



Agenda

Meeting: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **1 December 2020**
Time: **7.00 pm**
Place: **Remote meeting**

To: **All members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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.

Members of the committee, who wish to have information on any matter arising on the agenda, which is not fully covered in these papers, are requested to give notice, prior to the meeting, to the Chairman or appropriate officer.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 3 - 4)**

Members of the committee 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 5 - 12)**

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020.

4. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee (Pages 13 - 16)**

Queries about the agenda? Need a different format?

Contact Kate Clark Tel: 01303 853267
Email: committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or download from our
website
www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020.

5. **Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25 Consultation Responses (Pages 17 - 92)**

Report C/20/54 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.

6. **Draft Business Plan - Otterpool Park LLP (Pages 93 - 178)**

This report presents the draft proposed business plan of Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership for the Committee's consideration.

7. **Exclusion of the Public**

To exclude the public on the above item of business (Agenda item 6) on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 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.

Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Remote meeting
Date	Tuesday, 6 October 2020
Present	Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Gary Fuller, Peter Gane, Michelle Keutenius (Vice-Chair), Connor McConville, Terence Mullard, Patricia Rolfe, Rebecca Shoob (Chairman) and John Wing
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Andy Blaszkowicz (Director of Housing and Operations), Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Mrs Jess Harman (Community Safety Specialist), Jyotsna Leney (Community Services Manager), Tim Madden (Director of Transformation and Transition), Susan Priest (Chief Executive), Andrew Rush (Regulatory Services & Corporate Contracts Lead Specialist), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services), Karen Weller (Environmental Protection Senior Specialist) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)
Others Present:	Councillors Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee, David Monk and David Godfrey, Insp. Andy Brittenden (Kent Police), Nick Wilkinson (KCC), Rebekah Button (KCC), Caley Walden (Violence Reduction Unit), Mick Dennis (Kent Fire and Rescue Service)

21. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Rebecca Shoob made a voluntary declaration as a Director of Otterpool Park LLP which is mentioned in Agenda Item 5 (The District Council's Potential Office Relocation) as a potential site for relocation. Councillor Shoob remained in the meeting and took part in discussions on this item.

22. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 were submitted and agreed. The Chairman confirmed that her electronic signature could be added to the minutes.

23. **Changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Report OS/20/08 set out a proposed work programme for Overview and Scrutiny work, which had been put together with the assistance of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). The report also set out proposals for the creation of a Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee, including its terms of reference and membership. Approval was also sought for the proposed meeting dates, and adoption of a "Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Member's protocol" and its subsequent submission to Cabinet.

The Chairman, Councillor Shoob, highlighted areas of the report; the work programme, proposed membership of the sub-committee, proposed dates and the protocol.

The Chief Executive, Dr Susan Priest, thanked members for the work carried out in achieving the work programme and creation of the sub-committee.

(Councillor Peter Gane joined the meeting and apologised for his late entry due to technical issues)

Members noted the following:

- Assurances given that performance management and service delivery would be topics to be scrutinised.
- Flexibility to add items to the work programme would be accommodated.
- Cabinet members to attend meetings where topics within their relevant portfolios are discussed.
- Items scrutinised at the sub-committee will be reported back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, date frequency has been designed to ensure this occurs.

Members took the opportunity to thank the Chairman, officers and Mr Ian Parry at the Centre for Public Scrutiny for the work carried out.

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Keutenius and

RESOLVED:
That report OS/20/08 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Miss Susan Carey and

RESOLVED:
That the Scrutiny work programme is adopted and implemented as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report, until the next annual meeting of the Council.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Keutenius and

RESOLVED:

That the Workplan is submitted to the next available extraordinary meeting of the Council for endorsement.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Connor McConville and

RESOLVED:

That a Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee is created with the terms of reference as set out at appendix 1 of the report and appoint five Overview and Scrutiny Members to the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Michelle Keutenius
Seconded by Councillor Gary Fuller and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Connor McConville is elected as Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 2)

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Keutenius and

RESOLVED:

That the meeting dates are agreed for Overview and Scrutiny and its Sub-Committee meetings, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Keutenius and

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet/Overview and Scrutiny Member's protocol is adopted, as set out at appendix 2 of the report, and to submit it to Cabinet for its approval.

(Voting: For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

24. The District Council's Potential Office Relocation

The committee received a brief presentation on the proposed scope of work to provide a customer access point from a central location and a new civic facility for the district in order to reduce the council's operational carbon footprint and operating costs.

The Leader introduced this item. Dr Priest then referred to the presentation slides that had been circulated with the agenda, highlighting areas for discussion and views sought from the Committee on:

- Reduce carbon footprint
- Pandemic Impacts
- Travelling costs
- Regeneration
- Access to all; especially those who are digitally excluded.

Overall members agreed this was a positive step forward for the future. Comments for consideration were wide ranging and included the following:

- Consideration should be given to an initial public consultation to engage residents and seek their views.
- A possible joint venture with other public sector partners such as Folkestone Police, etc..
- Representation needed on the Marsh, bearing in mind poor transport links and unstable internet connections.
- Relocation to be carbon neutral looking at construction and transport links. Members felt it important to promote a greener district as a whole and encourage the use of public transport.
- Parish Councils and Libraries could be used as access points as well as providing and teaching digital skills. An example used is the collaboration of Sandgate Parish Council and Library which has been extremely successful.
- Face to face support is paramount for the most vulnerable, however members recognised that residents now expect services to be digitally available 24 hours a day.

25. Government Consultation on the Planning White Paper - 'Planning for the Future'

The Chairman reminded members that any comments need to be submitted by 5pm on Wednesday 7 October.

26. **Folkestone and Hythe Community Safety Partnership Plan Update**

This Committee, as part of its terms of reference, acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee and has an obligation to meet for that purpose once a year. In this respect a presentation was given to members, introduced by Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee. She also introduced and gave sincere thanks to all officers and partners of the Community Safety Partnership.

The proposal is to now go forward with a three year Community Safety Partnership Plan which would be reviewed annually for 2021- 2024.

The presentation is attached to these minutes along with the 2020/21 Community Safety Partnership Plan.

Mr Ewan Green, Director of Place, introduced himself to members, he went on to say there have been many challenges faced since lockdown culminating in excellent outcomes.

Mrs Jess Harman, Community Safety Specialist, started the presentation and explained to members the role of the Community Safety Partnership and how this feeds into the County Community Safety agreement. Sub-groups also form part of the CSP, and Mrs Harman went through who leads these.

(Councillor Terry Mullard left the meeting)

As the lead for the Crime & Community Resilience and the Serious and Organised Crime Group, Inspector Any Brittenden talked to members about some of the work carried out; track and trace targeting repeat offenders; seizure of vehicles to disrupt further crime; funding secured for targeting county lines and dangerous weapons; test purchasing; targeting hate crime and domestic abuse.

He also mentioned the work carried out by the Civil Nuclear Constabulary who can provide valuable assistance at scenes of violence and emergency situations. Customer engagement is important and he advised of the uplift in town centre constables.

Rebekah Button, spoke next, with regard to the Safeguarding and Supporting Vulnerable People Sub Group. Rebekah is the KCC lead for this group. This group looks at raising awareness of vulnerable adults and young people's safety. This group works closely with CSP, Kent Police and the Violence Reduction Unit.

Caley Walden, Violence Reduction Unit Co-ordinator for Ashford, Folkestone and Dover, gave information to members on the work this unit carries out giving examples such as: Supporting youths, ensuring communities feel safe, intelligence profiling and test purchasing. Recent test purchasing for knives was carried out which raises awareness.

The Violence Reduction Unit is a new initiative funded by the Home Office.

Members noted the following:

- Traffic offences, there seemed to be an increased in speeding cars since lockdown. Insp. Brittenden advised all referrals are followed up. Members were reminded of Community Speed Watch.
- Anti-social behaviour incidences have increased since lockdown, reference was made to the incident at Greatstone and how this can be controlled in future.
- Local immigration priorities and resourcing. Understandably this is a very emotive issue, however actions are taken by Border Force and the Home Office. Kent Police are involved with regard to welfare processes and procedures.
- Local Engagement Meetings (LEM) were an excellent success and these have continued as Virtual Engagement Meetings (VEM). It was recognised that these provide good interaction however, resuming face to face meetings would be preferable.
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), a review is due in June 2021, followed by a consultation and new PSPO plan. Members were advised that the current PSPO is working well.

Overall members agreed that moving to a three year CSP plan is a good idea as it gives longevity although annual reviews would be undertaken. They also thanked officers and partners for the work carried out.

Mrs Harman was very grateful for the praise she, fellow officers, partners and Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee had received with regard to the work they do within the community.

27. **Exclusion of the Public**

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Michelle Keutenius

RESOLVED:

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 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 – ‘Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual’.

(Voting: For 9, Against 0; Abstentions 0)

(A short break was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, and agreed, prior to the final item of business)

**PART 2
Exempt Information Item**

28. **PREVENT Update**

A presentation and update was given to members by Kent County Council's Prevent and Channel Strategic Manager. Members were reminded that Prevent gives guidance on the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Members noted that Prevent referrals can be made through KCC, also training will be available to officers and members on this subject.

The Chairman, on behalf of all members, thanked officers and guests for the work carried out.

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Minutes

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Held at:	Zoom - remote meeting
Date	Tuesday, 3 November 2020
Present	Councillors Peter Gane, Connor McConville (Chairman), Patricia Rolfe and Rebecca Shoob
Apologies for Absence	None
Officers Present:	Kate Clark (Case Officer - Committee Services), Gavin Edwards (Performance and Improvement Specialist), Cheryl Ireland (Chief Financial Services Officer), Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services), Lee Walker (Capital and Treasury Senior Specialist) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)
Others Present:	Councillor David Monk

1. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Patricia Rolfe made a voluntary announcement as she is a member of New Romney Town Council. This relates to Agenda item 3 (Key Performance Indicators review 2020/21 and Half Year Performance report Q1 and Q2).

Prior to moving onto the next agenda item the Chairman, Councillor Connor McConville, clarified to members that the reports being considered are Cabinet reports and the recommendations listed are for Cabinet and this committee will not be voting upon them. All comments would be noted and expressed to Cabinet. He added that in accordance with the new adopted proposals this committee could make additional recommendations to Cabinet, any such recommendations must be proposed, seconded and voted upon accordingly.

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

Report C/20/49 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.

There is a small amendment to the report; Number of private rental properties provided through the Social Lettings Agency & Property Solutions – Target figure should read 15 per quarter.

Members were advised that there are a total of 72 KPIs, 15 removals and 7 new KPIs introduced.

Councillor Patricia Rolfe, in focusing on the new KPIs, was keen to suggest further additions; More Homes – encourage high quality sustainable new homes across the district; More Jobs – proactively supporting the development of the Romney Marsh Business Hub; Appearance Matters – encourage public realm improvements in the district's high streets.

Councillor Rolfe's main concern was around Health Matters, where she considered more improvements are needed especially during this pandemic. A suggestion would be to introduce a measure to ensure that S106 or CIL payments made by developers contribute towards health services.

The Leader pointed out that although this is a good ambition it is not a simple solution and would require a change in policy. Discussions on this could be taken forward as a separate matter, perhaps looking at incorporating within the new Corporate and Recovery Plan.

Members comments also included:

- Monitoring could be undertaken on hub support.
- £188,000 CIL receipts, how had these been allocated?
- Exception reporting – clearer target reporting to show increases or decreases.
- Second lockdown imminent, so this could have an impact on results, however all KPIs have been checked and considered relevant.

Proposed by Councillor Connor McConville
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe and;

RESOLVED:
That report C20/49 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

3. **Update to the 2020/21 General Fund Budget**

Report C/20/47 set out the proposed amendments to the General Fund budget for 2020/21 to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's financial position in year.

Members were taken through the report and advised it was written without the knowledge of the impending lockdown from 5 November, however the budget will be closely monitored.

