challenges ahead. The findings of the review will help us to identify the key priorities going forward to enable FHDC to develop a relevant and robust Homelessness Prevention Strategy, which will be a fundamental part of the FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy⁷.

⁶ MHCLG Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018, page 13, Section 22.

⁷ Folkestone & Hythe Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023

2.2. Homelessness Legislation

The services that local housing authorities have a duty to provide, to help people who are threatened with homelessness, or already homeless, are set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.

Additionally, the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 (Section 2.7), which came into effect on the 3rd April 2018, introduced further duties that fundamentally changed the way in which local housing authorities respond to homelessness in their area; it is the biggest change in homelessness legislation since 1977. It not only imposes a duty to prevent and relieve homelessness, but it also provides opportunities for culture and systems change⁸.

The following definitions of Homelessness are used by Local Housing Authorities under the above legislation:

2.3. Statutory Homelessness

Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local housing authority (Council) and have met the necessary criteria set out in legislation to be accepted as eligible (Section 2.102.10) for assistance (according to immigration status), and homeless or threatened with homelessness.

2.4. Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness

When assessing whether a household is homeless or threatened with homelessness a Council must look at their particular circumstances and the prevailing housing conditions within the district. The following describe situations in which a household might not be deemed as homeless or threatened with homelessness:

- Being overcrowding by one bedroom is unlikely to be deemed as unsuitable housing and/or threatened with homelessness. Overcrowding is only an issue if it is severe and causing a Category 1 Hazardⁱ.
- Disrepair would not necessarily be deemed as unsuitable housing and threatened with homelessness. The nature of the disrepair would need to be assessed and involve the Council's Private Sector Housing Team working with the landlord.
- If a household has an invalid Section 21 from a landlord they will be deemed as not threatened with homelessness, and be provided with advice and information.
- A young person not wanting to live at home because they do not wish to abide by realistic and practical rules set by parents/relatives, providing reasonable accommodation, would be assessed as not homeless and able to return home.

⁸ Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act, Homeless Link 2018 <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Implementing%20the%20Homelessness%20Reduction%20Act.pdf>

- If a household has an available property that is reasonable and available (or could be reasonably expected to be available) to occupy anywhere in the world.
- A person finding it difficult to live in their home because of their health and mobility would be assessed for adaptations to their property in the first instance (even in private rented with the landlords permission) and not always be deemed as living in unsuitable accommodation.

2.5. Priority Need Households

The following fall into the groups of households that a Council must provide temporary accommodation to if it has reason to believe they are homeless⁹:

- Has dependent children living with them
- Is a pregnant woman or a person, with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside,
- Is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as fire, flood or other disaster,
- 16 or 17 year old who are not already under the care of Social Servicesⁱⁱ
- Those under the age of 21 who were in care between the ages of 16 and 18, but who have left care and are not relevant children
- Individuals and households who meet the criteria to be classed as vulnerable (for example because of old age, physical and learning disabilities, mental health problems, fleeing domestic abuse or violence, time spent in care, prison or the armed forces – depending on all of their circumstances).

2.6. Non Priority Need Households

These are generally households who are not assessed as being in priority need. People who fall into this group will be offered housing advice and support, however, Councils do not have a duty to provide these households with temporary accommodation.

2.7. The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017

The act ensures households can access support from local housing authorities earlier and for longer than they previously could. The aim of the act is to a prevent homelessness, or if not, to resolve the housing issues another way before the Council has to decide whether main housing duty (Section 2.9) is owed. The act will have a significant influence on the priorities agreed within the new strategy. It introduced the following additional duties for local housing authorities:

Advisory Duty

Under the HRA, everyone in a local housing authority's district should be able to access free initial advice and informationⁱⁱⁱ, regardless of whether they are homeless, threatened with homelessness, eligible, in priority need or intentionally homeless. Services providing advice and information must be designed to meet the needs of particular groups, for example care leavers, people "suffering with a mental illness or impairment" and groups identified as being at particular risk of homelessness.

⁹ Section 189 Housing Act 1996

Personal Housing Plans (PHP's)

The HRA states that local housing authorities will conduct an assessment with all eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and develop a personalised housing plan (PHP) with them. The assessment should include the circumstances that caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness, what housing they need, and whether they need support.

The assessment of an applicant's support needs should be holistic and comprehensive. Some applicants can be reluctant to disclose their needs, and Housing Options Officers should have sufficient skills and training to conduct assessments. The PHP must set out the steps the individual and the local housing authority should take to enable the individual to remain in or find accommodation.

The Prevention Duty

This duty means that every eligible (Section 2.10) household threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days, that approaches a Council, must be assessed and offered support and a PHP (regardless of whether they have a local connection, are in priority need or are intentionally homeless). If a household has been served with a valid section 21 notice they are automatically owed the prevention duty.

The Relief Duty

This duty states that where a Council is unable to prevent homelessness, or an eligible household (Section 2.10) is already homeless when they contact the Council a Relief Duty will be owed for 56 days. The Relief Duty is activated as soon as a household becomes homeless. At this stage a household without a local connection can be referred to a Council where a connection exists. The Council may also need to offer temporary accommodation at this stage.

During the Relief Duty the Council will also investigate how the household became homeless and if it was the result of a deliberate act (Section 0). If the investigation does not end the duty to assist, and homelessness is not relieved within the 56 days, the Relief Duty can be extended. If the Council is still unable to relieve homelessness then an assessment is made under the Housing Act 1996 to decide whether the full homelessness duty is owed (Section 2.9).

Duty to Refer

From 1st October 2018 the HRA required certain public bodies to refer people who they think may be homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to the local housing authority. The agencies subject to the new duty are:

Table A. Statutory Agencies that have a Duty to Refer homeless households

Youth Offender Teams	Prisons	Hospitals
Youth Offender Institutions	Probation Services	Statutory Medical Departments
Secure Training Centres	Job Centre Plus	Urgent Treatment Centres
Secure Colleges	Social Services Teams	Secretary of State for Defence

2.8. Intentional Homelessness

If a household knowingly undertakes an act that is likely to result in homelessness then following a full investigation of the circumstances under the Housing Act 1996 an intentionally homelessness decision can be made; ending the duty to provide housing assistance. This decision can be made at any time during the Prevention or Relief Duties although the household will continue to be owed these duties and in most instances will benefit from a period of temporary accommodation for 56 days, while seeking to make alternative rehousing arrangements.

If a household deemed to be intentionally homeless has not secured alternative suitable accommodation when the 56 days of the Relief Duty has ended then any temporary accommodation provided by the Council can be withdrawn and the household referred to other statutory agencies for assistance.

2.9. Main Housing Duty

The HRA puts the household experiencing homelessness at the centre of homelessness services by encouraging them to seek a solution to their situation. The act lengthens the time Councils work with households, with the emphasis on preventing homelessness, but if that is not possible to relieve homelessness.

These changes mean that very few households who are unintentionally homeless, eligible and in priority need will reach the end of the 56 days of both the Prevention and Relief Duties still homeless or threatened with homelessness. This is why local housing authorities have seen a dramatic drop in the number of statutory decisions to accept a Main Housing Duty to households, together with an increase in the number of homeless resolutions.

2.10. Eligibility

From April 2018, local housing authorities must make sure that free advice and information to prevent homelessness or help the homeless find accommodation is available to anyone in their area. This is for everyone, regardless of immigration status or right to reside. However, to access further assistance under the Prevention or Relief Duty, including temporary accommodation, a household must be eligible.

The law defines who is and is not eligible, in terms of immigration status and habitual residence. The law is different for people from within the European Economic Area (EEA) and the UK than those from elsewhere^{iv}.

2.11. Homelessness Case Level Information Classification (H-CLIC)

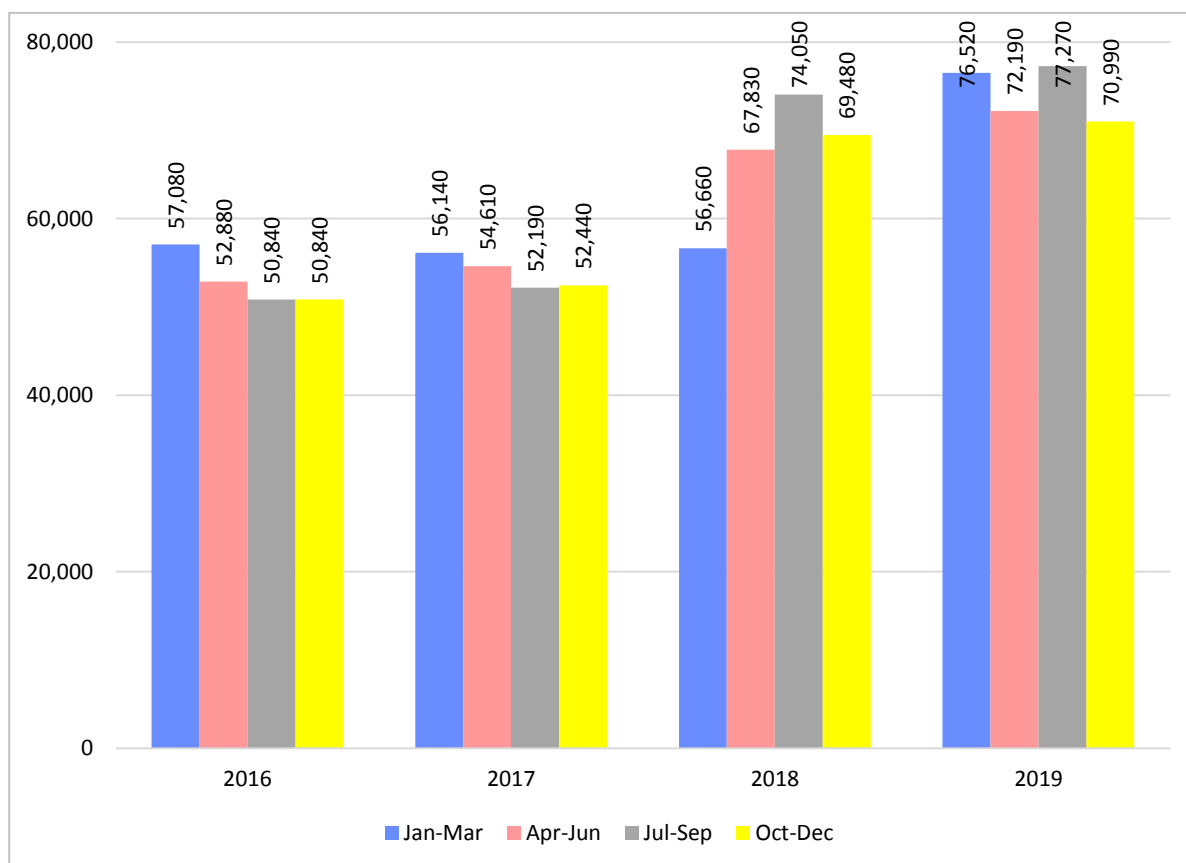
The H-CLIC is the new statutory homelessness case level data collection report that must be submitted to the MHCLG quarterly. It replaced the P1E^v to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 by local housing authorities. The H-CLIC return^{vi} is computer generated and encrypted so it cannot be reproduced as a readable document at local authority level.

3. National Context

3.1. Homelessness Nationally

Many factors nationally, such as changes in the housing market, the employment landscape and welfare reform have increased pressures on households in relation to their housing. Since the HRA was implemented in 2018 local housing authorities nationally have seen an increase in households approaching in need of housing assistance, as the table below shows.