Members raised the following points:

- Reduction in ICT maintenance budget, this will not impact on services.
- Members felt a better indication would be given on the budget in January.
- Pesticide motion delayed, a reasonable decision bearing in mind the pressure on officers.
- Corporate Estate and Maintenance, a reduction in budget, however members were assured this would not have any impact on health and safety.
- Climate change reserve. Closely monitored and will ensure that any external Government funding will be utilised.
- DWP new burdens grant funding – funding is usually confirmed in the new financial year, however a prudent approach is taken to anticipated funds.
- Homelessness Prevention – it was noted that there is no movement in this figure. Grant funding has been received in-year and prior years' funding and has been rolled forward at this time.

Members thanked all involved for a comprehensive report.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor Connor McConville and;

RESOLVED:
That Report C/20/47 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

4. Update to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme

Report C/20/46 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 considered 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.

Members were advised that Section 2 of the report lists the four main Capital Programme changes.

The main focus of this report at Section 3 was the proposed provision of loan funding to Veolia Environmental Services Ltd for new fleet and equipment. Members agreed this was a good proposition, especially considering the net annual rebate of £100,000 to the Council.

Members were advised that the Council's Procurement team in conjunction with Dover District Council are in negotiations with Veolia, including considering a securing a charge on the equipment until the loan is settled.

Proposed by Councillor Connor McConville
Seconded by Councillor Rebecca Shoob and

RESOLVED:
That Report C/20/46 is received and noted.

(Voting: For 4; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

5. **Briefing on the Medium Term Financial Plan**

A presentation was given to members, points mentioned by the Director of Corporate Services; the Medium Term Financial Strategy is considered to be the beginning of the budget cycle; the Budget Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in December 2020 with a further detailed Budget Strategy to come forward to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in January 2021.

Members noted the following:

- There is reliance on parking charges income which seems to go against carbon reduction. However, all vehicles, regardless of fuel type, require parking.
- 4% increase in staff wages which includes incremental rises as well as annual percentage increase, however Transformation has contributed to cutting costs.
- Members agreed that COVID-19 infections will continue, however it was good to note that this district has one of the lowest infection rates as many residents adhere to the Government guidelines.
- A prudent financial approach has been taken in anticipating the ongoing situation. Continuous monitoring and update of the current budgets is undertaken.
- Assurance given that this committee would be able to review the MTFS further.

Members thanked officers for the informative presentation.

This Report will be made
public on 1 December
2020

Report Number: **C/20/54**

To: Cabinet
Date: 9 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.

- 2.4 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.

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

DRAFT

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:
5.	Member of the Public	<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.
Response: One additional aim to be added to Priority 3 of the strategy		

- 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 not have 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 current provision accordingly. A new action has been added at point 4 under the second aim of Priority 2 (highlighted in Appendix 2, page 24).

Feedback provided by:		What they said:
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7.	Member of the Public	I'm pleased something is being done
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Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required

No response required

Feedback provided by:		What they said:
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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.
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Response: No amendment or addition to the strategy required

No response required

Feedback provided by:		What they said:
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9.	Member of the Public (identified themselves as a Council Housing Tenant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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		<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>Responsibility: 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

DRAFT

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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)

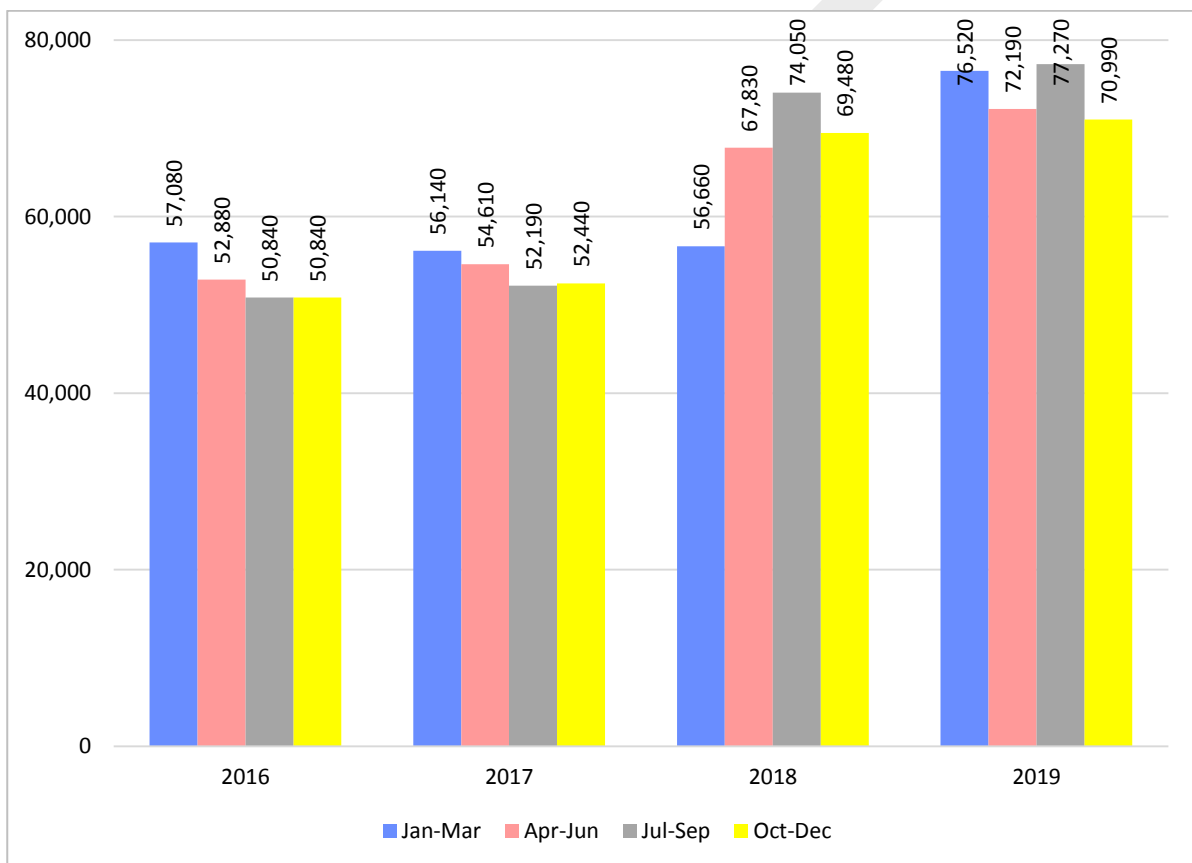
The H-CLIC is the new statutory homelessness case level data collection report that must be submitted to the MHCLG quarterly. It replaced the P1E^v to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 by local housing authorities. The H-CLIC return^{vi} is computer generated 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.

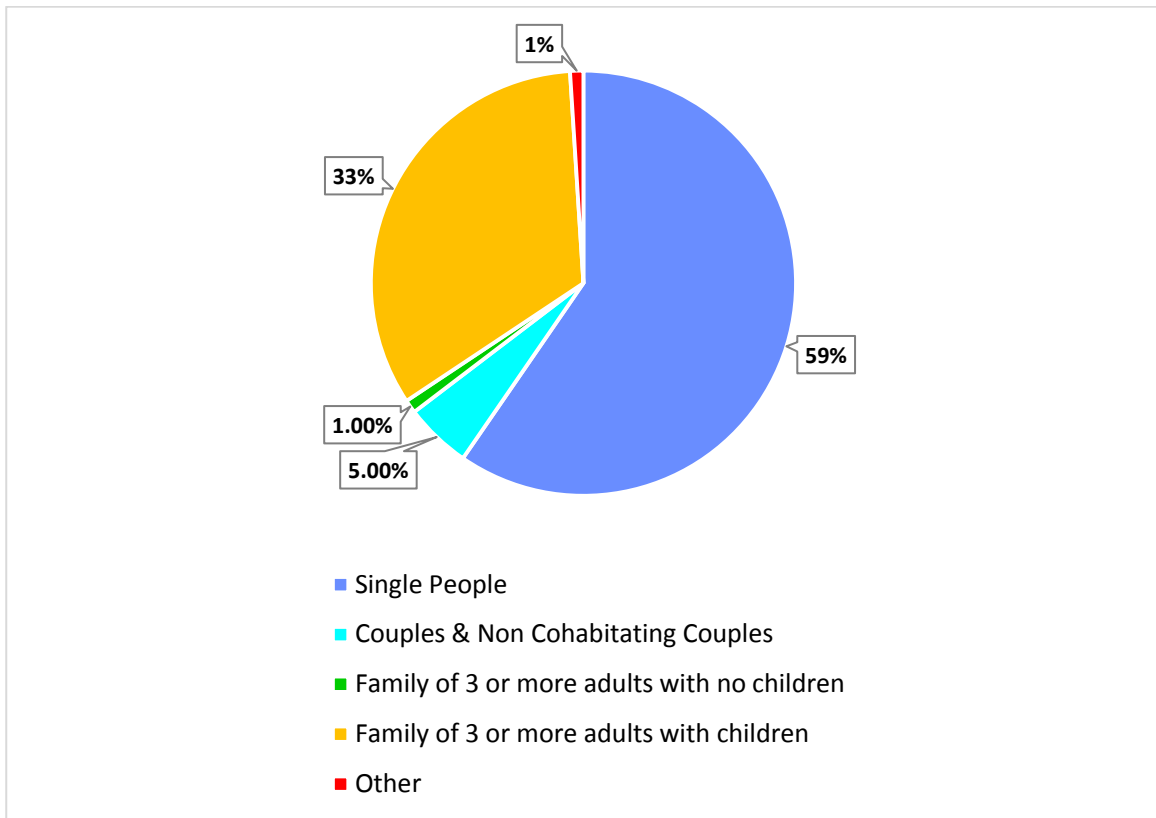
Table B. Total number of households that approached English LA's for homelessness assistance from 1st Jan 2016 to 31st Dec 2019¹⁰



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.

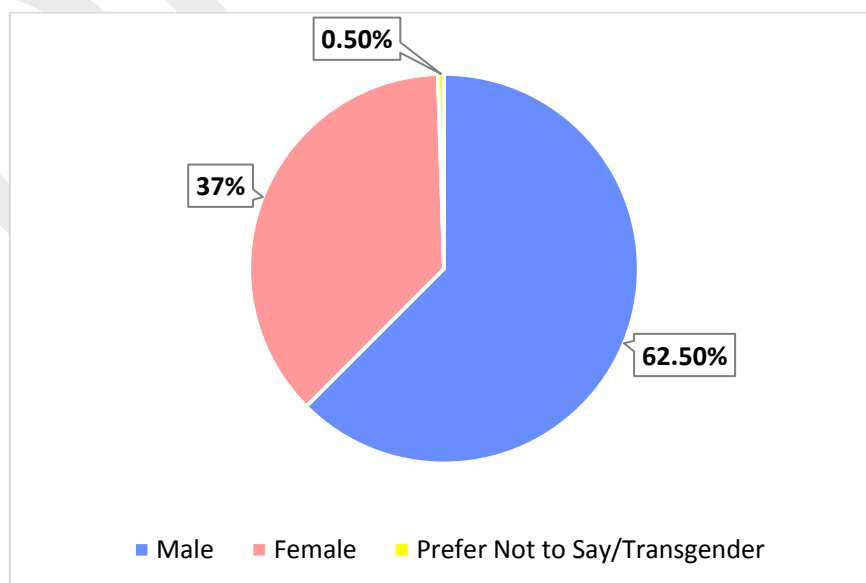
¹⁰ Figures sourced from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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

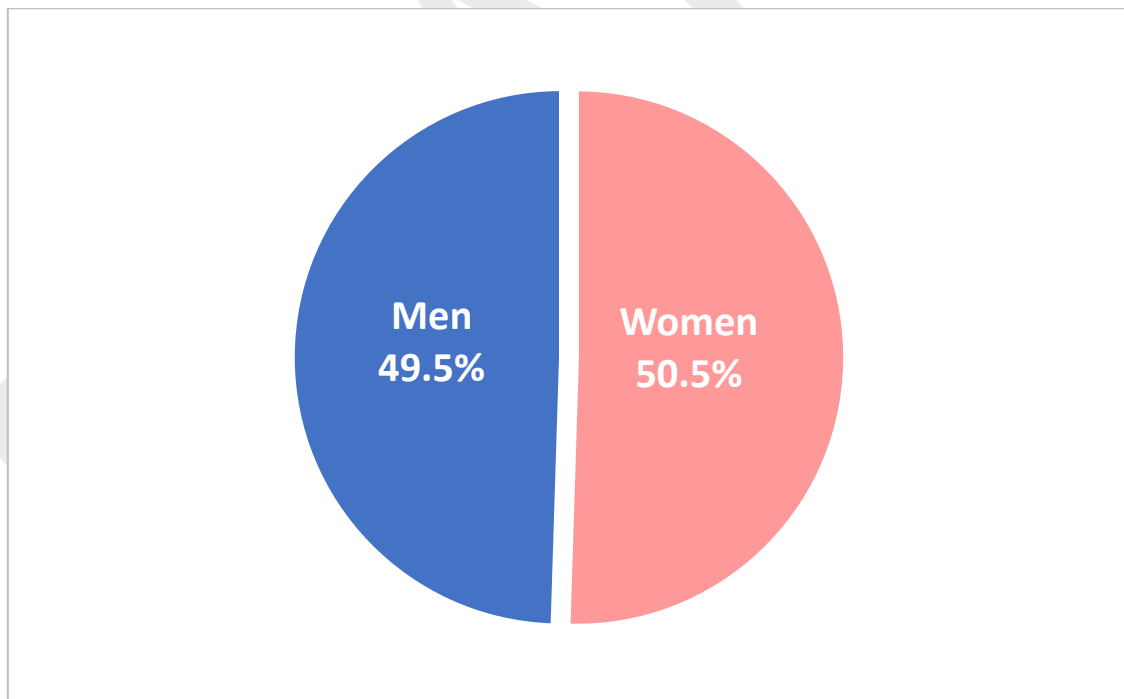
On the 25th October 2019 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the 2018 mid-year population estimates for Kent. The Population of the Folkestone & Hythe District was estimated at 112,580²⁰ (Section 4.1 of FHDC Healthier Housing Strategy 2018-2023). The table below sets out the projected 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 2018²²

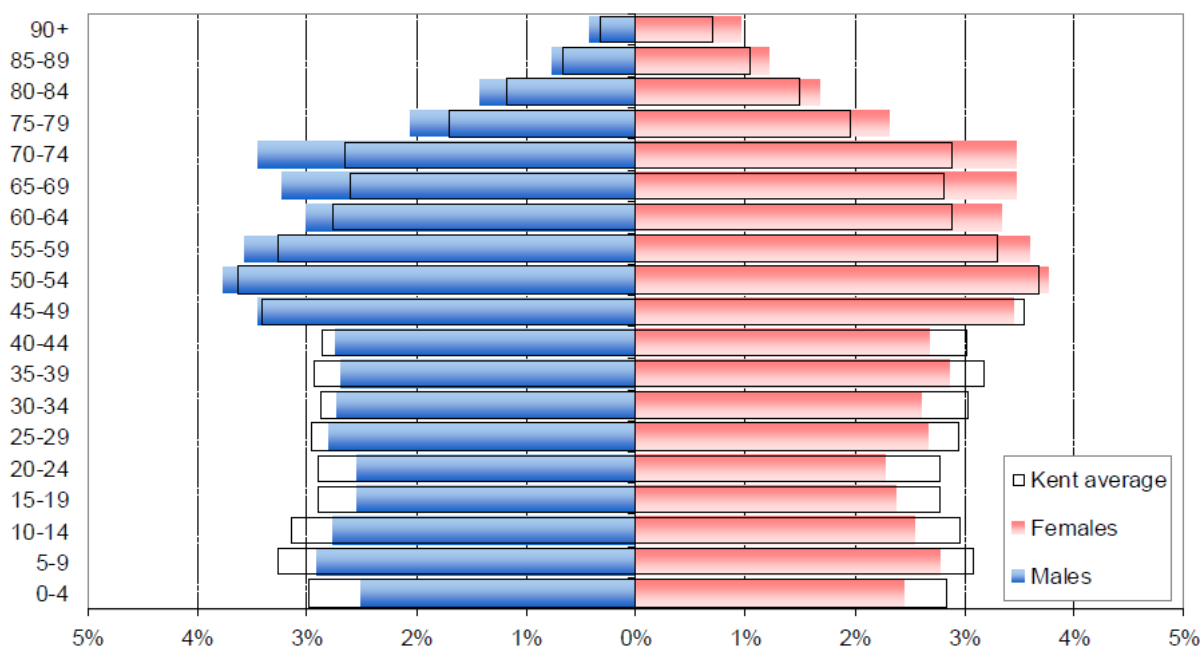


²⁰ KCC Statistical Bulletin, October 2019: 2018 Mid-year population estimates: Ward level population in Kent

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

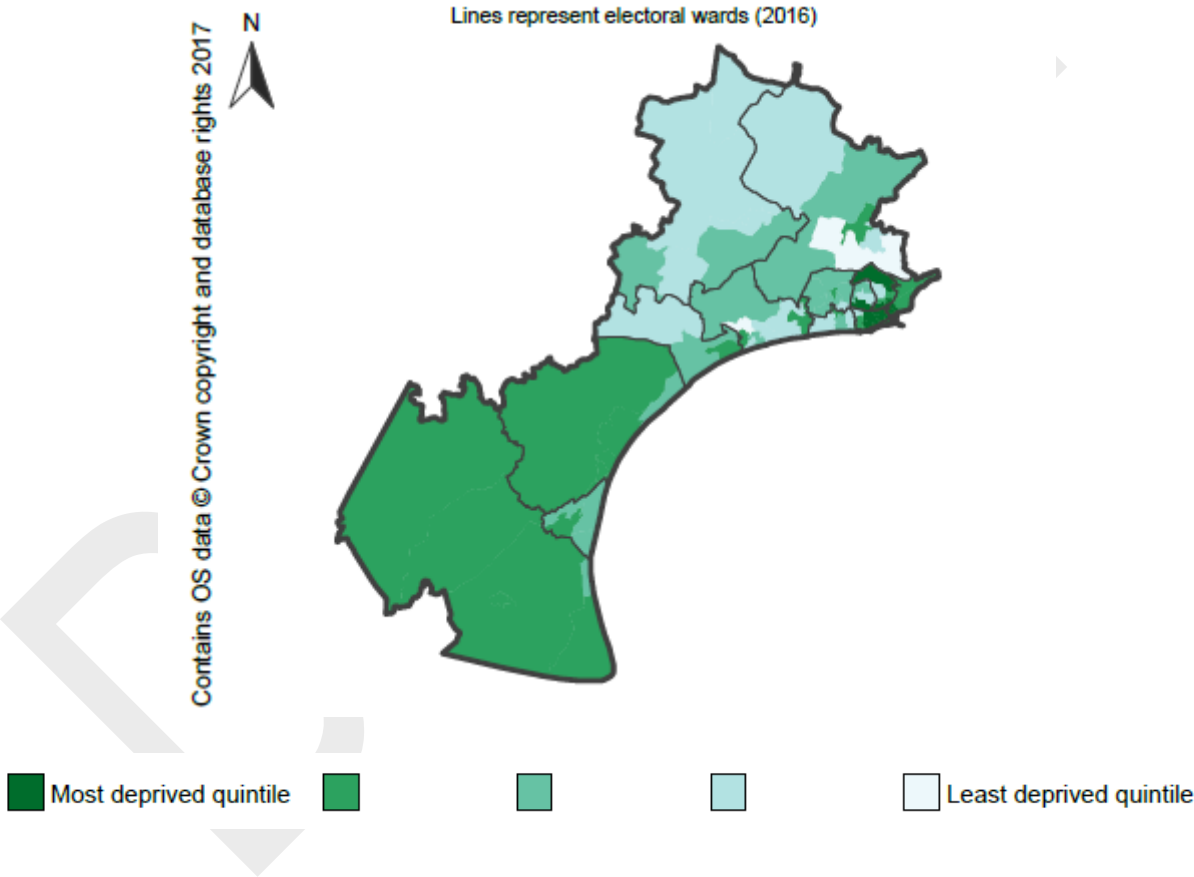
²⁹ Think Housing First 2013-2015, Kent Housing Group and the Joint Policy & Planning Board, page 12

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

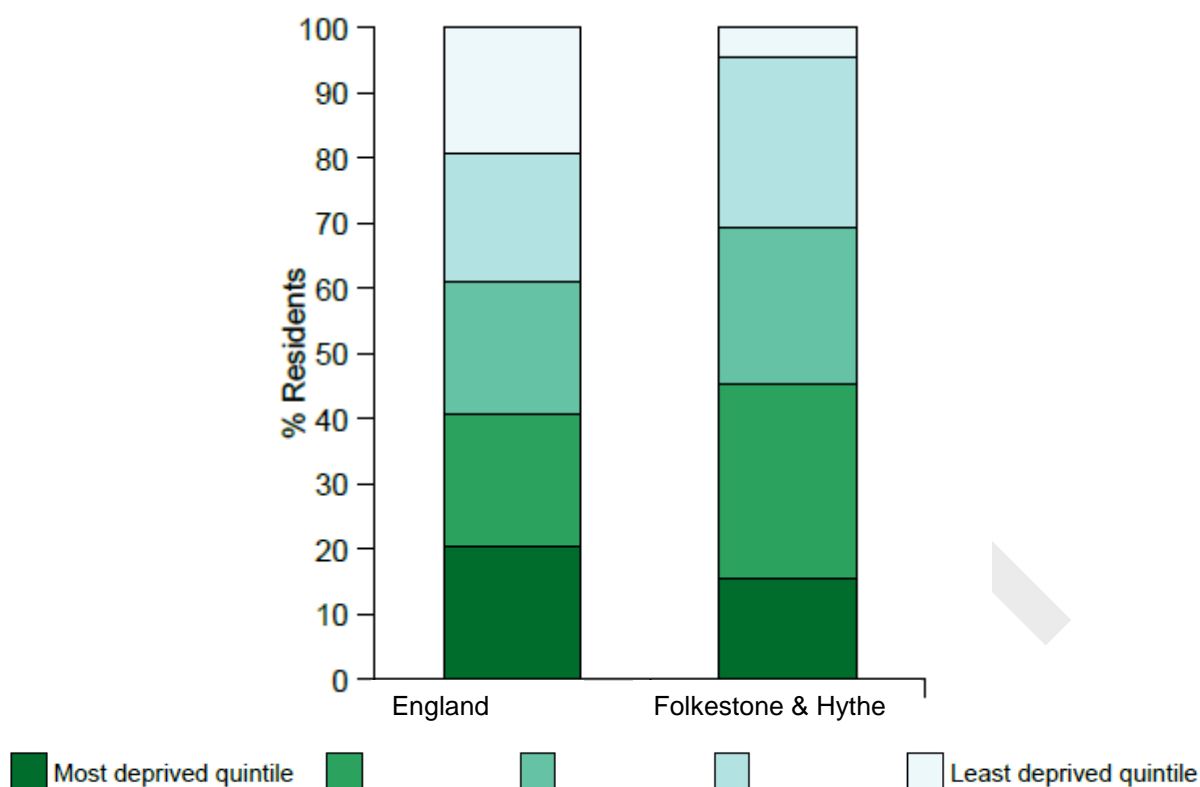
The map shows differences in deprivation in Folkestone & Hythe district based on national comparisons. The darkest coloured areas are some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