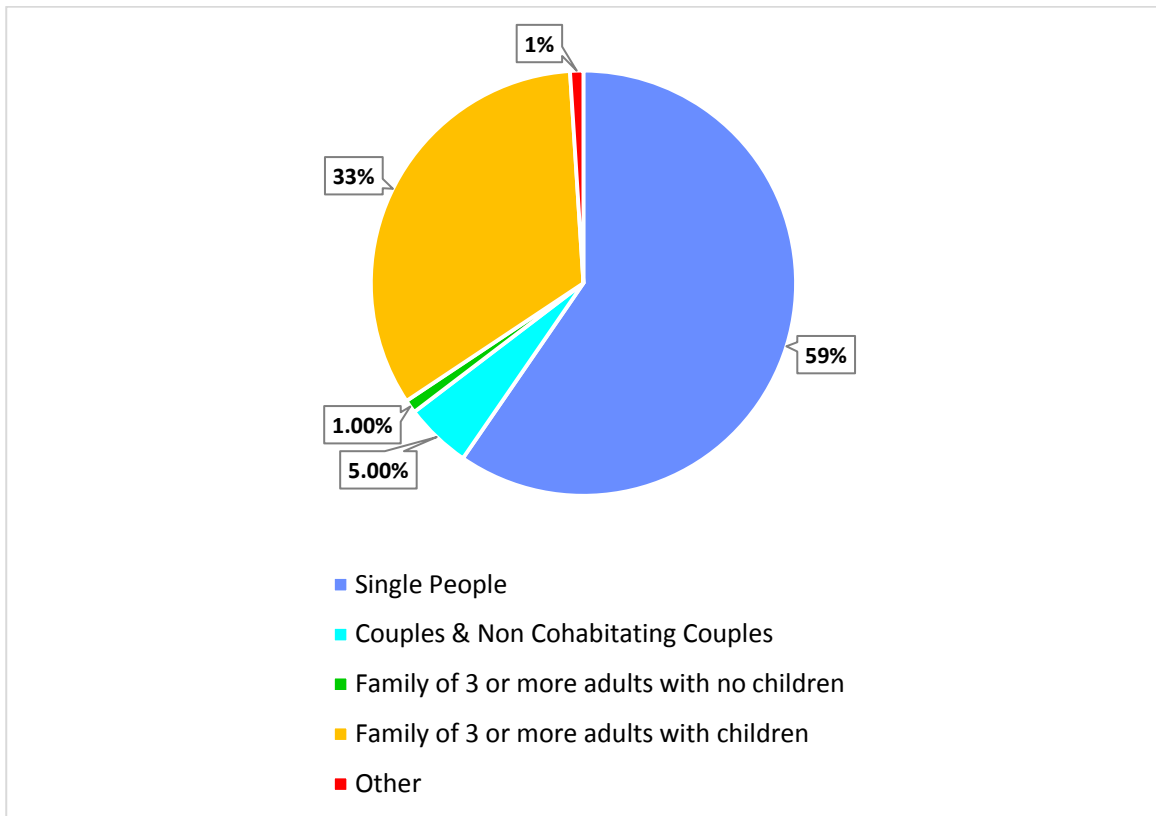
Table B. Total number of households that approached English LA's for homelessness assistance from 1st Jan 2016 to 31st Dec 2019¹⁰



The increase in housing assistance approaches nationally of 27.5% is in line with the increases in approaches in the Folkestone & Hythe District (Section 6.1). The HRA formalised the requirement on Councils to prevent homelessness wherever possible but many Councils, including FHDC, were engaging in homelessness prevention work prior to the implantation of the act.

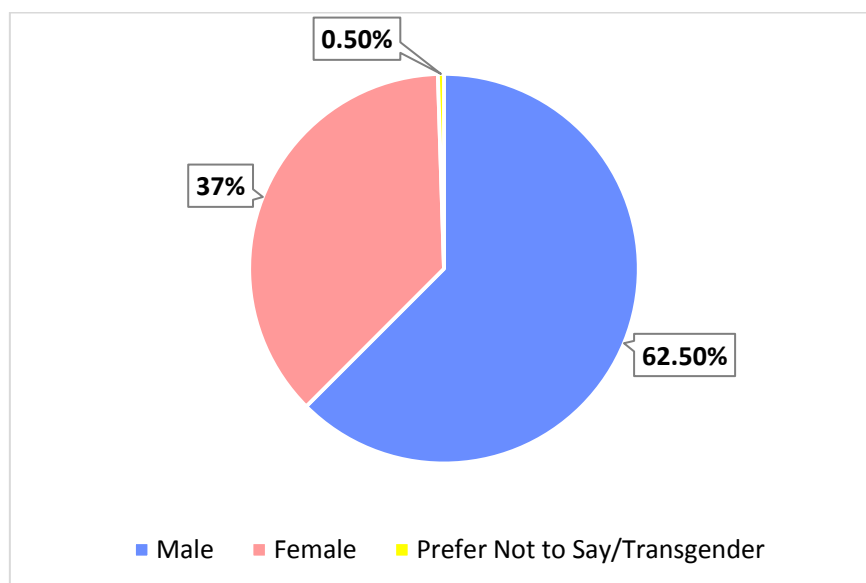
¹⁰ Figures sourced from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Table C. Make-up of Households Approaching English Local Authorities for Housing Assistance in 2019¹¹



The percentage of single homeless individuals recorded by the MHCLG as making an approach to an English Housing Local Authority (LA) in 2019 is similar to the percentage of single homeless people that approach FHDC locally.

Table D. Gender Ratio Single Homeless People Approaches to English Local Authorities 1st Jan 2019 - 31st Dec 2019¹¹



¹¹ Figures sourced from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

3.2. The National Housing Market

In 2018, the Office for National Statistics estimated that on average, full-time workers could expect to pay an estimated 7.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home in England and Wales^{vii}. Seventy-seven local housing authorities became less affordable between 2013 and 2018 (most were in London, the South East and East of England); with no local housing authorities in which affordability improved¹². Affordable^{viii} Rents for typical two-bed properties works out 30% higher than social rents. On average this is £1,400 per year and Affordable Rents are more expensive throughout England, but the difference is noticeably bigger in Southern Regions¹³. Private rental prices increased by 1.5% in England in the 12 months to January 2020¹⁴.

Welfare reform has further impacted low-income households and while unemployment is down employment is often part-time and/or zero hour contracts. This type of employment can continue to leave households limited to private sector rented accommodation, or in some cases, social housing property through their Councils Housing List (HL). Individuals and households experiencing housing issues frequently have complex health and mental health needs. The amount of income some households are having to spend on housing can be linked to causing or worsening these health issues (Section 4.3); this can be compounded by poor housing conditions in properties that are at the cheaper end of the private rental market¹⁵.

3.3. Welfare Reform

The Government has introduced a number of changes as part of its welfare reform programme^x. These changes include:

- The introduction of Universal Credit.
- The Benefit Cap - limiting the amount of benefit that many working age households can claim. Within the FHDC district the limits are £20,000 per year for families, couples and lone parents, and £13,400 for single claimants.
- The Two Child Limit - applied to children born after 6 April 2017 restricts the child element in universal credit and tax credits to the first two children in a household.
- Work-related benefit sanctions^x were also reviewed and updated.
- Under Universal Credit single parents under 25 years old will be treated the same as other under 25s and will only qualify for the lower 'standard allowance' rate. This means they receive up to over £100 less per month than a single parent aged 25 years and over, which causes significant financial challenges.

These changes are aimed at driving the Governments policy to incentivise households to work and to take responsibility.

¹²Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2018>

¹³ Affordable Rents Compared To Traditional Social Rents, report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 13th July 2018

<https://www.irf.org.uk/report/affordable-rents-compared-traditional-social-rents>

¹⁴ Office for Natural Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/indexofprivatehousingrentalprices/january2020>

¹⁵ Brick by Brick - A Review Of Mental Health And Housing, Mind, November 2017 <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/26223865/brick-by-brick-a-review-of-mental-health-and-housing.pdf>

Universal Credit

Universal Credit brings together a range of working age benefits into one payment; it is now the over-arching benefit for unemployed and low income households, with the amount a household receives dependant on their circumstances.

It is awarded monthly in line with the way the majority of working households receive their income; preparing individuals/households for when they return to work. Additionally, any Housing Benefit a household may be eligible for will be paid as part of the monthly Universal Credit payment. Households in employment may still be eligible for a part payment of Housing Benefit but this depends on how much earned income they are receiving.

Spare Room Subsidy (Bedroom Tax)

On the 1st April 2013, under the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Government introduced what it called the “Spare Room Subsidy”. Under the changes, tenants in social housing have their benefit reduced by 14% if they have a spare bedroom or 25% if they have two or more spare rooms. Two children under 16 of the same gender are expected to share one bedroom, as are two children under 10, regardless of gender. New rules were also introduced which restrict the amount of Housing Benefit working age Council and Housing Association tenants can claim if they are deemed to be under occupying their home.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

In April 2008 the Government introduced Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. These rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. Each area has specific LHA rates that relate to the broad rental market areas (BRMA)^{xi} in that locality. The Government calculates LHA rates by basing them on private market rents being paid in the BRMA, which can differ from advertised rents^{xii} (Section 5.8 of FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023 for further details).

In 2014 the Government introduced measures to ensure that any increase in LHA would be capped at actual rent inflation, or 1%, whichever is the lower figure. Also from April 2016 LHA rates were frozen for four years, resulting in a disparity between housing benefit rates and actual market rents by 2020. A report, published by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in August 2018, stated that private rented accommodation is now unaffordable for most low income households¹⁶ (Section 5.2). The Government announced in January 2020 that from April 2020 the LHA rates will be raised in line with the Consumer Price Index (See Appendix 1 LHA rates).

3.4. Rough Sleeper Strategy

In August 2018 the Government published the national Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy sets out the Government’s commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it completely by 2027. The strategy describes key areas of work around prevention, intervention and recovery. An important feature has been to highlight the importance of collaboration between statutory and community sector partners. When launched the

¹⁶ http://www.cih.org/news-article/display/vpathDCR/templatedata/cih/news-article/data/Benefit_freeze_puts_private_renting_out_of_reach_for_low-income_tenants_and_risks_fuelling_homelessness

strategy was backed by £100 million of funding. This funding was bolstered in September 2019 when the Government committed a further £422 million in 2020/21 to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping following a 22% increase in deaths of homelessness people from the previous year.

This funding has been distributed through numerous funding streams, which includes £30 million to the NHS to provide better access to mental health services for homeless people. The main funding stream for local housing authorities is the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) (Section 7.3.6). There is also a Cold Weather Fund administered to charitable organisations that are not commissioned by local housing authorities, such as Winter Shelters.

3.5. Decision to leave the European Union

The impact of the decision to leave the European Union is hard to predict. In relation to homelessness the most immediate potential impacts are likely to be experienced by EU nationals. It is recognised that the risks and opportunities posed by the UK's departure from European Union will have significant long-term consequences for homeless/threatened with homelessness households and the wider housing sector. However, whilst the exact impact of leaving the EU is impossible to predict the, 'Homelessness and the impact of Brexit' report¹⁷, endeavours to set out the key factors that may influence how homelessness and the experience of homeless people will be affected ([Homelessness and the impact of Brexit | Homeless Link](#)).

4. Local Context

4.1. FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy

The FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy deals with the topics of new affordable homes (for rent and low cost home ownership), homelessness, the private sector, empty homes, managing the allocation of properties, and providing support and accommodation for vulnerable groups within the community¹⁸. The overall housing priorities for the district have been grouped together as follows:

- Improve access to housing in the district and increase the supply of affordable homes for rent and low cost home ownership
- Work to ensure that homes are well maintained, safer and healthier
- Enable people to live independently
- Make the best use of the existing housing stock¹⁹.

Sections 5.13 to 5.21 of the Healthier Housing Strategy sets out an overview of homelessness, the needs of former members of the Armed Forces (Section 6.5), Gypsy and Traveller communities (Section 6.6), as well as rural housing need. Many of the other topics mentioned within this review document are expanded upon further within Healthier Housing Strategy.

¹⁷ Written by WPI Economics Report for Crisis and Homeless Link

¹⁸ FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy, page 3

¹⁹ FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy, page 9

4.2. Population

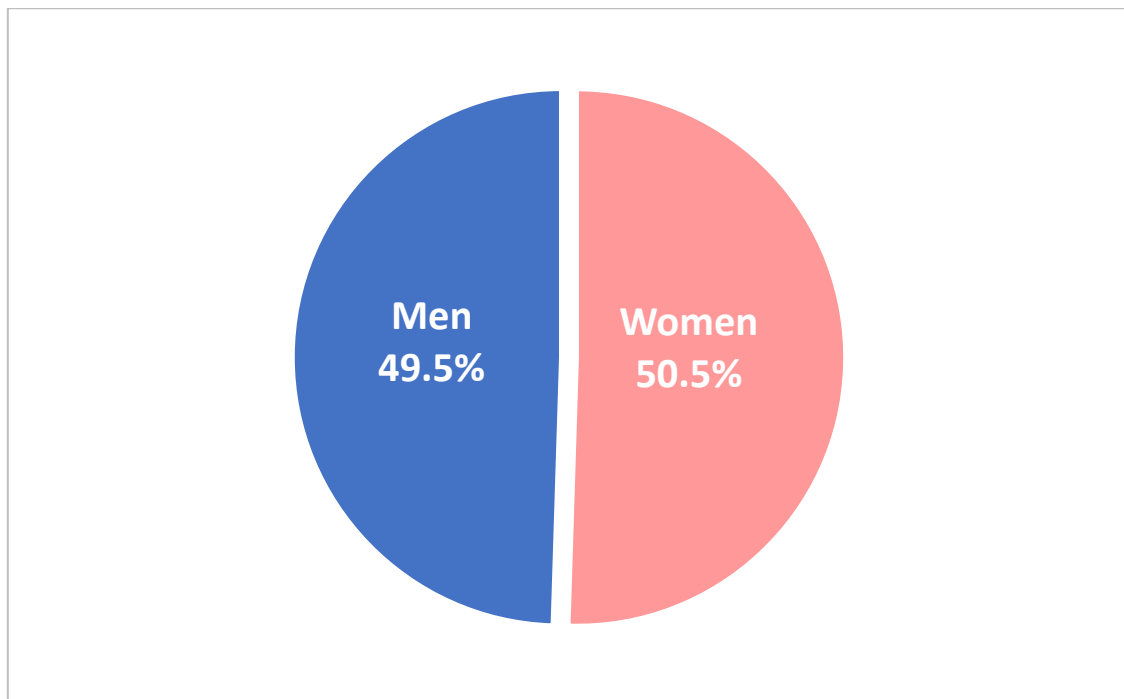
On the 25th October 2019 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the 2018 mid-year population estimates for Kent. The Population of the Folkestone & Hythe District was estimated at 112,580²⁰ (Section 4.1 of FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023). The table below sets out the projected population change for the district.

Table E. Projected population change – Folkestone & Hythe District²¹

Total Population			
2016	2026	10 year change	% of change
111.000	117,500	6,500	5.9%

The further two tables below provide information relating to the male/ female ratio with districts population. This is relevant with regards to the male/female ratio of individuals rough sleeping within the district (Section 6.2).

Table F. Folkestone & Hythe Gender Profile 2018 ²²

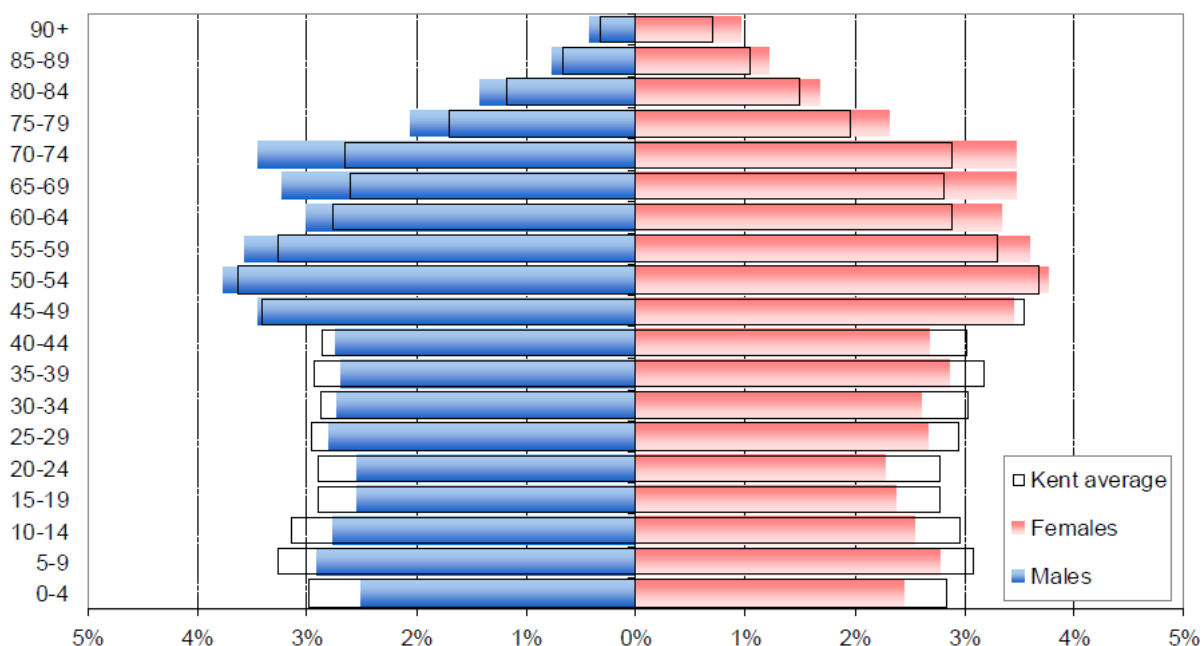


²⁰ KCC Statistical Bulletin, October 2019: 2018 Mid-year population estimates: Ward level population in Kent

²¹ KCC Statistical Bulletin, May 2018, 2016-Based Subnational Population Projections

²² Strategic Commissioning Statistical Bulletin, July 2019, 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates: Age and gender profile

Table G. Folkestone & Hythe 2018 Population Estimates – Age distribution²³



The male/female ratio changes with age. Generally, there are more males compared to females in the younger age groups, but as age increases there become more females to males²⁴. As shown in Table G, 45.5% of the population in the district are aged 50 years and over. The district has one of the highest proportions of over 65 year olds in the country²⁵.

4.3. Health Profile

The Crisis Report ‘At what cost?’²⁶, published in July 2015, suggests that at worst the cost to public services of allowing homelessness (rough sleeping) to persist for an individual for a 12 month period could be as much as £20,128 in some circumstances. The Kent Housing Group’s (KHOG) paper, ‘Think Housing First’²⁷, states that it is a well-known fact that housing is intrinsically linked to health inequalities. In short, without access to good quality and affordable housing, the chances of enjoying good health and a long life are hindered²⁸.

The report also advises that rough sleepers (Section 6.2) experience significant health inequalities. They have higher rates than the general population of hepatitis, hypothermia, pneumonia, respiratory disease, tuberculosis, poor condition of teeth, skin conditions, infection, poorer mental health, greater prevalence of smoking, alcohol and substance misuse, as well as injuries following violence²⁹. In 2010 the average death of a rough sleeper was 30 years before the general population. Recent ONS information shows that the mean age of death for homeless men is 44 years, and homeless women is 42 years.

²³ KCC Statistical Bulletin, July 2019, 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates: Age and gender profile

²⁴ KCC Statistical Bulletin, July 2019, 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates: Age and gender profile

²⁵ See Section 5.2, FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023 for further details

²⁶ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237022/costsofhomelessness_finalweb.pdf

²⁷ <https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/2016/07/ThinkHousingFirstNov13-Final.pdf>

²⁸ Think Housing First 2013-2015, Kent Housing Group and the Joint Policy & Planning Board, page 5

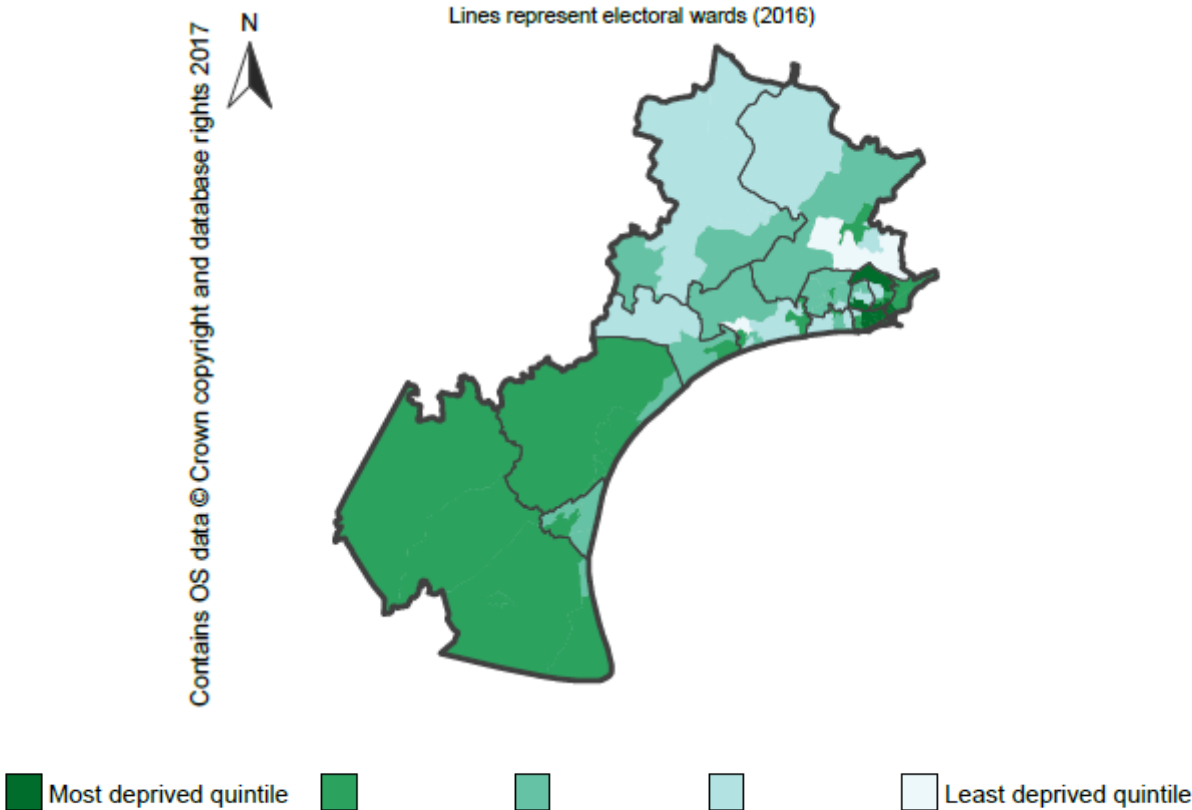
²⁹ Think Housing First 2013-2015, Kent Housing Group and the Joint Policy & Planning Board, page 12

The health of children can be dramatically affected by their housing conditions, impacting on their growth, development and their educational achievements. The Public Health England’s 2017 Health Profile for the district advised that life expectancy within the district for both men and women is similar to the average for England³⁰. However, life expectancy is 6.7 years lower for men and 3.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the Folkestone & Hythe district than in the least deprived areas; and about 22% (4,100) of children live in low income families.

Areas of Deprivation

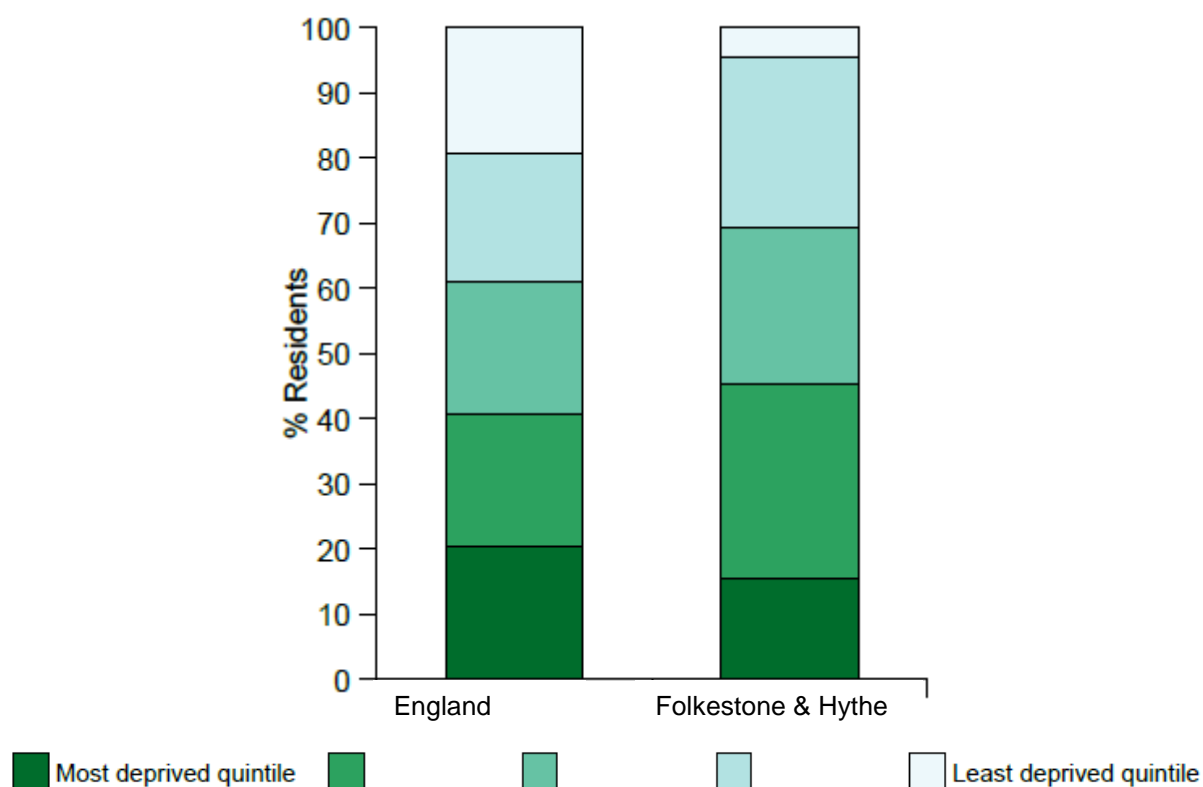
The map shows differences in deprivation in Folkestone & Hythe district based on national comparisons. The darkest coloured areas are some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

Table H. Folkestone & Hythe Areas of Deprivation (2015)



³⁰ Office for National Statistics reported life expectancy for England in 2017 was 79.2 years for males and 82.9 years for females.