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

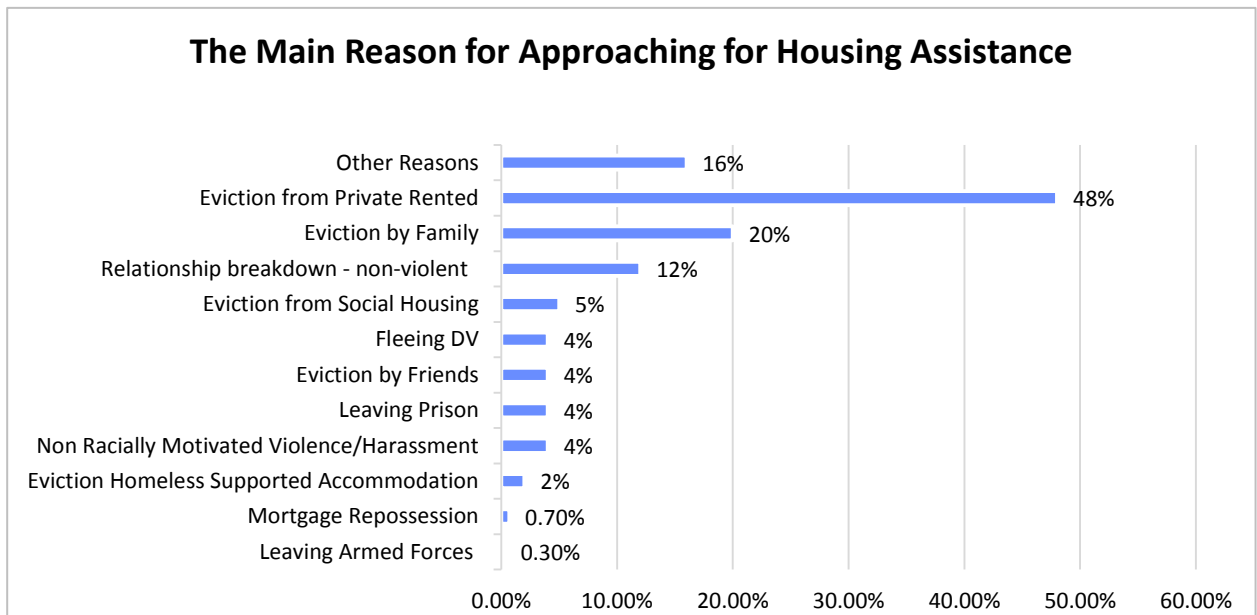
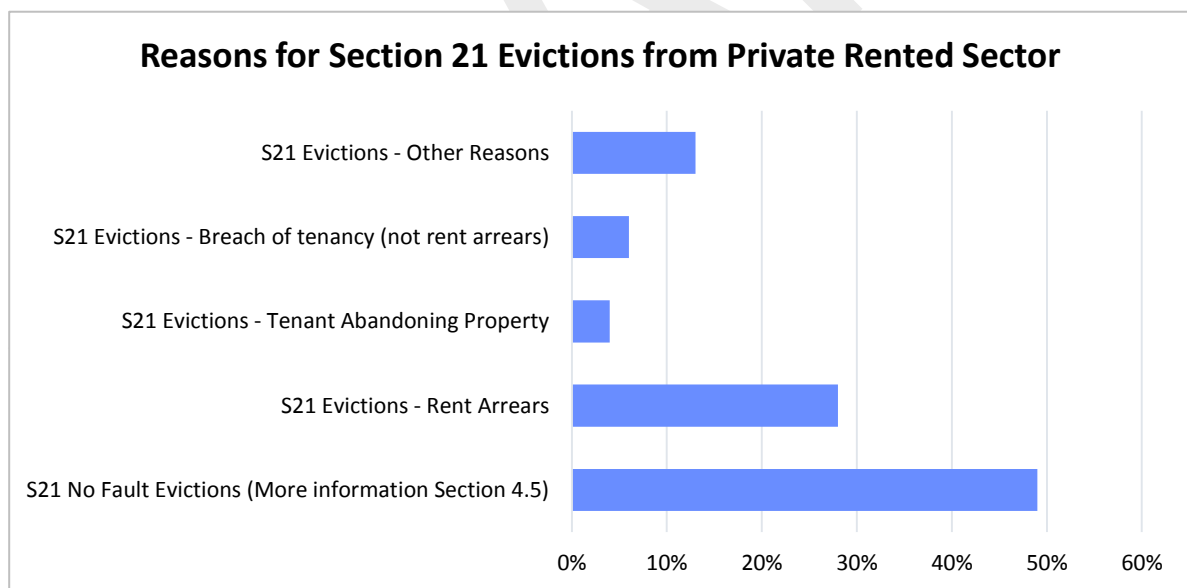


Table K. Main Reasons for being evicted from Private Rented Sector 2018-2019



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

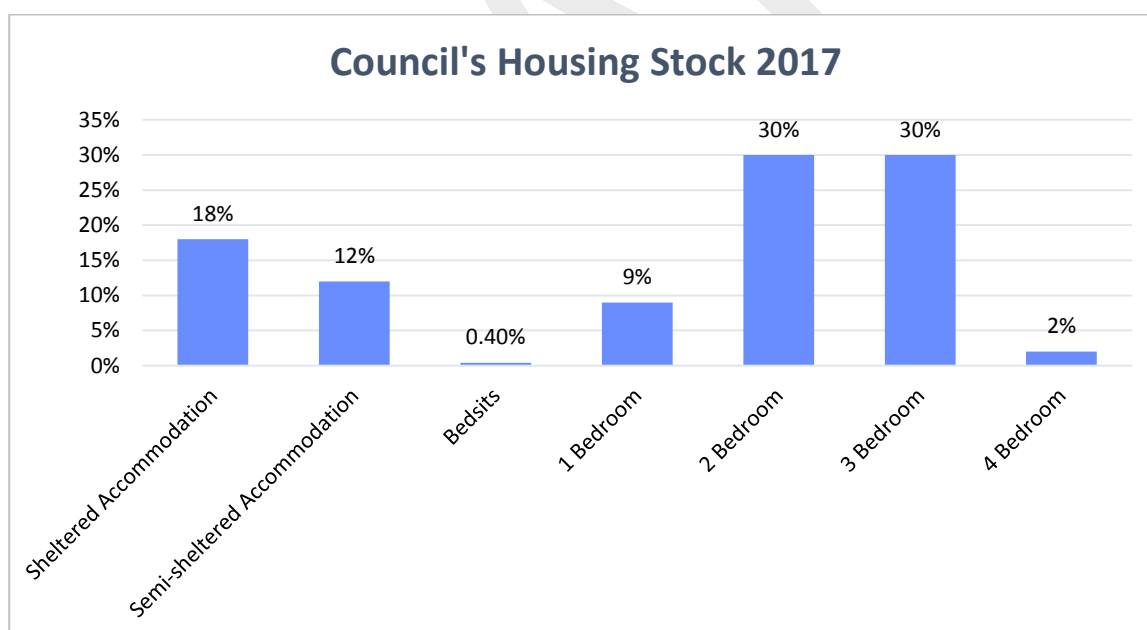
Table M. Average Mean Private Rents compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates

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

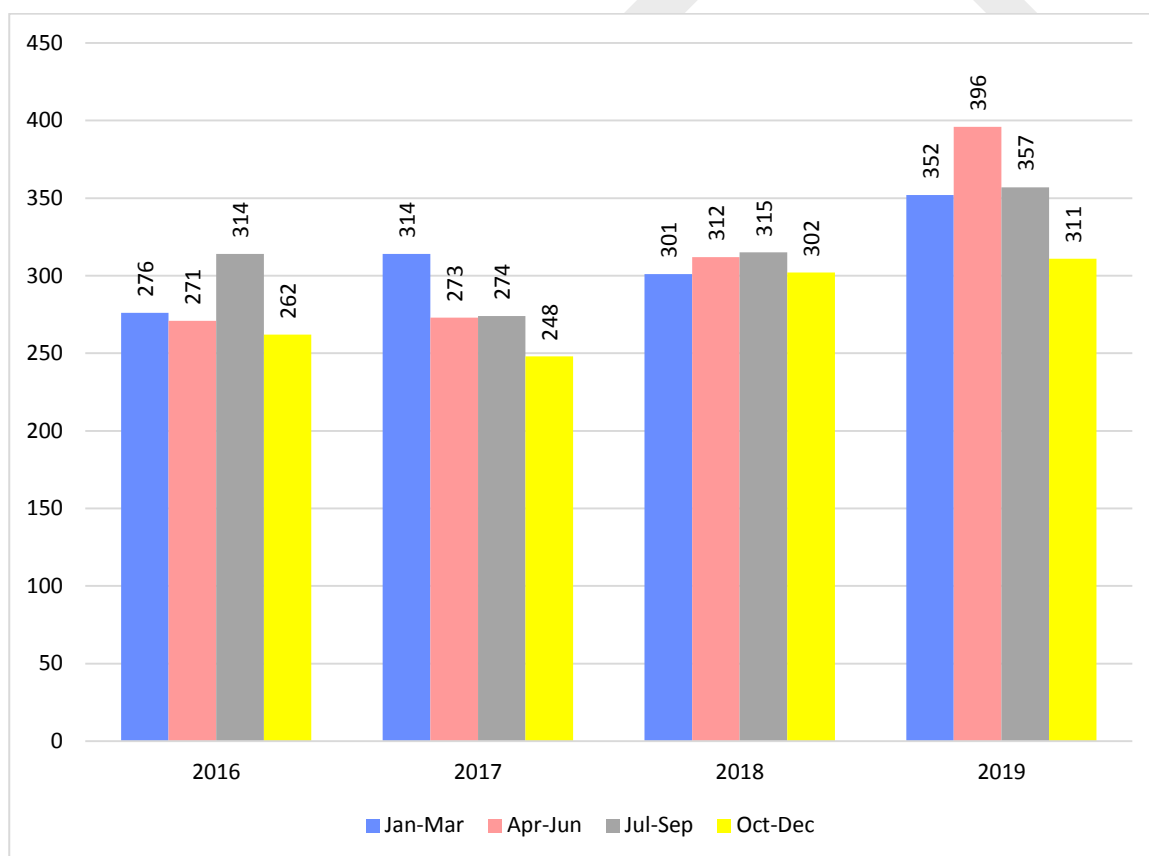


Table R. Make-up of Households Approaching the Council for Housing Assistance in 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2018