Table I. Percentage of the population who live in areas at each level of deprivation.



4.4. Employment in the District

The ‘Unemployment in Kent’ Workbook, published by KCC in November 2019, looks at the total number of people aged 18 to 64 years in the district claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit for the reason of being unemployed. The report puts the percentage of these people in relation to the working-age population in the Folkestone & Hythe area at 3.5%. The ‘Kent Economic Indicators’ report published in April 2019 includes 16 and 17 year olds in the information recorded, and puts the unemployment rate for 16 to 64 year olds in the district at 4.2% of the working-age population (Section 4.5 & 4.6, FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023). In December 2019 the ONS stated that the current unemployment rate for England was 3.8% for people 16 years and over.

4.5. Reasons for Statutory Homelessness in FHDC 2018-2019

The prevailing reasons for households requiring assistance from the Council is due to eviction either by a landlord from the Private Rented Sector or by family; this is line with national evidence and similar statistics published by neighbouring authorities. A breakdown of all the main reasons why households approached the Council in need of housing assistance during 2018-2019 is shown in Table J.

The information in Table K breaks down the reasons why households approaching the Council for housing assistance were issued with S21 Notices in 2018-2019. It is important to note that although 49% of these households were confirmed as being evicted through ‘no fault’ of their own, this information can be misleading. There are some landlords, for varying reasons, who do not wish to report rent arrears or anti-social

behaviour to the Council, preferring to evict a household via a S21 Notice without providing a reason.³¹

Table J. Main Reason for Approaching FHDC for Housing Assistance 1st April 2018-31st March 2019

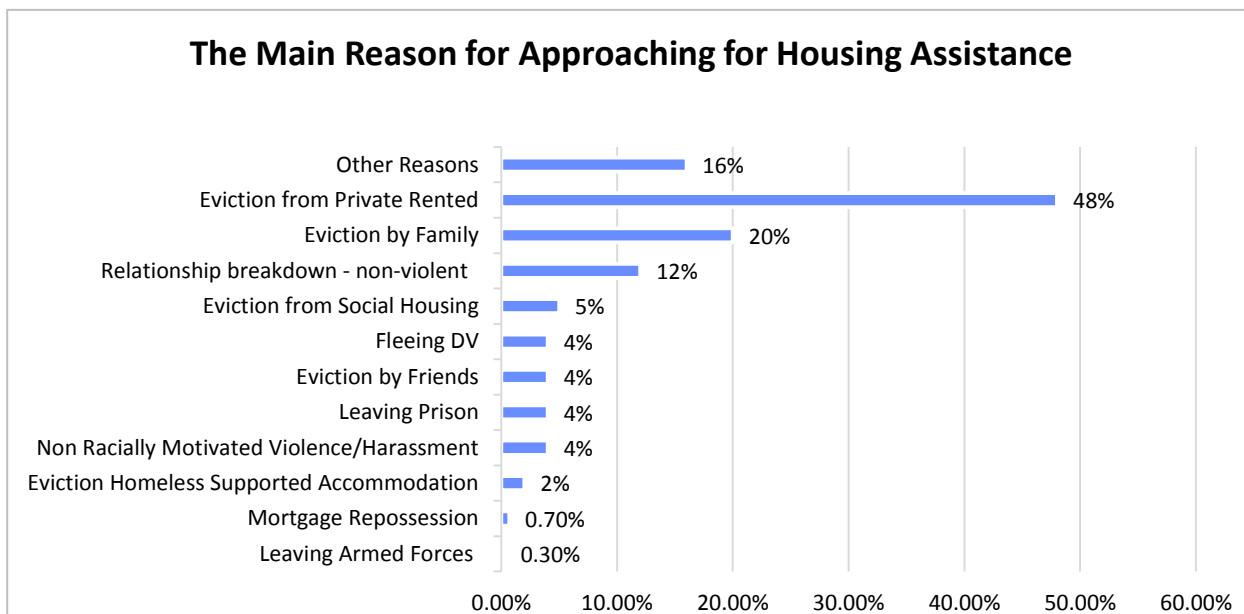
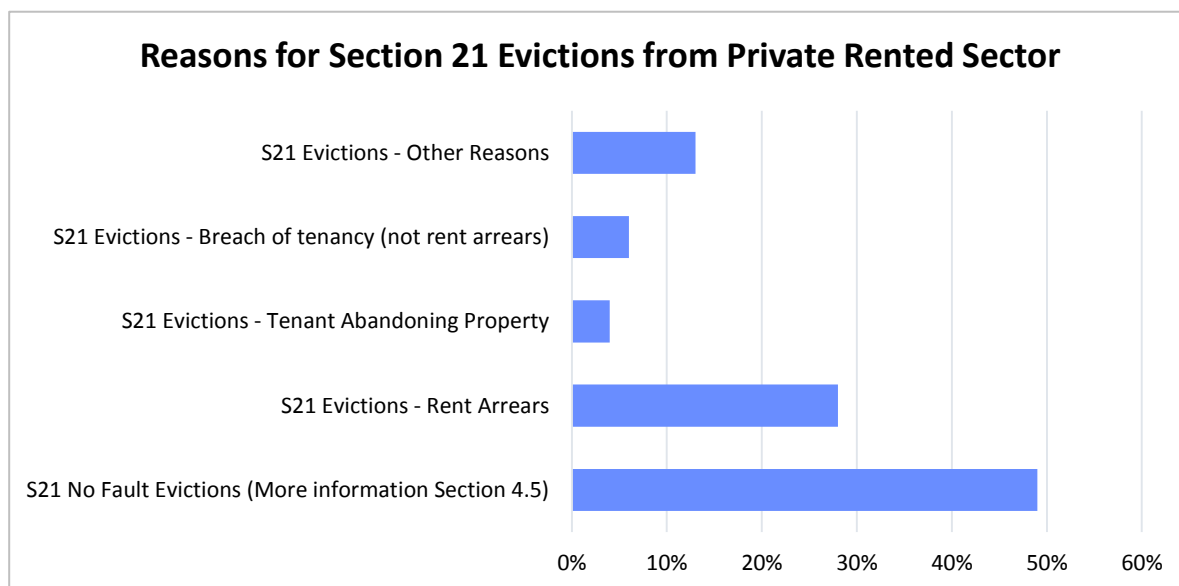


Table K. Main Reasons for being evicted from Private Rented Sector 2018-2019



³¹ House of Commons Briefing, The end of 'no-fault' section 21 evictions <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8658/CBP-8658.pdf>

5. Profile of Accommodation in the Folkestone & Hythe District

5.1. Housing Profile of District

There are approximately 50,000 residential dwellings in the district. Owner-occupation is the dominant form of tenure, with Council Housing Stock considerably smaller than the national average. In contrast, the Private Rented Sector (Section **Error! Reference source not found.**) is markedly larger than in other areas of the country and neighbouring council areas³² (Section 3, FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023).

Table L. Housing Tenure in the Folkestone & Hythe District 2017 with National and UK Comparisons

Tenure	Proportion of Stock - Folkestone & Hythe %	Proportion of Stock - Kent %	Proportion of Stock - UK %
Owner Occupation	73%	74%	75%
Private Rented	17%	11%	10%
Council Housing	7%	8%	12%
Housing Association Properties	3%	7%	3%
Section 4.5 & 4.6 of FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023 for further details			

5.2. Affordability and the Private Rented Sector

The most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was completed by the Council in early 2017. This assessment put the then house prices in the district at nine times the current average household income for local residents. The assessment also showed that 73% of newly forming households, within the district each year, are unable to afford to access entry level private rented sector accommodation. The evidence suggested that an increasing number of households would be required to spend in excess of 35% of their gross household income in order to meet their housing costs³².

The High Speed 1 train route brings more visitors to the area and allows the local population to access employment in London through a faster commute. However, it has also had an impact on house prices in Ashford, Folkestone and Dover due to Londoners moving to areas where house prices are cheaper in view of improved travel options.

As previously mentioned in Section 3.3 of this review the LHA rates covering most of the district are set quite low and in 2016 they were frozen for four years, which placed increased pressure on households in the district. With rents tending to continuously rise and the overall restriction of household welfare benefits, including the benefits cap and the restriction for single people under 35 to the LHA shared accommodation rate (see Appendix 1), the types of private rented accommodation accessible to households in receipt of benefits or low income is increasingly restricted.

³² FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy, page 10

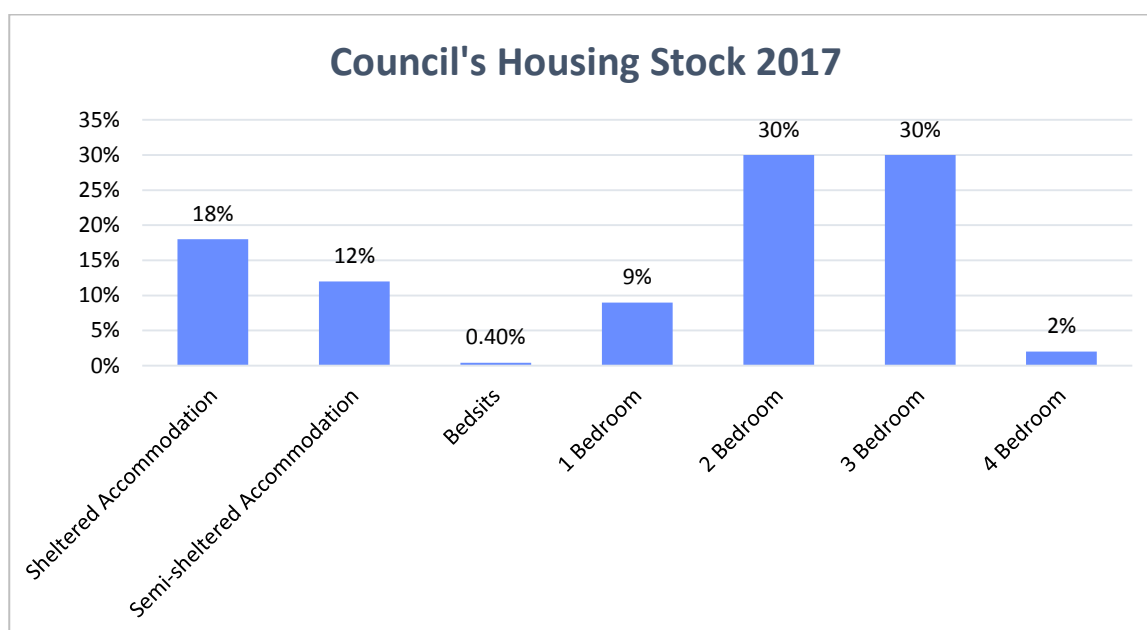
Table M. Average Mean Private Rents compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates

Number of Bedrooms	The Average Mean Private Rents pcm 2017/2018 ³³	LHA for FHDC pcm 2019/2020	LHA for FHDC pcm 2020/2021 (see Appendix 1 for more detail)
.Room/Bedsit (shared bathroom & kitchen)	£340.00	£264.45	£282.44
Studio (own bathroom & kitchen)	£420.00	£386.25	£435.00
1 Bed	£478.00	£386.25	£435.00
2 Bed	£632.00	£500.01	£575.01
3 Bed	£810.00	£625.02	£749.99
4 Bed+	£1215.00	£730.00	£899.99

5.3. Social Housing

The Council provides approximately 3400 affordable rented homes and about 30% of these are specifically for older people. Housing Associations provide approximately 1900 homes in the district³⁴.

Table N. Profile of the Councils Housing Stock



Approximately 250 to 300 Council and Housing Association properties become available each year (inclusive of Sheltered, Semi-sheltered, bedsits, 1, 2, 3 & 4 bed properties) and are let in accordance with FHDC's Housing Allocations Policy.

The Council has approximately 1250 households registered on the Council's Housing List (HL). Table O below shows the number of households in each priority band and what size property they need (see Chapter 8.1 FHDC Housing Allocations Policy).

³³ KCC Statistical Bulletin 'Housing rents in Kent Local Authorities' March 2019

³⁴ FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy, page 12

Table O. Number and size of Households on the Housing List 16th Dec 2019

Property Size Required	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Total
1 Bed Need	7	112	162	2	323	606
2 Bed Need	2	24	166	5	193	390
3 Bed Need	3	44	80	2	51	180
4 Bed Need	1	21	34	1	23	80
5 Bed Need	0	10	11	0	2	23
Total = 1279	13	211	453	10	592	1279

5.4. Supported Housing

There are currently 60 units of supported accommodation in FHDC (this does not relate to any type of sheltered or supported accommodation for older persons, care or residential homes). There are different types of supported accommodation, such as:

- Providing emergency refuge and support for victims of domestic abuse, helping them to stabilise their lives and engage with other services.
- Homelessness Accommodation Projects working with homeless people that may have complex multiple needs to help them transition from life on the street to a settled home, training, education or employment.
- Young Persons Accommodation Schemes for care leavers and homeless young people that provide tailored support to assist young people to be able to live independently.
- Supported Housing for people with mental health needs to stabilise their lives, recover and live more self-sufficiently where possible.
- Supporting living projects for people with learning disabilities in the longer-term to maximise their independence and exercise choice and control over their lives.

Most Supported Accommodation projects across Kent are commissioned by KCC and are managed by the various charities and agencies that are awarded contracts. In Kent there are homelessness support services and housing projects specifically for young people aged 16 and 17 years old, and separate services for adults aged 18 to 65 years and over.

Most supported accommodation is usually temporary in nature and it can often be difficult to find suitable and affordable move-on accommodation. This reduces the turnover of units in supported accommodation and can restrict access for people who require a higher level of support.

Table P. Supported Housing Provision in the District 2018 (excl. older persons)

Client Group	Number of Accommodation Units
People with physical or sensory disability	17
People with learning disabilities	7
People with mental health issues	11
People who have suffered domestic violence	7
People with substance/alcohol misuse issues	11
Vulnerable young people	7
Total	60

A recent review into the future funding of supported housing has required the Government and the sector to evaluate how this type of accommodation works across the country to help end people’s homelessness. There is limited data available in relation to the outcomes that a supported housing project achieves in comparison to approaches like Housing First which has an excellent international evidence base³⁵; and which is now fast becoming the Governments focus in relation to support and housing provision for single homeless people.

Housing First Projects (See Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025) places no conditions on individuals before they are housed. They also have a positive impact on the community because the projects have a better success rate leading to fewer people sleeping rough, which often leads to a reduction in crime and substance misuse in towns and surrounding areas.

5.5. Supply of new Accommodation

The Council’s Action Plan for housing in the district can be found in Appendix 1 of the FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023. The plan sets out the targets for building new affordable homes within the District, improving the condition of private rented accommodation, bringing empty properties back into the housing market, and making the best use of council and housing association properties, as well as reducing the time these properties are vacant between lets. Any increase or decrease in the level of resources the Council has to deliver this strategy will clearly impact on the ability to deliver the targets.

There are a growing number of communities across the UK that want to have more of a say, and much more involvement, in solving their own housing problems; and the Government is supporting these Community-Led-Housing Projects through funding initiatives (See Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025). These community housing projects yield many positive results that traditional building programmes do not

³⁵ Homeless Link website <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2018/jun/28/future-hostel-%E2%80%93-what-do-we-know-about-how-hostels-can-help-end>

always deliver, such as improvements in feelings of self-worth and well-being, as well as increasing the employability of those involved and those who come into contact with these projects. These types of housing initiatives often organically establish a sense of community naturally as the project evolves, and before the new housing is even completed; in much the same way as a village community may have developed over decades in the past.

6. Who Uses FHDC Housing Options (Homelessness) Services

6.1. Homelessness Approaches for Assistance to FHDC

Following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act the Council saw a 10% increase in homelessness approaches for housing assistance in 2018 and in 2019 the approaches were 25% higher than in 2016 and 2017 as the chart below shows.

Table Q. Total number of households that approached FHDC for homelessness assistance 2016 to 31st Dec 2019

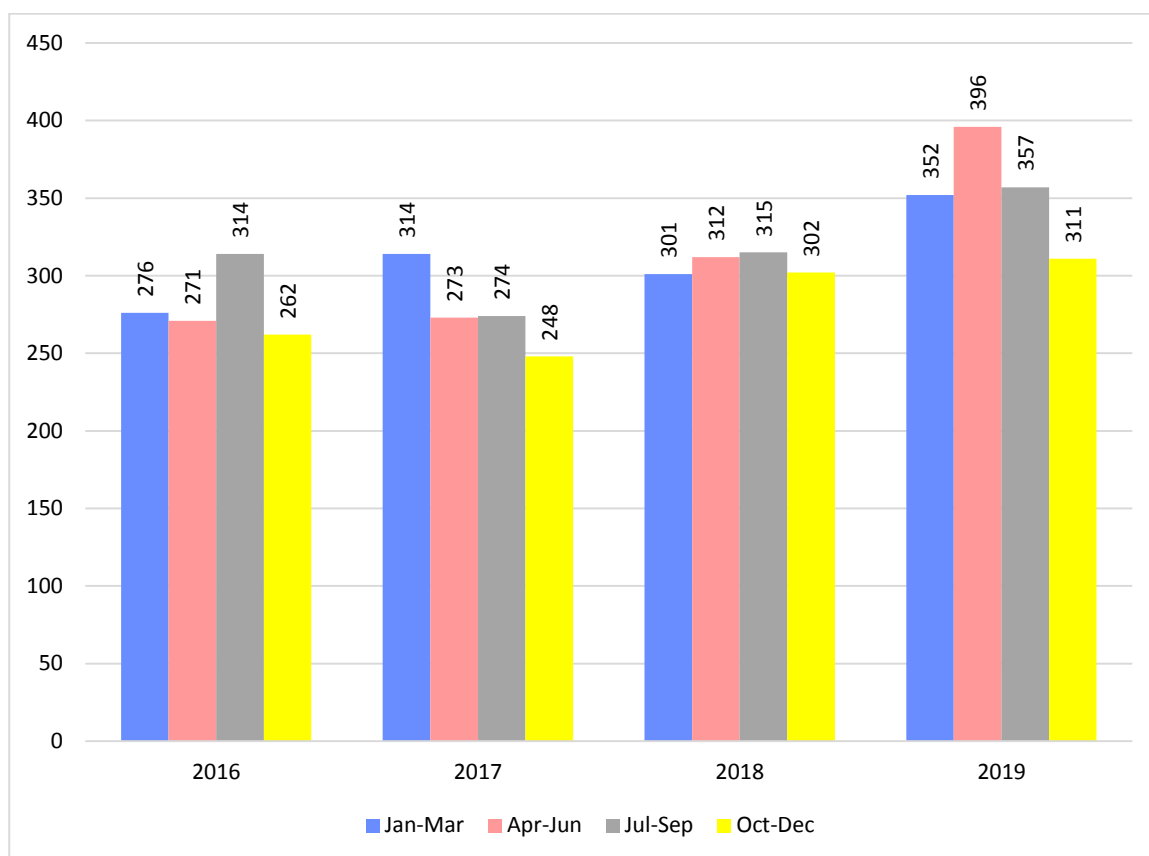


Table R. Make-up of Households Approaching the Council for Housing Assistance in 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2018

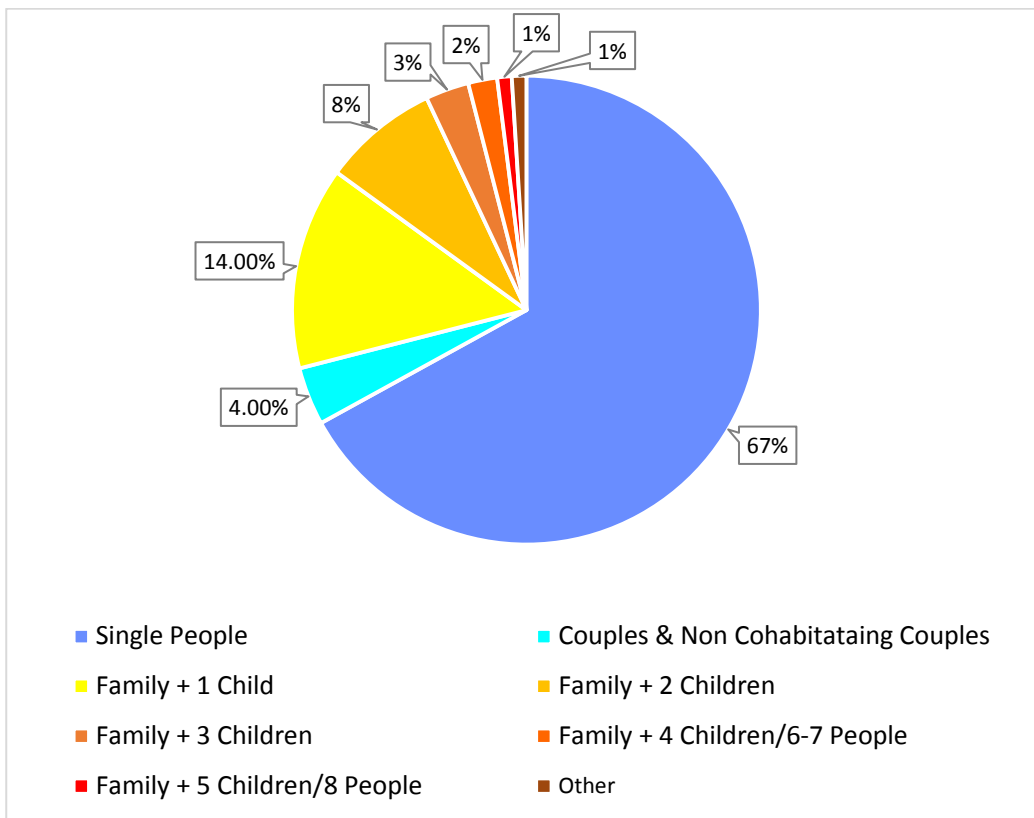
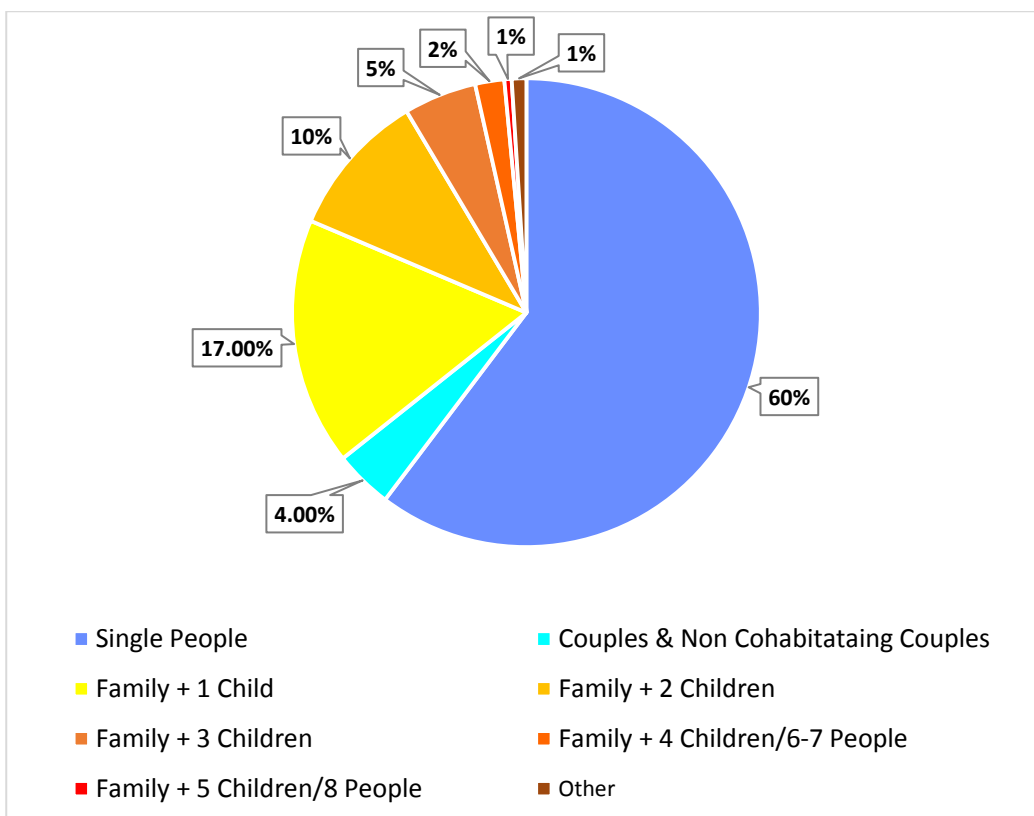


Table S. Make-up of Households Approaching the Council for Housing Assistance in 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2019



The two charts above show that in 2018 and 2019 the majority of all homelessness approaches were from single person households, and an average of about 32% has been from families; mostly those with 1 child. The extra funding (Section 7.3.6) the Council received from the MHCLG at the beginning of 2019, to provide additional services for single homeless people, has had a positive effect, reducing these approaches from single people by 9% during 2019.