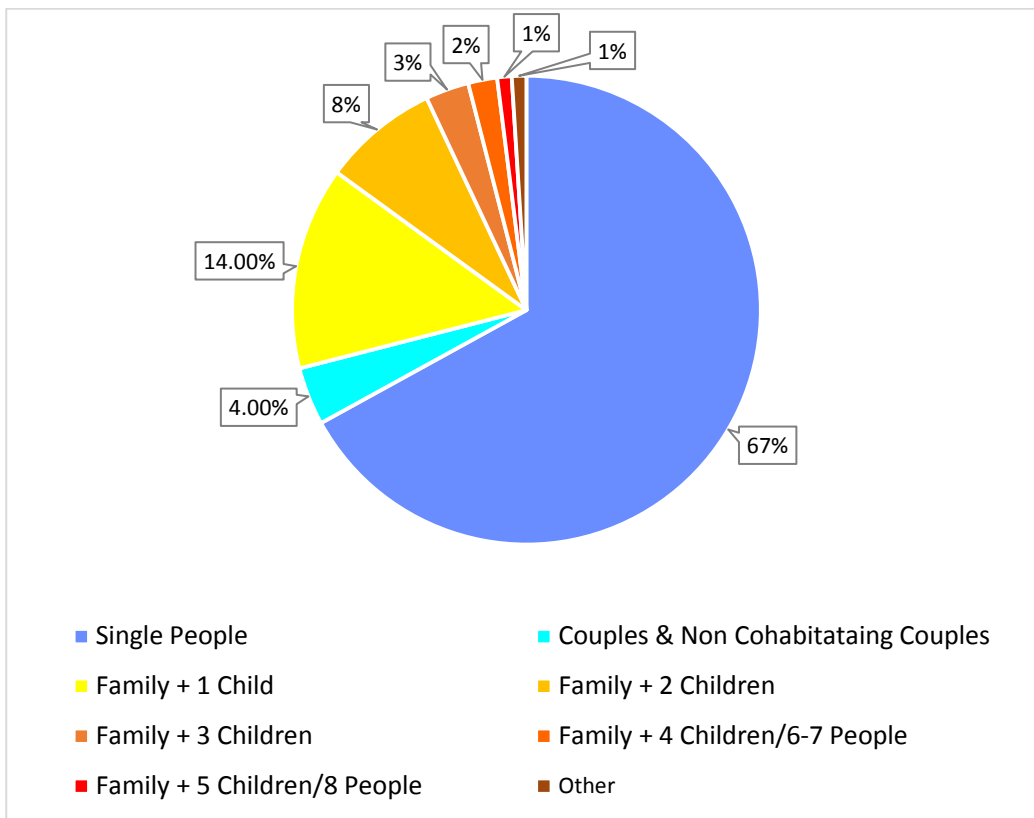
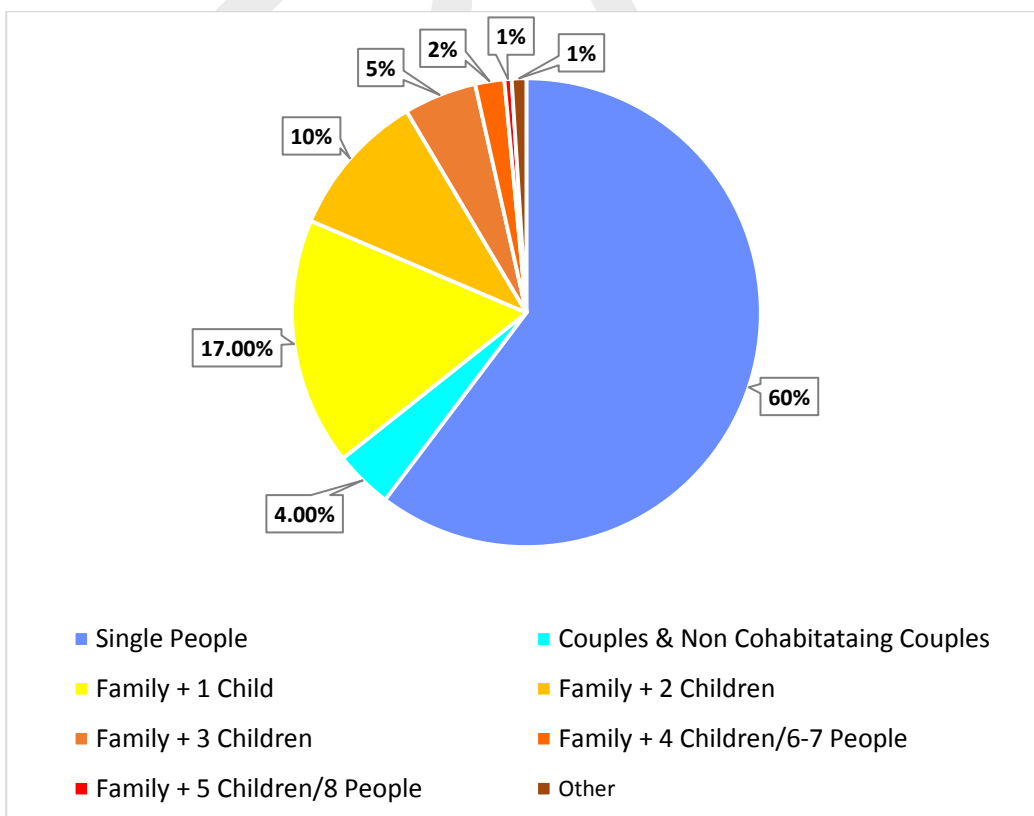


Table S. Make-up of Households Approaching the Council for Housing Assistance in 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2019



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

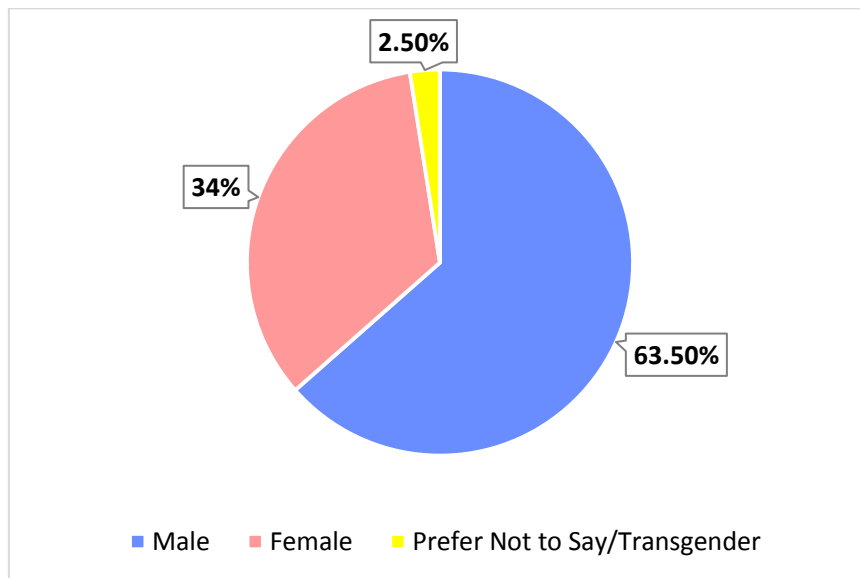
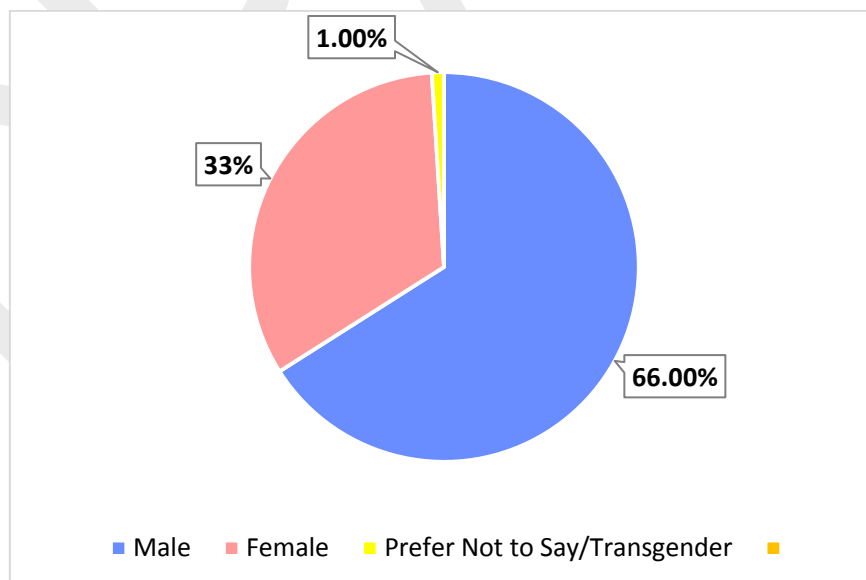


Table U. Gender Ratio Single Homeless People Approaches 1st Jan 2019 - 31st Dec 2019



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 VTable 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

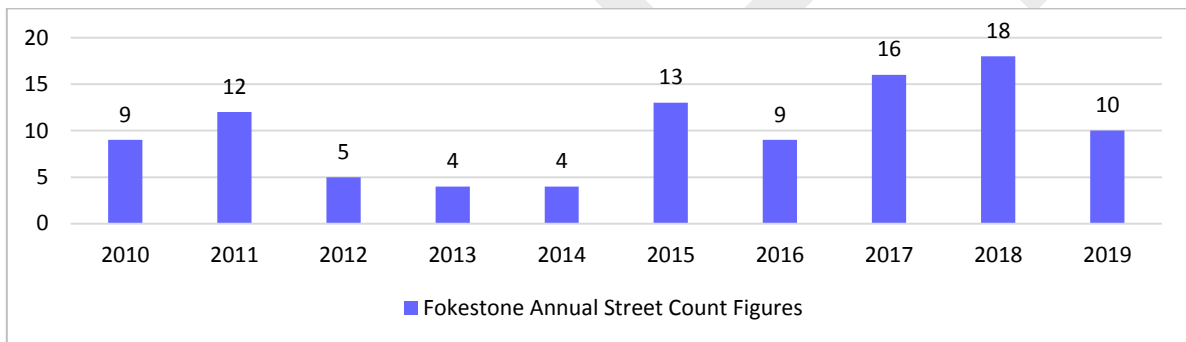
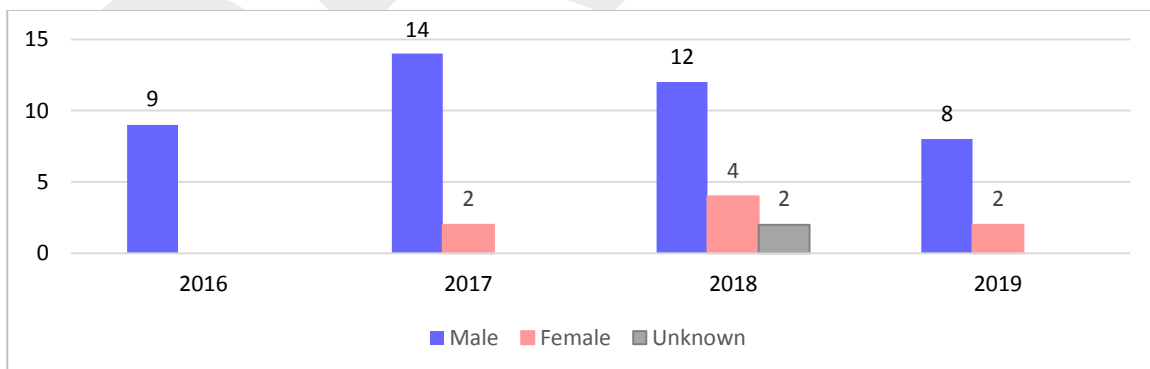
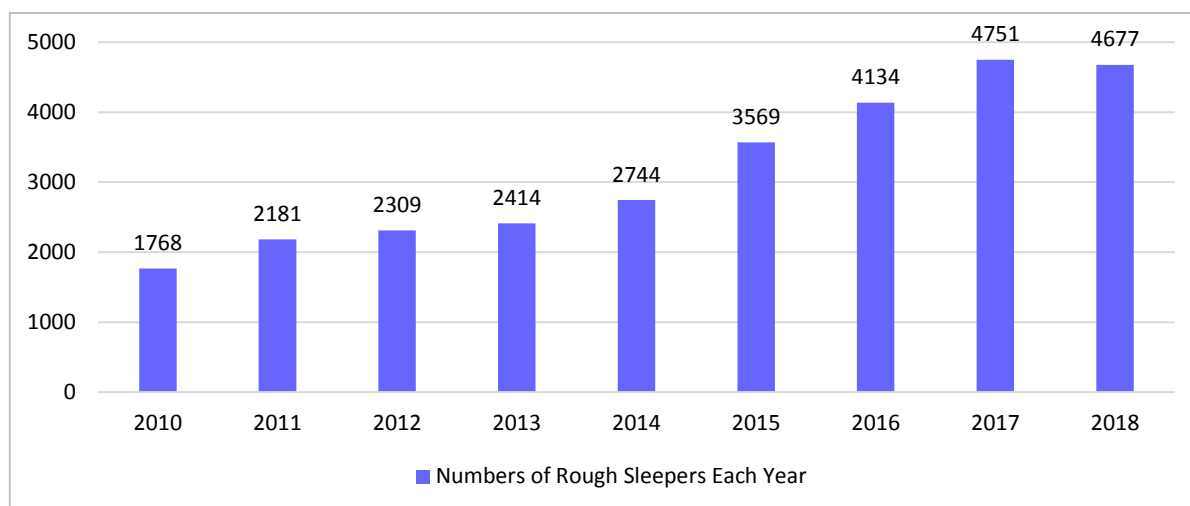


Table W. Gender breakdown of FHDC Annual Street Count Figures 2016 – 2019



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

	<p>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.</p>
Age	<p>Neutral</p> <p>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.</p>
Gender	<p>Neutral</p> <p>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.</p>
Transgender	<p>Neutral</p> <p>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.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>Neutral</p> <p>The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their sexual orientation and they will receive the same level of service.</p>
Religion/Belief	<p>Neutral</p> <p>The Strategy does not discriminate or disadvantage anyone due to their religion and beliefs and they will receive the same level of service.</p>
Pregnancy & Maternity	<p>Neutral</p>