Table T. Gender Ratio Single Homeless People Approaches 1st Jan 2018 - 31st Dec 2018

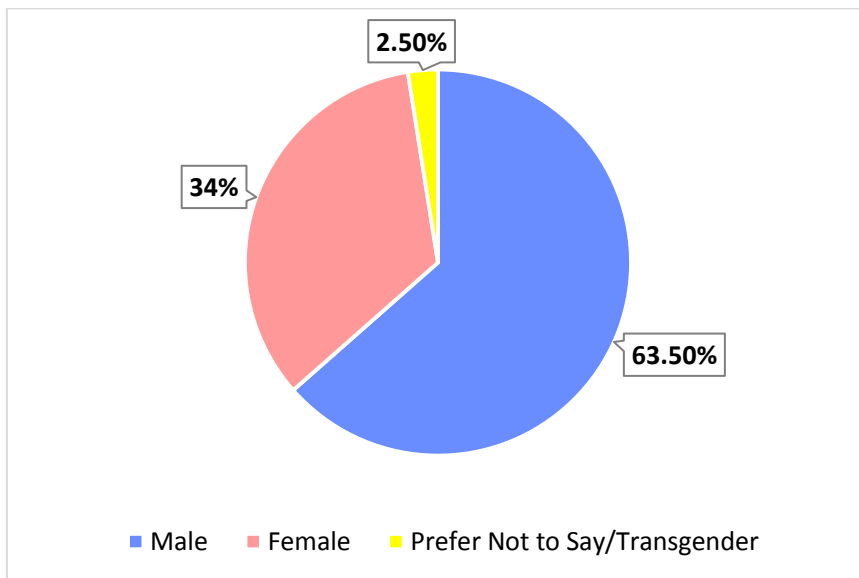
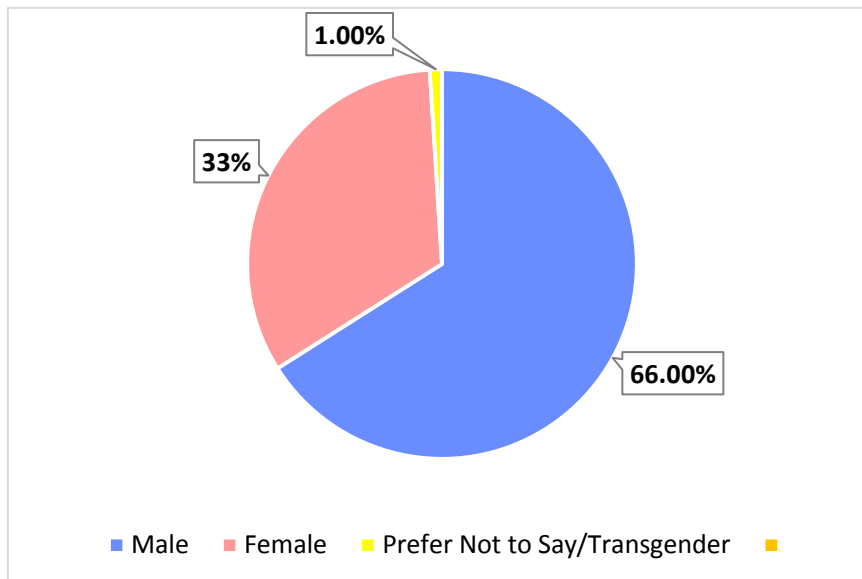


Table U. Gender Ratio Single Homeless People Approaches 1st Jan 2019 - 31st Dec 2019



In the Folkestone & Hythe District there are fewer women sleeping rough than men, although in the district's population overall there are more women than men. The Rough Sleeper services in Dover and Folkestone, funded by the MHCLG, includes a female rough sleeper worker to support women who may not wish to be supported by a male worker, due to their past and present experiences.

6.2. Rough Sleepers

Homelessness amongst vulnerable single people, including people sleeping rough, continues to be an issue in the district. The MHCLG requires local housing authorities in England to undertake either an annual count or an intelligence-led estimate of the number of people rough sleeping in their district. The counts and estimates process is not designed to arrive at a single irrefutable number of people sleeping rough. Instead, it is a snapshot of the numbers of people likely to be sleeping rough each night during a given period each year, and which can subsequently be used to track trends nationally and locally.

The rough sleeping count completed in November 2019, identified 10 individuals sleeping rough in the Folkestone & Hythe area. This figure is a substantial reduction from the 18 individuals identified rough sleeping during the count in November 2018 (Table V Table V). This reduction is likely to be as a result of a change to the Council’s Rough Sleeper Outreach Service (Section 7.3.3) and additional rough sleeper service provision funded by the MHCLG from April 2018 (Section 7.3.6).

Table V. FHDC Annual Street Count Figures 2010 – 2019

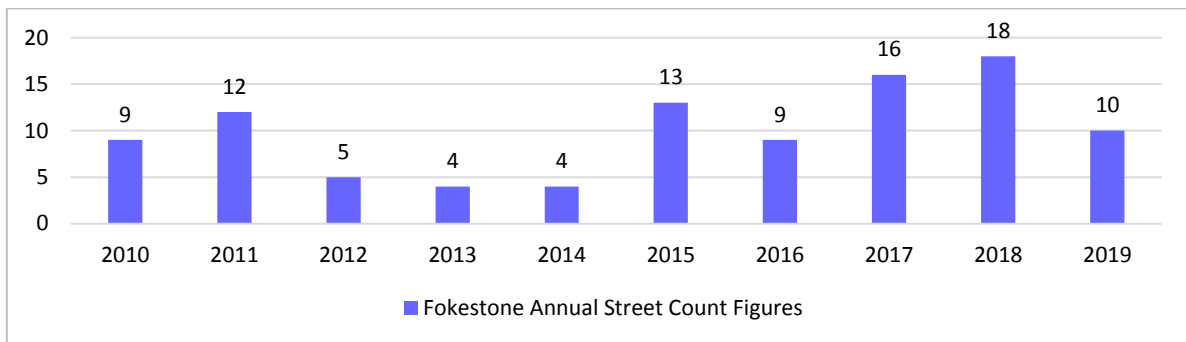
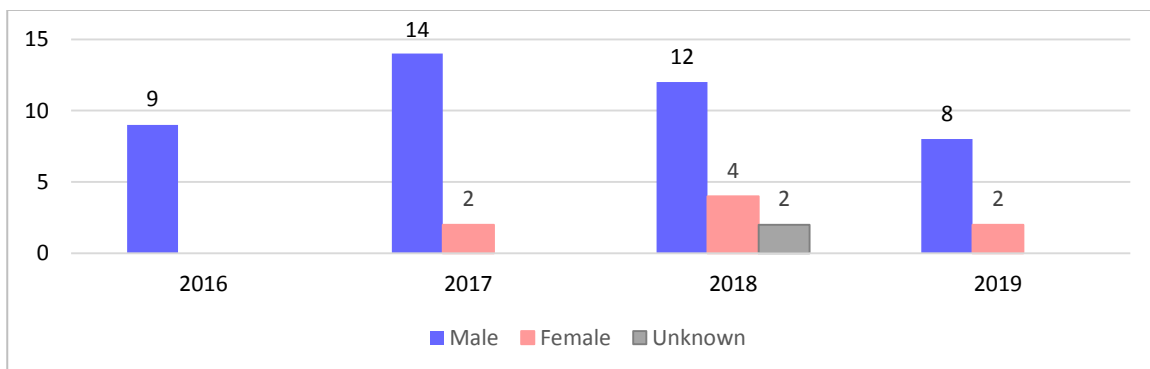
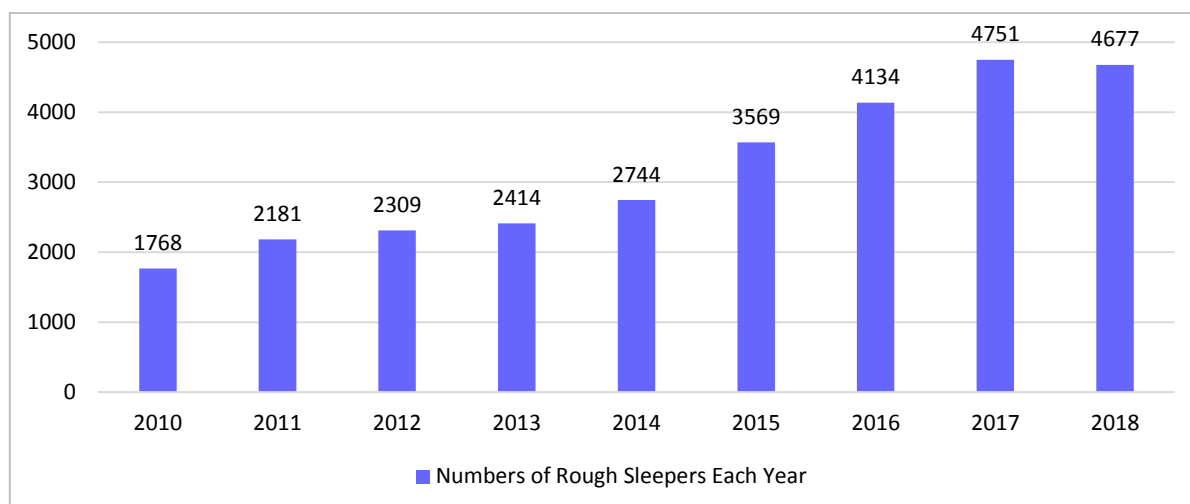


Table W. Gender breakdown of FHDC Annual Street Count Figures 2016 – 2019



The rough sleeper count results across England in 2018 showed a slight drop in the numbers of people sleeping rough (0), which is in line with the local numbers reported for the Folkestone & Hythe District. The reduction follows the implementation in 2018 of the Governments Rough Sleeper Strategy (Section 3.4).

Table X. Numbers of Rough Sleepers - MHCLG Statistics 2010 - 2018



We consider that the support provided will continue to proactively prevent people from becoming homeless wherever possible, and assist those already rough sleeping off the streets. However, there is a group of about 6 individuals with complex needs, and histories of longer-term rough sleeping, who continue to decline offers of support or assistance from the council and partner agencies.

6.3. Youth Homelessness

Relevant legislation sets out that primary responsibility for homeless 16 and 17 year olds, who require accommodation, lies with the relevant local social services team. However, there remain some circumstances when the local housing authority (the district or borough council) will have duties towards them.

The MHCLG advise that all young people who approach a local housing authority or social services team should have access to advocacy services, which tailors the way information is explained, to assist them to make the right choices. FHDC Young Persons Advocacy Service is provided by Young Lives <https://ylf.org.uk/>.

Table Y. Number of Homelessness Approaches to FHDC from Young People

Homelessness Approaches to FHDC from Households Aged 16 to 18 years				
Age Breakdown	16 years	17 years	18 years	Total
1 st Jan to 31 st Dec 2018	1	16	27	44
1 st Jan to 31 st Dec 2019	5	26	37	68

All local social services teams now include an 'Adolescent Team' specifically to carry out preventive work around homelessness issues with 16 and 17-year-olds, and to undertake mediation with their families. The principal aim is to divert young people from the care system and the teams typically provide a short-term, intensive, preventive service to help young people and families resolve issues.

6.4. Victims of Domestic Abuse

According to “The Domestic Abuse Report 2020: The Hidden Housing Crisis”³⁶, nearly 70% of women responding to a survey by Women’s Aid told the national charity that their housing situation and concerns about future housing, including fears of homelessness or lack of safe housing, prevent them from leaving an abuser³⁷.

The government plans to change the law so anyone fleeing domestic abuse is automatically in priority need. This change has not been introduced yet, however, the Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-2021, which will contain the legislation to change the law once it becomes an Act, is currently being scrutinized by the House of Commons, before it is examined by the House of Lords and given Royal Assent.

During the financial year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020, just under 2.5% of households approached the Council for housing assistance due to fleeing domestic abuse.

6.5. HM Forces Personnel and Ex-servicemen

A local authority must consider whether any person who makes an approach for housing assistance, and who is leaving, or has left the HM Forces, (including someone who had been detained in a military prison or corrective training centre) is vulnerable as a result of that service, and therefore in priority need. If a household approaches who is leaving, or has left, HM Forces includes children in the household, a vulnerable adult with a priority need, or a person who is pregnant, the household automatically has a priority need.