	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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Agenda Item 6

This Report will be made public on 23 November 2020



Report Number **OS/20/09**

To: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date: 1 December 2020
Status: Non - executive decision
Responsible Officer: Ewan Green, Director of Place

SUBJECT: DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN – OTTERPOOL PARK LLP

SUMMARY: This report presents the draft proposed business plan of Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership for the Committee's consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note the report.
2. To consider the draft business plan of Otterpool Park LLP and to submit comments on it, if any, to the Cabinet.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Appended to this report (attached as Appendix 1) is the draft proposed business plan of Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership (the LLP). The basis of which was presented to, and considered by, this Committee on 14 July 2020 (see Minute 16 of the meeting of that date).
- 1.2 The draft proposed plan was considered by the Board of the LLP on 13 November 2020 and at a meeting of the owners of the LLP on 17 November 2020. A note of the decisions arising from the LLP Board are included as Appendix 3. The ownership structure of the LLP is shown in paragraph 5.1 of the business plan.
- 1.3 The business plan is being presented to this committee for comments before it is finalised by the LLP and considered by Cabinet on 20 January 2021 for approval. The chairman of the board of the LLP, Mr Luke Quilter, and two of the other directors of the LLP (John Bunnett and Andy Jarrett) will present the business plan and answer the committee's questions. Whilst the draft proposed business plan is in the public domain, certain details which underpin this are commercially sensitive and if members wish to discuss such details it will be necessary to exclude the public from the meeting.
- 1.4 Should members vote to go into private session external advisers, BNP Paribas, will be in attendance to address technical questions. It should be noted that amendments are expected to the plan before it is presented in its final form to Cabinet.
- 1.5 Fundamentally, in presenting the business plan, the LLP will be asking for the council to release funding to it, namely £5 million on 1st April 2021 and the facility for a further £70 million over the subsequent 3 to 5 years as required for infrastructure and related investment.
- 1.6 The draw-down of funds will be linked to key milestones contained in a separate detailed Funding Agreement which will be the subject of expert advice to be commissioned by the Director of Corporate Services (the S151 Officer of the Council).
- 1.7 The LLP will be required to enter into this agreement which will be monitored by the Director of Corporate Services (the S151 Officer).
- 1.8 Appendix 1 is not a detailed delivery plan, those are matters for the LLP Board and management. It is a strategic 5 year business plan which will be updated and reviewed annually. It should be considered in the context of the council's ambition, aims and objectives for Otterpool Park, the financial resources council has made available, and ultimately whether it convinces the council that it can be delivered successfully.
- 1.9 This report considers the council's objectives, the role of the LLP, the financial position and the substance of the draft plan.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Council's Ambition, Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 The Council's aims and objectives for Otterpool Park are set out in a charter which was adopted on 18 October 2017 (see Minute 48 of the Cabinet meeting of that date). The charter is synthesized in the document expressing the council's ambitions for Otterpool Park (see Appendix 4).
- 2.2 As stated the charter aims to ensure that the new garden town is truly sustainable and expands this by focusing on three key elements which will underpin this: economic, environmental and social sustainability. All three elements need consideration, not trading one benefit against the other but building in a way that delivers gains across all three.
- 2.3 In addition to these aspirations, the Council is the local planning authority and is required to facilitate delivery of a minimum of 13,284 additional homes a year over the period 2019/20 to 2036/37 (18 years) to meet the Government's target of 738 new homes a year.

The Places and Policies Local Plan (as adopted by the Council on 16 September 2020) allocates a number of small and medium-sized sites to meet the target, and remaining development on the strategic sites identified in the 2013 Core Strategy (Folkestone Seafront, Shorncliffe Garrison and the New Romney broad location) will also contribute. However, it is clear that this target cannot be met without a substantial contribution from Otterpool Park, and an allocation for the new garden settlement forms the main focus for development in the emerging Core Strategy Review, which is currently the subject of an examination in public.

The role of the LLP and its relationship with the Council

- 2.4 The LLP was established on 27 May 2020, (see minute 6 of the Cabinet meeting of that date).
- 2.5 The Members' (or Owners' Agreement) governs the administration and activities of the LLP, regulating matters including:
 - business planning;
 - decision-making; and
 - funding, treatment of receipts and distribution of profits.
- 2.6 In particular the Members' (or Owners') Agreement sets out the process for the approval of the LLP's business plan. In basic terms, every 5 years, the LLP submits its draft business plan to the council for approval. Within the 5 year period annual updates will also be prepared and placed before the Council for approval. The scope of these updates will, of course, vary as the scheme progresses through the various stages of delivery.
- 2.7 The main documents and mechanisms governing the relationship between the council and the LLP are:
 - The members' or owners' agreement approved on 27 May 2020;

- A strategic land agreement (see paragraph 4.7 of the business plan and below);
- Loans / members' equity; and
- The business plan itself, including a related Funding Agreement.

Regular meetings (at least quarterly) of the owners with the LLP Board provide opportunity for dialogue and assessment of progress against the business plan, including detailed consideration of financial matters and risk. Attendees at these meetings are the nominated representatives, which include elected Members and the statutory officers of the Council as agreed by Cabinet (see Minute 6 of Cabinet meeting 27 May 2020).

- 2.8 The LLP will act as master developer of the site. As such the LLP will secure planning permission and put in place infrastructure in order that parcels of land can be sold to housebuilders. This will be the main focus of activity and generator of value, i.e. income to the LLP. It is important to remember that the LLP has been established to make a profit, and is governed by the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000. This contains a fundamental principle that LLPs may only be used for the carrying on of a lawful business with a view to profit. It has always been the intention that these profit making activities will provide funds back to the council in order to sustain delivery of council priorities and activities across the district. The high level financial position is set out more fully below.
- 2.9 The process whereby land owned by the council is transferred via the LLP, and onwards to housebuilders, will be captured in a separate document of control called a Strategic Land Agreement. Cabinet will be recommended to enter into this agreement in a report to its meeting in January 2021. This Agreement is being developed from separate expert advice from Browne Jacobson and will be subject to close legal and financial monitoring by the statutory officers of the council. Paragraph 4.7 of the business plan sets out at a high level how the strategic land agreement will work, which is basically the concept of land being transferred from the council via the LLP at a point in time where conditions set by the council are met.

Financing the development

- 2.10 On 20 November 2019, minute 69 (2) full council resolved:-

“To make available an additional one hundred million pounds to be drawn down over a period of up to five years to enable the Otterpool Park project to proceed.”

- 2.11 Since November 2019 work has continued on the development of the business plan and the associated underpinning documents and modelling. For a project stretching over some 30 years or more, it was always anticipated that economic cycles would be a feature of the assumptions underpinning the financial modelling of the project. Sales values are reported to have increased in that period by approximately 5% and build costs have reduced albeit modestly, according to robust national data. In view of the current economic context of COVID-19 recovery, it is however entirely possible that next year sales values may reduce and build costs

may increase and this indeed would be a feature periodically throughout the life of this long term project. However, market forces are expected to ensure that the gap between sales and costs remains broadly constant. Following recent refreshed analysis, the view from our external advisers is that the fundamental business case agreed by council on 20 November 2019 remains sound and this remains a solid basis for considering the drawdown of funds to the LLP at this time. Should members of OSC want to discuss detail that is deemed by officers to be commercially sensitive, members will be asked to go into private session.

3. THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Council's Ambition, Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 The business plan includes a draft vision document which sets out the aspirations of the LLP for the development and which captures the essence of the scheme. The vision document draws on a range of council documents, primarily the Charter for Otterpool Park. It was prepared at the same time as the council's restated ambition and, following recent discussion with the owners, the next iteration of the business plan for Cabinet in January 2021 is expected to respond more fully to the matters captured.
- 3.2 The finalised LLP Board vision document will be used, in part, to market Otterpool Park to housebuilders and is designed to distinguish it from other developments.
- 3.3 The benefits of the project to the Council are recognised and set out in section 3.1 and these accurately build upon the aims and objectives set out in the Council's charter.
- 3.4 The three sustainability principles in "the wheel" – environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability are supported by details in the business plan and represent the balance that needs to be struck across all three elements.
- 3.5 The infrastructure delivery details in paragraph 4.6 set out the various items of infrastructure necessary to make Otterpool Park a sustainable town, including essential social and community infrastructure such as schools and medical facilities.
- 3.6 The plans for community involvement and development appear advanced and are due for more detailed discussion with the owners – see section 6 "Stakeholders". The expected requirements of the new community are acknowledged and there are plans to ensure that they are met, which is a key part of the overarching Garden Town principles which are endorsed by central government and the Town and Country Planning Association.
- 3.7 The need for the development to contribute towards the district's housing requirement is also outlined in the document. If housing was not planned and is not delivered at Otterpool Park other far more constrained areas across the district would be put under immense pressure to accept more

housing. The plan sets out in section 9 how it is intended that planning permission will be obtained including supporting the housing land allocation at the examination in public. Furthermore the team identified in paragraph 5.4 appear resourced to deliver the planning permissions.

- 3.8 Whilst the Council's ambition, aims and objectives and charter are covered in the business plan, the LLP Board has been asked to provide a more explicit response to the priorities outlined in the draft Corporate Plan 2021-30: Creating Together Tomorrow.
- 3.9 As an example, the final business plan requires to set out the strategic approach to be taken to ensure that the Otterpool Park project will contribute to the key principle of a *Greener Folkestone & Hythe* through the overall creation of a new low carbon town. It should be noted however that it has never been the intention to deliver a zero carbon town in totality. The complexity and challenges of doing so go beyond the stated ambition of the Council at this time. However, the aspiration of the LLP Board and the Council are aligned well to the ambition that the project will include exemplar aspects and developments in this regard.

The role of the LLP and its relationship with the Council

- 3.10 The final business plan will set out the strategic approach to delivery of the project, governance of the LLP and its formal relationship with the Council. As mentioned earlier, it will not be a detailed delivery plan per se with, for example detailed Gantt charts, as those are the responsibility of the LLP Board with the executive team.
- 3.11 Members will however appreciate the importance of the business plan in the relationship between the Council and the LLP Board. Once approved the business plan will enable the LLP to deliver the overall plan without, generally, further approvals from the Council including the ability to expend the monies available to it in line with delegations to be agreed by Cabinet and the relevant controls formed from the documents referred to earlier in this report. The Council's Chief Executive and Statutory Officers will continue to ensure that a robust process is put in place to measure progress against targets set out in the business plan and, by doing so, confirm that the council's best interest is being served as the project progresses.

Financing the development

- 3.12 Section 7 (The Market) and Section 8 (Finances) set out how the LLP sees the development being funded and the returns.
- 3.13 The business plan states, subject to certain assumptions:-

“The development has the potential to deliver significant returns... Current modelling suggests that these returns will be over circa 28 years. Pace, and timing of these returns will be dependent on a number of decisions around infrastructure investment, and the timing of market cycles.”

- 3.14 In headline terms the business plan sets out an approach whereby the LLP acting as a master developer and principally, as stated above, funded through land parcel sales would generate around £190 million of profit over the life of the scheme (modelled over a 28 year delivery period). The business plan has taken a prudent approach with regard to the finance modelling and only the first 8,500 homes have been modelled as this reflects the area for which the planning application has been submitted.
- 3.15 The financial projections accord with the financial model on which the council based its decision to create a funding facility on 20 November 2019 (see Minute 69 of the Council meeting of that date).

Delivery

- 3.16 The LLP, as noted above, will be requesting the council to release in total £75 million over the next 3-5 years.
- 3.17 Once planning permission is granted the main focus of the LLP will be the delivery of the infrastructure so that land can be marketed to house builders, the marketing of the land and its sale so enabling the LLP to capture land value uplift and make a financial return.
- 3.18 It is considered that whilst the resources necessary to ensure that planning permission is obtained the business plan is less clear on the resources required to ensure that the infrastructure is delivered. Members may wish to explore this further with the LLP Directors.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The strategic level risks to the business plan are set out in section 12 of the plan. A more detailed risk register, to operational level, has been prepared which the LLP board monitors and updates regularly. Strategic level risks are discussed at the owners' meetings with the LLP Board. Members may wish to explore this further with the LLP Directors.

5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Legal Officer's Comments

The main potential legal issues are covered in the body of this report. It is essential that specialist legal is obtained throughout this project.

5.2 Finance Officer's Comments

The main potential finance issues are covered in the body of this report. It is essential that specialist finance is obtained throughout this project.

5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

The final version of the business plan to be presented to Cabinet will be subject of an assessment on implications for diversity and equalities.

6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

Ewan Green, Director of Place
Telephone: 01303 853203
Email: ewan.green@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

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

"Exempt by virtue of paragraphs 3 and 5 of part 1 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Draft Business Plan of Otterpool Park LLP
- Appendix 2: Draft Business Plan Appendix - Otterpool Park Vision
- Appendix 3: Decisions of Otterpool Park LLP Board (13 November 2020)
- Appendix 4: Council's Ambition for Otterpool Park

Draft – Otterpool Park Business Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION - BY THE CHAIRMAN

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 BACKGROUND

Otterpool Park is a unique opportunity to meet the challenge of housing need in Folkestone and Hythe through a properly planned new garden community set in rich countryside. It is ideally located to take advantage of excellent existing connections by road and rail.

In 2015 Folkestone & Hythe District Council (the Council) bought 144 ha of agricultural land at Otterpool Manor Farm as a long term investment for future development. Shortly after this the government announced its Garden Cities, Towns and Villages programme, which provided the stimulus for the Council to advance its ambitions for development and form a partnership with its neighbouring landowner Cozumel Estates Limited, the owner of Folkestone racecourse. A proposal for a new town of up to 10,000 homes and thousands of new jobs, all in a green setting with 50% green space, was born.

The bid to government for garden community status was successful, and the project continues to be supported by politicians at national, county and district level. The project has attracted £3.4 million of capacity funding from government to support the Council's work to date. The Council has continued to acquire properties and land options, including Westenhanger Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed Building within the site. Homes England, the government's housing agency, has also invested in land at Otterpool Park to support the proposals.

Work began in 2016 on a masterplan for the area, led by consultants Arcadis and masterplanners Farrells, resulting in an outline planning application submitted in February 2019. The plans were guided by a set of principles that were agreed at the outset, based on the Garden City Principles. These principles were explored in more detailed in the Charter for Otterpool Park, adopted by the Council in 2017. (Cabinet meeting 18 October 2017 minute 48)

In parallel the Council as the local planning authority was reviewing its Core Strategy, and after a capacity analysis of the district concluded that this location was the only viable area for significant growth to meet escalating housing need. It recognised the sensitivity of the landscape – within the setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and views from the North Downs – and the impact on existing neighbouring communities. In many respect this has been a positive challenge to create a proposal that is landscape led, creates green space accessible to new and existing residents and attractive townscape views through well designed streets and buildings. The masterplan also brings new life to heritage assets including Westenhanger Castle and offers biodiversity net gain

2.2 CONTEXT AND DRIVERS

Housing need: the undersupply of housing nationally is recognised by all political parties, and need within Folkestone and Hythe district is no different. The latest government figures for objectively assessed housing need that the district is obligated to plan for continues to increase, now more than doubling current rates of delivery. This need applies to all types of housing but in particular affordable housing and helping younger people onto the housing ladder.

Planning context: historically the district has built a significant proportion of its housing on brownfield sites within existing towns and villages. However there is now very limited capacity for further growth in Folkestone or Hythe, and while there is some scope for more housing on the marsh and in some villages the district is heavily constrained by the AONB and floodplain. Development around junction 11 therefore becomes a natural choice, helped by the fact the junction has plenty of capacity and there is a railway station at Westenhanger.

Economic positioning of the district: East Kent has historically underperformed economically within Kent and nationally. There are now several factors that give an opportunity for the district to punch higher, developing higher value jobs, attracting more visitors and raising values. These factors include the high speed train service into London; increased attraction of natural assets such as the coast and countryside; good connections to Europe; comparative affordability of houses and the thriving arts and creative scene. Much of the employment space in Folkestone is outdated, or in the case of the creative industries has not got the capacity to expand, so there is latent opportunity to improve skills and provide better quality jobs.

Ageing population: Folkestone and Hythe area has historically attracted people wishing to retire to the coast, and has a shortfall of younger adults.

Financial: as government funding to local authorities becomes less predictable and reduces in real terms, so councils are looking to other sources of income to ensure a stable financial future, including through development portfolios. Over the last five years the Council has bought land or developed proposals on a pipeline of different sites, in many cases delivering new homes through the Housing Revenue Account. Otterpool Park is by far the most ambitious acquisition but with the potential for the greatest long term income.

2.3 DRIVERS FOR OTTERPOOL PARK

- meeting the council's corporate objective of more homes and more jobs*;

- planning properly for long term housing growth;
- rebalancing the demographic of the district to attract more people of working age, away from the trend of an increasing older population;
- Creating a comprehensively planned community that provides infrastructure in a timely way and a high quality environment, controlled through land ownership. This will avoid incremental and poorly planned, poorly designed development; and
- creating an environment that offers healthy lifestyles, including neighbourhoods that are walkable, encouraging walking and cycling over use of the car. Thriving local communities and access to the outdoors has become increasingly important during the Covid pandemic.
- financial sustainability of the council, providing a long term source of income to reinvest in the district and improving services to its residents;

*The Council is currently consulting on the next revision of its corporate plan. One of its priorities is to “deliver a sustainable new development at Otterpool Park”.

The importance of working in partnership to deliver a project of this scale cannot be underestimated, including a strong working relationship with the local planning authority. Section 6 sets out the work with stakeholders present and anticipated.

3. VISION AND PURPOSE

Our Vision document for Otterpool is included at appendix 1

3.1 BENEFITS TO THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Development management – The Council is keen to ensure that the development is of a high quality and delivers a wide range of objectives. The LLP is a vehicle able to exert control far beyond what would be possible through the Council's role as local planning authority. This may involve applying control or financially supporting a wide range of aims and objectives, including the following:

- **Homes** - Developing up to 10,000 new homes including
 - Satisfying local needs including affordable homes
 - Providing a range of tenures to meet diverse needs
 - Including homes for key workers
 - Providing opportunities for innovative delivery including self-build and community land trusts
 - Achieving high quality design and sustainable construction
- Distinctive and high- quality design
 - Applying guidance through design codes
 - Applying control through deals struck with housebuilders and enforced through licensing arrangements
- Sustainable transport
 - Provision of transport hubs to encourage the use of public transport and sustainable vehicles
 - Incentives for the use of electric vehicles good quality cycle and pedestrian facilities
- Employment space
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Energy conservation
- Healthy lifestyles
 - Land uses arranged to encourage walking and cycling, assisted by dedicated cycleways, footpaths and large areas of parkland
 - Contemporary health facilities
 - Indoor and outdoor spaces and activities to improve community development and mental health
- Improve heritage assets
- Creativity
- A technology enabled community
- Local Food
- Monitoring the success of the town against its objectives and resident/ employer satisfaction

3.2 LAND VALUE CAPTURE

Financial – Although not the primary reason one of the reasons for the Council embarking on the Otterpool Park Project was to generate a commercial return and thereby improve its overall financial position. The decision was taken in anticipation of Government reducing its annual support grant to the Council and with an aspiration of making the Council more financially independent. Initial land purchase costs were justified on the basis that in the long term there would be benefits to residents across the District. The aspiration is for the Council to benefit from capital receipts in the middle and long term and to explore the scope for generating sustainable revenue incomes.

The capital receipts will result from the selling of serviced plots to housebuilders, some receipts will be reinvested in the project and some will be payments to the Council to enable the repayment of loans to the company and to support improved Council services. Further capital receipts could be generated if the Council wanted to directly develop land for housing or commercial uses.

The revenue receipts could be manifest from a range of sources which could include:

- Income from land and/or buildings through the payment of rent (residential and commercial). The Council could retain the freehold interest in parts of the site and achieve ground rents or it could potentially construct commercial buildings to let.
- The provision of services to the LLP e.g. Grounds maintenance.

Each year the board of the LLP will consider the distribution of profits to its owners, the ability to distribute profits will depend on a variety of factors including the amount of money generated by land sales.

3.3 DESIGN

Design quality

Several mechanisms were agreed early on with the LPA to ensure good design and place making was carried through from early concept through to detailed design and construction. These are:

- The Charter for Otterpool Park, which was approved in October 2017
- Setting up the Otterpool Park Place Panel
- Proactive involvement of the LPA, working together with the promoter
- Preparation of design guidelines as part of the outline planning application
- Preparation of design codes – a strategic code for the whole site, with detailed codes required by phase

- A Kentish Contemporary Vernacular design guide aimed at developers that demonstrates how traditional Kent building forms and materials can be reinterpreted.

The LLP will continue to support and invest in these design tools. It recognises the need to review each phase of development to assess its success and where lessons can be learnt, then revise design codes and other strategies accordingly.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 PLANNING INCLUDING UTILITIES / INFRASTRUCTURE

In order that the key objectives of the Otterpool Park Garden Town can be achieved, for example homes, jobs, education and health services and high quality public open spaces, it is firstly necessary to deliver the key infrastructure provision that enables the key elements of the town to be delivered.

As master developer for the Garden Town, the LLP has a key role to play in the delivery of such infrastructure. In order for the LLP to be in a position to deliver this infrastructure it be necessary to develop and deliver a detailed programme of activities based on the following stages, as set out below :-

4.2 SECURING PLANNING PERMISSION

The planning strategy for Otterpool Park is set in more detail in Section 9 of the Business Plan. However in summary, in order allow the key infrastructure to be delivered, it will be necessary for the following to be obtained:-

- Adoption of the Folkestone and Hythe Core Strategy Review
- Approval of the Otterpool Park outline planning application
- Tier 2 approval, including approval of the Phase 1 masterplan and design code (plus approval of subsequent phases as the scheme proceeds).
- The discharge of pre-commencement and other relevant planning condition.
- The discharging of any S106 or other similar legal obligations.

4.3 DETAILED TECHNICAL DESIGN AND APPROVAL

- The preparation of detailed technical designs for the key infrastructure provision.
- The obtaining of the necessary technical consents such as building regulations approval or S278 approval for highway related infrastructure.
- Other approvals such as main rivers consent, listed building consent and approval from the relevant utility companies.

4.4 LANDOWNERSHIP

- Addressing any landownership issues required for the delivery of key infrastructure including the acquisition of any required land in accordance with the options agreements between the LLP and third party land owners.

4.5 PROCUREMENT

For element of infrastructure provision it will be necessary to procure a contractor or operator to deliver the infrastructure. There are number of options available for this such as:-

- Procurement of contractor to deliver a particular piece of infrastructure based on a design commissioned by the LLP. In such an example the LLP would be responsible for the securing of the necessary consents.
- The entering into a design and build contract with a contractor, whereby the appointed contractor secures the necessary consent and prepares the detailed design prior to implementation on behalf of the LLP.
- Direct delivery by a third party operator for example in the case of the Waste Water Treatment works.

4.6 OTTERPOOL PARK LLP INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

The planning and delivery of infrastructure will be a key function of the LLP in its role as master developer and a costed infrastructure programme will be prepared and maintained by the LLP. The key focus will be on delivering the infrastructure necessary to provide serviced plots capable of being built out by third party developers as well as delivering the social and community infrastructure necessary for place making and the achievement of the broader objectives of the company. The type of infrastructure that will be delivered by the LLP includes:-

- Sustainable transport measures including cycle/footpath provision, bus and rail infrastructure and a network of mobility hubs.
- Strategic road network including key junction improvements and other mitigation measures.
- Advanced planting and other green infrastructure including the strategic park network, sports pitches and neighbourhood level play provision.
- Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) provision.
- Waste Water Treatment facilities including waste water recycling provision.
- Utilities provision including potable water and electricity supply and ultra-fast broadband.
- Community infrastructure including primary and secondary schools and a health and well-being centre.