From 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 less than 1% of households that approached the Council for housing assistance were homeless due to leaving HM Forces, or had a priority need due to having served in HM Forces. FHDC has made a commitment to support local HM Forces personnel and is signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant (<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/armed-forces/community-covenant>).

6.6. Gypsies and Travellers

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amended the Housing Act 1985 so that the duty to assess the housing needs of the districts inhabitants includes consideration of the needs of people residing in, or resorting to the district for, caravan and houseboat mooring sites. The ‘East Kent Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people Accommodation Assessment’ completed in 2014 estimated that the gypsy and traveller population in the Folkestone & Hythe District was 164 individuals or 42 households. It is difficult to obtain accurate information about the number of households in the area who identify as being from this ethnic group, because they do not always wish to declare their background.

The Council is aware that there are communities in this district requiring housing support, who identify as a gypsies and/or travellers. The Council will follow the advice and guidance available from Government, as well as any up-to-date data and local anecdotal information from the FHDC Community Safety Specialist, Environmental Services and Planning to formulate a best practice approach for working with these households in relation to their housing need.

³⁶ The Domestic Abuse Report is a series published by Women’s Aid that brings together the most comprehensive set of data on domestic abuse in the country

³⁷ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/fear-of-homelessness-prevents-women-leaving-their-abuser/>

6.7. Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS)

Through the SVPRS^{xiii}, launched in January 2014, the Council is working closely with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees via KCC to identify those in the greatest need, and most at risk, to bring them to the UK. The Community Sponsorship Scheme, also enables community groups to directly welcome and support refugees in the UK, and this will continue. Refugees resettled under this new community-led scheme will be in addition to the Government commitment³⁸.

In 2015 FHDC agreed to work with KCC, along with the eleven other local authorities in Kent, to house ten families over five years. To date eight Syrian families have been housed in the Folkestone & Hythe area, leaving a further two families to be resettled from the original agreement. FHDC has also agreed to rehouse another two families in 2020 and two more for each year thereafter.

7. Previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy and FHDC Corporate Delivery Plan 2017-2020

7.1. East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2019

In 2008 Folkestone & Hythe, Canterbury, Dover and Thanet adopted a joint East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy, this was subsequently reviewed and updated in 2014. Over the last eight years local housing authorities have experienced significant reductions in core funding, this combined with welfare reforms (Section 3.3), the challenges of leaving the European Union (Section 3.5 **Error! Reference source not found.**) and the recent recommissioning of homelessness services across Kent by KCC, has left each Council with their own particular issues. Therefore, each Local Housing Authorities will have their own Homelessness Prevention Strategies.

Under the East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2019 six priorities were identified as follows:

- Preventing and responding to homelessness before a crisis point is reached.
- Preventing and responding to rough sleeping.
- Providing high quality housing options advice before a crisis point is reached and appropriate advice, accommodation and support if crisis occurs.
- Providing good quality housing that local people can afford and making best use of the housing stock.
- Promoting partnership working and shared good practice.
- Deliver excellent homelessness services.

7.2. FHDC Corporate Delivery Plan 2017-2020

The Corporate Delivery Plan provides details of what the Council proposes to achieve between 2017 and 2020. Six priorities were identified, one of which is More Homes. Under this priority the five following goals in relation to homelessness were adopted:

- Provide advice and alternative housing options to prevent more people from becoming homeless.
- Preventing 550 families at risk of homelessness from losing their home per year.

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-global-resettlement-scheme-for-the-most-vulnerable-refugees-announced>

- Increase the availability of suitable temporary accommodation through a review of use and type.
- Prevent rough sleeping by delivering a Rapid Response Service with local partners:
- Increase availability of private rental properties through the promotion of the Social Lettings Agency.

7.3. Achievements against the Previous Homelessness Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan

7.3.1. Housing Options Service – Advice, Information and Support

The FHDC Housing Options Service has always strived to provide the best available advice, information and support to customers needing housing assistance. Since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (Section 2.7) this service has developed further. This included a renewed emphasis on prevention work and creating several detailed Housing Advice Factsheets. A Landlord Liaison Officer was recruited in early 2018, with specialist lettings background, to set up the Council’s Property Solutions Scheme (Section 7.3.5) for private sector landlords. This role and the scheme has greatly improved the Council’s relationship with, and access to, the private rented sector, resulting in more properties in the private sector being offered to our customers.

7.3.2. Prevention Approach

Prevention has always been a key focus of all Housing Options Services and over the last 5 years FHDC has worked jointly with many different Housing Support Agencies to provide wide-ranging support to households to maintain their housing or source other suitable accommodation. Over the last three years the Council has invested in a Prevention Plus Service to further support households at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point. This service is constantly adapting to meet the needs of the local community, also signposting when necessary to other local agencies who can also strengthen and booster the support.

Table Z. Homelessness Prevented and Relieved

FHDC	2018/2019	2019/2020
Cases closed at Triage due to advice provided to prevent homelessness	243	338
Cases closed as prevented under the Prevention Duty	118	96
Cases closed as relieved under the Relief Duty	84	154

7.3.3. Working with the Voluntary Sector

The Council leads several forums such as the Homelessness Forum and the Rough Sleeper Forum to promote and support joint working between all local agencies that may be involved in assisting those with housing issues. These meetings help to identify the most vulnerable households and how each agencies resources can best be deployed to have the most positive and effective impact.

In 2018 the Council re-commissioned the FHDC Rough Sleeper Outreach Service and relocated the service to the Council Civic Centre resulting in improved communication between Customer Services, the Housing Options Team and the Outreach Service. This enhanced and simplified the assessment and support process for single homeless individuals. The joint working enables access to a broader range of housing options for these individuals that includes supported accommodation, private rented accommodation, social housing and specialist housing support for those with complex issues, such as residential detox units across the county.

The Council continues to work with and support all agencies and charities supporting households experiencing housing issues, particularly the Rainbow Centre, the Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter, Porchlight, Serveco, the Sanctuary Outreach Service, the Job Centre Plus and the Forward Trust.

7.3.4. Temporary Accommodation

By working hard to prevent homelessness, or to source alternative suitable accommodation for households to move to before eviction takes place, the Council has reduced the number of households who require temporary accommodation and reduced the length of time households spend in this accommodation.

Table AA. Average Households in Temporary Accommodation

Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation as of the 31 st March each year.				
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
36	44	72	38	21

Over the last five years the Council has improved the quality of temporary accommodation accessed by working with several organisations who provide self-contained^{xiv} temporary accommodation. The Council has also delivered eight units of self-contained temporary accommodation. The Council continues to monitor the need for this type of accommodation and will consider increasing the number of units as required. Bed & Breakfast accommodation is rarely, if ever, used – in emergencies only. On the rare occasions when families with children have to be placed in this type of accommodation they are not there for more than 6 weeks in line with legislation.

7.3.5. Property Solutions and Social Lettings Agency

The Property Solutions Scheme connects a landlord with the right tenant for their property and provides support and guidance to both parties. Although the service does not continue to manage the property, or the tenancy for the landlord once it is let, access to support is available to assist with any issues that arise that may put the tenancy at risk. To date this scheme has successfully obtained 57 private sector properties, and the numbers of properties is increasing each year.

Table BB. Number of PRS properties sourced by Property Solutions

Property Solutions	2018	2019	As at 10 th June 2020
Number of PRS properties obtained through the scheme.	15	43	14
Another 6 PRS properties were obtained through the scheme during 2018 & 2019 for the SVPRS (Section 6.7)			

The Council also works with ABC Lettings, which is a Lettings and Property Management Service run by Ashford Borough Council across both the Ashford and Folkestone & Hythe Districts. It offers landlords a safe property management service for letting their rental properties to customers of both Councils. ABC Lettings has been creating and successfully managing tenancies in the private sector for more than seven years in Ashford and for five years in the Folkestone & Hythe District.

7.3.6. MHCLG Funding/Rough Sleeper Provision

Folkestone & Hythe and Dover District Councils received joint funding award of £414,000 in 2019 from the MHCLG to tackle rough sleeping in their areas. This funding has allowed both Councils to employ local homeless agencies, including Porchlight, Serveco and Sanctuary Supported Living, to help people sleeping rough and assist them into accommodation.

A further £33,500 funding was awarded in late 2019 to help rough sleepers into emergency accommodation throughout the winter months. This money has allowed the Councils to take 17 rough sleepers off the streets of Dover and Folkestone. A new bid for continuing these services into 2020/2021 was made to the MHCLG, as was a request to join the Prison Navigator Service currently operating successfully in 4 Kent council areas. As a result further funding of over £400k was jointly awarded to Folkestone & Hythe and Dover District Councils

7.3.7. Increased Housing Stock

Over the last 5 years 351 new properties of various types of tenure have been delivered in the Folkestone & Hythe area as set out in the table below.

Table CC. New Affordable Homes delivered between April 2014 & March 2019

Type of New Housing Delivered	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		Total
	HA*	LA*	HA*	LA*	HA*	LA*	HA*	LA*	HA*	LA*	
Affordable Rent	75	0	38	17	0	9	0	23	8	22	192
Social Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
Intermediate Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	14

Shared Ownership	44	0	26	0	0	0	0	5	20	2	97
Shared Equity	0	0	20	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	26
LA Mortgage Scheme	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Wheelchair Accessible	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	4	7
TOTAL	119	5	84	19	6	9	0	30	51	28	351
*HA = Housing Association & LA = Local Authority											

8. Strategic Priorities Going Forward

The findings of the homelessness review have helped inform the priorities for the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025. The three priority areas are:

- End Rough Sleeping
- Early Intervention, Prevention and Support
- Maximise Access to Affordable and Suitable Accommodation

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025 sets out an action plan of how the Council plans to achieve these priorities and monitor progress.

Glossary

FHDC	Folkestone & Hythe District Council
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing Communities & Local Government
HRA	Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
NFA	No fixed Abode
KHOG	Kent Housing Options Group is made up of all the Housing Options Managers from each Kent Local Authority and meets quarterly.
Local housing authority	In Kent the local housing authority is the district and borough councils.
Sofa-surfing	The practice of a homeless person who stays temporarily with various acquaintances, people they have only just met, friends and relatives while attempting to find permanent accommodation.
PHP	Personalised Housing Plan
PRS	Private Rented Sector
HL	Housing List
Affordable Rent	Are rents of up to 80 per cent of market rent which registered providers can charge for certain residential properties. This limit is set by the rent standard, which is one of the regulatory standards imposed by the Regulator of Social Housing in England. The Regulator has issued guidance on how market rent should be calculated, and service charges are included.
Social Rents	Are pegged to local incomes to keep rents more affordable. Changes to social rents – whether up or down – are controlled by central Government. Social rents are lower than so-called 'affordable' rents which are set at up to 80% of the market rate.
Pcm	Per Calendar Month
Section 21 (S21) -	A Section 21 is the most common form of notice a landlord serves on a tenant to request that they leave their private rented property.
Section 8 (S8) -	A Section 8 Notice is used to gain possession of a property at any time during a tenancy. It can only be used if there are grounds for eviction, such as over 8 weeks rent arrears, reported and recorded (i.e. to the Police) anti-social behaviour.
Local Children's Authority	In Kent the local children's authority is Kent County Council.
KCC	Kent County Council
County Councils	County councils cover the whole of the county and are responsible for: education, highways, transport planning, passenger transport, social care, libraries, waste disposal and strategic planning.
District & Borough Councils	Each county is divided into several districts. District councils, which may also be called borough councils or city councils, provide the

following local services: housing, leisure and recreation, waste collection, environmental health, planning and taxation collections.

Unitary authorities	Many large towns and cities and some small counties are unitary authorities. Unitary authorities are responsible: education, highways, transport planning, passenger transport, social care, housing, libraries, leisure and recreation, environmental health, waste collection, waste disposal, planning applications, strategic planning and local taxation collection.
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Social Services	For the purpose of this review Social Services for Children and Families will be referred as 'Social Services' or 'local children's authority'. These Services are provided by KCC and assist families with children and teenagers up to the age of 16 years old.
Adult Social Services	Services provided by KCC for Adult Social Services, for older people or adults with a physical or learning disability.
P1E	A quarterly statistics return managed by MHCLG, containing data as reported by 326 local authorities that covers: Households dealt with under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act, and homelessness prevention and relief.
Rainbow Centre	The Rainbow Centre is a Christian charity that delivers a range of services in the Folkestone & Hythe District to provide support and hope to individuals and families experiencing deprivation or hardship; through its Homeless Support Service, Foodbank and Food Stop
Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter	The Folkestone Churches Winter Shelter project was established in 2009 by Churches Together Folkestone and other local interests. For the last ten years the Folkestone Rainbow Centre has overseen the operation of the shelter project.
Porchlight	Are a Kent-wide homelessness charity, supporting individuals and families through a variety of different services across the county. Porchlight are also providing the rough sleeper support services in Folkestone and Dover funded by the MHCLG.
Sanctuary Outreach Service	Based in the Folkestone and Hythe district, the Folkestone & Hythe Rough Sleeper Outreach service is commissioned by FHDC and currently delivered by Sanctuary Supported Living and provides floating support for adults aged 18 and over, who are sleeping rough.
Jobcentre Plus	Jobcentre Plus is the part of the Department for Work and Pensions which delivers working-age support service in the United Kingdom, including Universal Credit.
Forward Trust	The Forward Trust manages a diverse range of drug and alcohol recovery services to provide individuals with the care and support to stabilise their lives. The Folkestone & Hythe District Service is a mobile and outreach/drop-in service with the main hub in Dover.

Appendix 1.

The LHA rates from 1st April 2020 to the 31st March 2021 for properties within the Folkestone & Hythe District are as follows:

FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE (LHA) RATES			
For the Folkestone, Sandgate, Hythe, Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay and Hawkinge – this is a guide please check LHA rates at https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx			
	Weekly	Four Weekly	Monthly
Shared accommodation*	£65.00	£260.00	£282.44
One bedroom	£100.11	£400.44	£435.00
Two bedrooms	£132.33	£529.32	£575.01
Three bedrooms	£172.60	£690.40	£749.99
Four bedrooms & above	£207.12	£828.48	£899.99
For New Romney, Greatstone, Littlestone, Lydd-on-Sea, Lydd, Newchurch, Ivychurch & St Mary's-in-the-Marsh – this is a guide check LHA rates at https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx			
	Weekly	Four Weekly	Monthly
Shared accommodation*	£78.00	£312.00	£338.93
One bedroom	£143.84	£575.36	£625.02
Two bedrooms	£168.00	£672.00	£730.00
Three bedrooms	£207.12	£828.48	£899.99
Four bedrooms & above	£260.05	£1040.20	£1249.99
Elham – this is a guide please check LHA rates at https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx			
	Weekly	Four Weekly	Monthly
Shared accommodation*	£78.59	£314.36	£341.49
One bedroom	£136.93	£547.72	£594.99
Two bedrooms	£182.96	£731.84	£795.00
Three bedrooms	£224.38	£897.52	£974.98
Four bedrooms & above	£287.67	£1150.68	£1249.99

Please Note:

Shared Accommodation rates apply to single occupiers under 35 years of age. Care leavers should be entitled to the 1 bed rate up until they turn 22. Please ask staff for more details.

Endnotes

- ⁱ If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, this is known as a Category 1 hazard. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, this is known as a Category 2 hazard. For example, if an officer assessed the hazard of Excess Cold and it scored over 1000 it would be a category 1 hazard and the council must take action to remove or reduce the hazard.
- ⁱⁱ For the purpose of this review Social Services for Children & Families will be referred to throughout the document as 'Social Services' or 'local children's authority'. These Services are provided by KCC and assist families with children and teenagers up to the age of 16 years old.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The free initial advice and information should at least cover the following:
- Preventing homelessness or securing accommodation
 - The rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
 - The duties of the authority
 - Any help that is available from the authority/agencies, and how to access that help
- ^{iv} More up-to-date information about eligibility for housing assistance can be accessed on the Chartered Institute of Housings "Housing Rights" website (www.housing-rights.info).
- ^v P1E – A quarterly statistics return managed by DCLG, containing data as reported by 326 local authorities that covers: Households dealt with under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act, and homelessness prevention and relief.
- ^{vi} The H-CLIC report relies on accurate data entry by Housing Option Teams.
- ^{vii} Copeland, in the North West of England, remained the most affordable local housing authority in England and Wales in 2018; with average house prices being 2.5 times average workplace-based annual earnings. Kensington and Chelsea remained the least affordable local housing authority in 2018, with average house prices being 44.5 times workplace-based average annual earnings.
- ^{viii} Affordable Rents are rents of up to 80 per cent of market rent which registered providers can charge for certain residential properties. This limit is set by the rent standard, which is one of the regulatory standards imposed by the Regulator of Social Housing in England. The Regulator has issued guidance on how market rent should be calculated, and service charges are included. Lettings at affordable rents are defined as 'low cost' rental accommodation and as such are 'social housing'. They are therefore regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- ^{ix} Through the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- ^x Benefit sanctions. When claiming benefits you must follow certain rules, otherwise you may lose your benefits or have them reduced. This is known as a sanction.
- ^{xi} A BRMA is an area within which a person could reasonably be expected to live having regard to facilities and services for the purposes of health, education, recreation, personal banking and shopping, taking account of the distance of travel by public and private transport, to and from these facilities.
- ^{xii} Mathematical calculations are applied to the list of private market in the BRMA to determine the LHA rate which continues to be set to the 30th percentile of all rents in the Folkestone & Hythe District Area.
- ^{xiii} On 7 September 2015, the then Prime Minister announced that the scheme would be expanded to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection by 2020. On 3 July 2017, the Home Secretary announced that eligibility for the scheme would be extended to all those refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria, regardless of their nationality and thus become the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). From 2020 the Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the Gateway Protection Programme will be consolidated into one global scheme. There will also be a new process for emergency resettlement, allowing the UK to respond quickly to instances when there is a heightened need for protection, providing a faster route to resettlement where lives are at risk.
- ^{xiv} Self-contained temporary accommodation are mostly flats, terraced and semi-detached houses (all with their own kitchen & bathrooms) that are leased to the Council on a nightly let basis, by reputable companies, for use as temporary accommodation.

Stage 1 and 2 Equality Impact Assessment Templates

Directorate: Housing & Operations

Service: Housing Strategy

Accountable Officer: Kimba Layton

Telephone & e-mail: Kimba.layton@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Date of assessment: 4 November 2020

Names & job titles of people carrying out the assessment:

Name of service/function/policy etc:	Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy
Is this new or existing?	Existing - Updating Strategy for 2020 to 2025

Stage 1: Screening Stage

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The findings from the Homelessness Review have been used to update and draft the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025 and agree on the priorities for the Council in relation to homelessness and homelessness prevention, for the next 5 years. The priorities agreed are as follows:

1. Ending Rough Sleeping
2. Early Intervention, Prevention & Support
3. Maximise Access to Affordable & Suitable Accommodation

The draft strategy sets out how the council, working with partners, aims to achieve these priorities and monitor progress.

2. Are there external considerations? (legislation/government directive etc.)

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness and related provision in their district. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has also said that all local housing authorities must develop new homelessness strategies to take into account the changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

In August 2018 the Government published the national Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy sets out the Government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it completely by 2027. The strategy sets out key areas of work around prevention, intervention and recovery. An important feature has been to highlight the importance of collaboration between statutory and community sector partners.

Due to recent events related to COVID-19 the focus on ending rough sleeping has been heightened. The Council is following all guidance from the MHCLG in relation to keeping persons/households who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness safe and in accommodation. All additional housing options funding provided to assist during the COVID-19 pandemic is being used to provide temporary accommodation as required and to secure longer-term housing.

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

- The Council, in particular the Housing Strategy, Housing Options and some of the Community Safety Teams.
- All constituents/households who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or who will experience these situations sometime in the future.
- All the Council's statutory and voluntary partners (such as Police, NHS, KCC, DWP, Mental Health provision, Social Services, Substance Misuse Agencies, Homelessness Support Services, local businesses, third sector partners and education organisations).
- Housing providers (such as Council Housing, Housing Associations, Community-Led Housing Groups, and Supported Housing Projects).

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

The outcomes aimed for through the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025 and Action Plan are focused on assisting all households affected by homelessness or the risk thereof, including low-income households, those in receipt of in-work and out-of-work benefits, those affected by mental health issues and substance misuse issues. The main focus is on preventing homelessness as much as possible.

Other beneficiaries of the outcomes aimed for are Kent Police (reduction in crime – ASB & shoplifting etc.); businesses in Folkestone, Hythe & New Romney (reduction in shoplifting, a loitering street population, drinking, sleeping in shop doorways); also landlords having to undertake less eviction procedures and having longer-term reliable tenants; a reduction in pressure on FHDC & the Housing Options Team, Mental Health & Substance Misuse services allowing time to enhance a personalised service, with a more proactive, and less reactive case.

Below is a summary the aims identified in the Strategy:

- A reduction in rough sleepers, particularly long-term, entrenched rough sleepers, on the street.
- Preventing more households becoming homeless, particularly single person households becoming street homeless from social services youth care facilities, prisons and hospitals.
- Improved and flexible access to support services for rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse treatment services.
- Increase the number of homelessness preventions achieved.
- Update and expand the amount, and quality, of accessible homelessness advice available on the Councils website to help towards an increase in preventions.
- Assess the demand for homelessness advice & information to be distributed in hard copies through community services, for example libraries (incl. mobile library), Parish & Town Councils, Drop-in Centre, local community support services such as substance misuse & mental health services (Romney Marsh Counselling Service).
- That all opportunities to access additional funding to enhance housing options and homelessness services are fully explored and evaluated.
- Set-up a Tenancy Sustainment Course for the Council's Housing Options customers that will give landlords more confidence to offer housing to our customers.
- Develop a Housing First Project, a Community-Led Housing Scheme and a Social Enterprise to add to affordable housing opportunities and employment and training prospects.

- Continue to add to the pool of affordable accommodation available for low-income households, including supporting local communities to provide their own housing solutions through projects like Community-Led Housing.

5. Has any consultation/research been carried out or relied upon?

Yes – A comprehensive Homelessness Review was completed, looking at the national and local context of homelessness. The review evaluated homelessness statistics reported for the last 3 to 5 years and the achievements against the priorities in the previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

A consultation took place from the 3rd Aug to 2nd Oct 2020 with internal & external partners, as well as partner and homelessness support agencies. The outcomes from the consultation will be report to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? (Consider and identify any evidence you have - equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, feedback and issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so please provide details.

None at this time.

7. Could a particular protected characteristic be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? (Positive – it could benefit, Negative – it could disadvantage, Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact or Not sure?)

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate if someone approaches the service and they have either a visible or invisible disability and they will receive the same level of service.
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	Neutral

	The Strategy does not disadvantage on the grounds of race and a household/person will receive the same level of service regardless of their race.
Age	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their age and a household/person will receive the same level of service regardless of their age.
Gender	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their gender and a household/person will receive the same level of service regardless of their gender.
Transgender	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to them being transgender or having had gender reassignment and they will receive the same level of service.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their sexual orientation and they will receive the same level of service.
Religion/Belief	Neutral The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their religion and beliefs and they will receive the same level of service.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Neutral

	The strategy and the service does not discriminate if someone is pregnant or has a child or children.
Marriage/ Civil Partnership Status	Neutral The strategy and the service does not discriminate anyone due to their relationship/marital status.

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?

None identified.		

9. Are there any human rights implications?

None identified.

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

<p>Yes</p> <p>The strategy supports equality of access and assistance to all eligible person/households to Housing Options and other related community and statutory services.</p> <p>In particular services for Rough Sleepers, and opportunities for Housing First and Community-Led Housing (CLH) Projects, have the potential to provide types of housing for marginalised groups as well as additional housing for all other members of the community.</p>

The possible set up of these projects and others outlined in the Strategy could have a positive impact on the integration of communities, the appearance of town centres and the demands on statutory services (so they can be focused where most needed).

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal? (not Discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation)

There are no identified negative impacts for any group. Immigration law defines who is and is not eligible for housing assistance, in terms of immigration status and habitual residence.

Local housing authorities must make sure that free advice and information to prevent homelessness or help the homeless find accommodation is available to anyone in their area. This is for everyone, regardless of immigration status or right to reside. However, to access further assistance under the Prevention or Relief Duty, including temporary accommodation, a household must be eligible.

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Yes

Rough Sleeper Services are commissioned and provided by external partners such as Porchlight and Serveco. These organisations have policies & procedures in place ensure equality and human rights legislation and guidance is adhered to.

Please note that normally you should proceed to a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community. (Refer to Quick Guidance Notes at front of template document)

13. Is a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report required?

No

No negative or human rights impacts have been identified that would warrant a Stage 2 EIA Report. The Action Plan within the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025 sets out how the progress of the strategy will be monitored.

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14. Date by which Stage 2 is to be completed and actions

N/A

Please complete

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full impact assessment **is not required.**

Completed by: Kimba Layton

Date: 04/11/2020

Role: Housing Strategy & Initiatives Officer

Countersigned by Head of Service

Adrian Hammond

Date: 6/11/20

Lead Specialist Housing Strategy

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