The LLP will need to make a long terms commitment to the delivery of strategic infrastructure based on a rolling 5 year infrastructure programme.

4.7 STRATEGIC LAND AGREEMENT

The foundation of the arrangements between the Council and the LLP is a Strategic Land Agreement (“the SLA”) which is outlined below are intended to be as flexible as possible to account for the long term nature of the Project.

The SLA provides the LLP with a call option over the Council’s land interests at Otterpool Park.

The SLA is flexible on:

- **Timing** – in terms of its overall duration and when the call options are exercised during that contractual term;
- **Subject matter** – in relation to which one or more land interests (in whole or in part) the call option is exercised by the LLP at any one time;
- **Outcome** – in terms of what the LLP exercising its call option in relation to one or more land interests results in – i.e. that could be a land transfer to the LLP or a transfer to another 3rd party nominated by the LLP (e.g. a house builder); and
- **Payment** – in terms of both the nature of the consideration and when it is payable (e.g. is it deferred?).

Where the LLP acquires one or more land interests from the Council under the SLA, it will fund those acquisitions either (i) pursuant to a debt facility from the Council or from another third party lender, or (ii) the land interest(s) could be transferred in consideration of loan notes from its Members (Owners) (at the value of the land interest(s) in question) being issued by the LLP to the Council.

Subsequent transfers of land pursuant to the LLP exercising its call options under the SLA will be subject to the satisfaction of certain pre-conditions – e.g. planning permission, viability, funding, site/phase business plans.

4.8 MANAGEMENT OF THE SITE

Presently the area of the site owned by the Council consists of agricultural land, some residences, the Castle and areas that are unused e.g. the old stands of the racecourse.

The agricultural land is let on agricultural tenancies and the houses or bungalows that are occupied are rented out on non-secure or assured shorthold tenancies. This ensures that the Council get a return on its investment.

It is the intention that the Council and the LLP will enter into a licence agreement so that the land is managed by the LLP for a fee. This will enable the LLP to manage the site ensuring that, amongst other things, it is presented in such a way as to be attractive to developers.

5. ORGANISATIONAL FORM

5.1 LEGAL FORM AND GOVERNANCE

The Council has formed Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership (“the LLP”) to act as the master developer for the Project in accordance with this business plan and the agreements it has with the Council, principally the Strategic Land Agreement (see above) and the financing arrangements.

As the master developer the LLP will take responsibility for obtaining planning permission and other consents and for delivering the infrastructure (e.g. community infrastructure, utilities and highways) for the Project. The LLP will also carry out feasibility studies to determine market need.

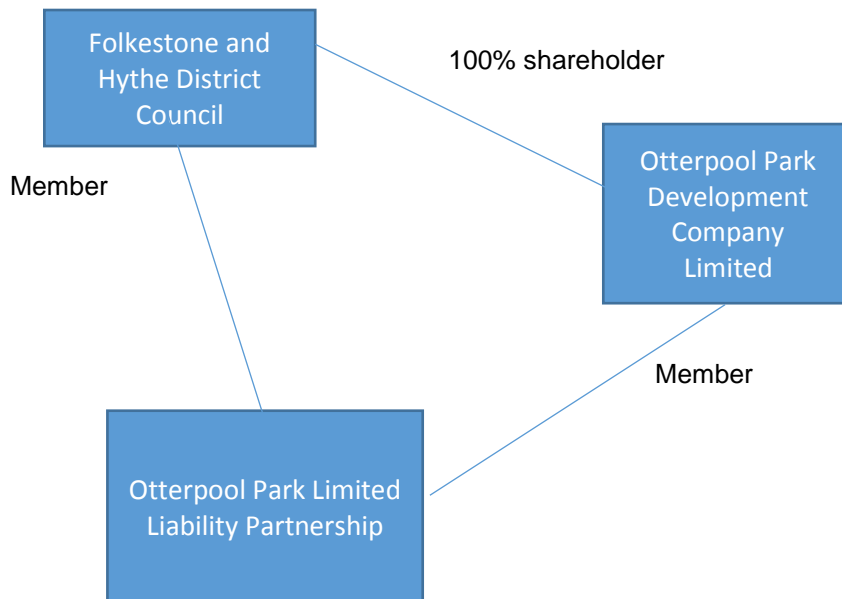
The LLP will market fully serviced land parcel to housebuilders and commercial developers facilitating the creation of high quality places.

The LLP through subsidiaries will have a continuing role in the physical and social development of the Project.

It is not envisaged in the plan that the LLP will either itself or through a subsidiary develop land itself, which would require a different set of considerations and decisions. This may change during future plans or indeed during updates of this present plan. In addition, although not related to developing land it is likely that the community infrastructure will be managed and owned by a subsidiary of the LLP.

Finally the LLP will create value for its owners in the way it facilitates the development of the Project. This is dealt with more fully elsewhere

The LLP is presently owned by the Council and by the Otterpool Park Development Company Limited (“the Limited Company”). The Limited Company is itself wholly owned by the Council. The ownership structure is shown below.



A Members' (or Owners') Agreement between the Council, the Limited Company and the LLP is the governing document of the LLP. The Members' Agreement sets out the objective of the LLP as:-

"To ensure that the Otterpool Park Garden Town, a settlement that will in time consist of 10,000 dwellings is delivered in accordance with the business plan approved from time to time including but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing generating the required commercial return to the Members."

The LLP's tasks are further shown as:-

- a) Be the planning applicant for the Project delivery.
- b) If appropriate act as the manager of community infrastructure created as part of the Project.
- c) Lead and coordinate development activity at the Project site, potentially via subsidiary vehicles.
- d) Where appropriate, facilitate partnership development arrangements to bring forward housing and employment opportunities at the Project site, including joint ventures with other organisations.
- e) Where appropriate, hold and manage residential, commercial, agricultural and/or industrial land and buildings at the Project site in advance of, during and following Project delivery (as applicable).
- f) Lead and coordinate the delivery of such infrastructure works as are necessary as part of Project delivery.
- g) Commission any necessary professional services relating to either the Council's objectives for the Project and/or the business objectives of the Delivery Vehicle.

- h) Carry out such trading activities as will be identified in the Delivery Vehicle's Business Plan (which will be subject to periodic update/review/approval)

The Members' Agreement also contains the delegation matrix which sets out those matters which need the approval of the Council and are not within the authority of the LLP to make a decision on.

The structure will enable new partners to join the LLP; a decision on whether to and on what terms would rest with the existing members. At present it is the Council's intention that it would retain the majority "share" in the LLP. Any new partner could come from the private or public sector. It is likely that the Council would expect that any new potential partner would bring substantial funding with them.

The governing body of the LLP is a board of nominees or directors. The present board (details of whom are shown in section 5.4) comprises seven people six of whom are appointed by the Council and one by the Limited Company. One of the directors has been appointed as the chairman of the board.

The board has adopted a code of conduct so that conflicts of interest are identified and avoidedⁱ and has also adopted a procurement policyⁱⁱ.

The Members of the LLP meet at least quarterly to discuss the affairs of the LLP and the progress towards achieving the objectives in the business plan.

ⁱ Board decision 15 July 2020 minute 3

ⁱⁱ Board decision 15 July 2020 minute 4

5.2 THE BUSINESS PLAN PROCESS

The board will, every five years approve a business plan. The business plan will have a five – year duration with annual updates. The business plan and its updates will be approved by the Board for submission to the Council in December / January of each year. This will enable any budgetary implications to be considered by the Council for inclusion in the budget for the subsequent financial year.

5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUSES

Each year the board will meet to decide what proportion of the net profits (if any) should be retained for the working capital reserves of the LLP and for reinvestment in the LLP in accordance with the business plan. The remainder will be distributed to the members in accordance the proportion each member is entitled to, currently the Council is entitled to 99.9% and the Limited Company 0.1%

5.4 THE TEAM AND RESOURCES

The Board

The LLP is governed by a board of nominees or directors. The rules for the board's meetings are contained in the Members' Agreement. The agendas and minutes of the board meetings are made public unless there are confidential or sensitive information is being discussed.

The board meets at least quarterly with other meetings being arranged as and when required.

The board presently comprises seven directors. Two of the directors are members of the council, two employees of the council and three appointed after public advertisement.

Brief biographies of the directors are set out in appendix 2

Leadership

Day to day leadership of the LLP is provided by John Bunnett and Andy Jarrett. The board have delegated most day to day decisions to them, although John and Andy naturally keep the board apprised of what is going on.

They also are the primary link between the LLP and the owners – the Council and the Limited Company.

John and Andy are responsible and answerable to the board for the delivery of the business plan.

Wider team

The resource strategy is to have a blend of internal resource along with a range of interim management, consultants and contractors appointed on a term contract or through partnership arrangements.

The following staff will be appointed on a secondment basis for a term of three years initially:

John Bunnett - Managing director
Andrew Jarrett - Planning director
Julia Wallace –Masterplanning and Design Manager
David Shore - Planning Manager
Tess Luetchford - Community Service Delivery Manager
Donna Brace - Project coordinator

The structure of the team will be initially a relatively flat model whereby each area of work whether it be planning or delivery is assigned to an individual. The coordination of this work will be led by John and Andy

depending on the area of work. As the bulk of that work currently is planning the resource within the team is largely planning expertise and design expertise and Julia and Dave are very experienced and capable planners who are well able to carry forward the outline planning application and the design of the first phase master plan along with support from Andy.

John is leading on the on the delivery elements of the project and the commercial negotiations both with housebuilders and commercial property organisations along with overseeing the day-to-day running of the business.

Andy's role is to support the Managing Director in the preparation and delivery of the Otterpool Park Project. Andy is the lead officer in preparing and managing the planning strategy for the project including managing the delivery budget for the planning strategy. He also manages the planning team.

Julia's role is to project manage the masterplanning and technical work for Otterpool Park and to provide related professional advice and to oversee a range of workstreams through to delivery of the project on site.

Dave's role is to provide professional advice and project manage town planning and associated technical work for Otterpool Park, for the promoter Otterpool Park LLP. He is also the lead on transport provision for Otterpool Park.

Tess' role is to manage delivery of a range of community buildings and services to meet the needs of the new community at Otterpool Park, including leading on community liaison and community development. The role will involve delivering ambitious social and environmental objectives for the town including health and wellbeing; culture and arts; education and lifelong learning. It will rely on developing strong and constructive working relationships at a senior level with a range of partners in the public and voluntary sector.

Donna's role is to support the project management and administration of the planning and delivery of Otterpool Park. She is also budget holder for the day to day running costs of the office and solely responsible for the purchase order and invoice system. She also assists the finance manager with budget management for the project.

Their specialisms are described above. Their role is to ensure that the LLP fulfils the objectives in the business plan.

Recruitment over the plan period

The LLP does not employ anyone at present. This is likely to change over the plan period. A skills audit will be undertaken to identify gaps in the skills necessary to progress the project with a view recruiting to fill the gaps. Policies and human resources, recruitment and remuneration will be developed for approval by the board.

Support services

It is intended that the LLP will enter into service level agreements with the Council to provide all or some the following:-

- The provision of staff to run the business and carry out the business activities of the LLP;
- Legal advice;
- Accountancy advice and services;
- Accommodation;
- Procurement services;
- Internal audit services;
- Communications and public relations services;
- IT services;
- Human resource services.

Other services may be added but over the Plan Period it is likely that some, at least, of these services will be tendered and possibly awarded to third parties.

The LLP has already moved out of the Civic Centre in Folkestone to a dedicated office on the former racecourse under a lease on commercial terms from the Council.

Contracts

The major consulting firm Arcadis have already been appointed on a term contract and are responsible for the delivery of all environmental assessment work. In addition Arcadis have been appointed to project manage the planning application process which will include representations to, appearance at the local plan enquiry and the preparation of the outline planning application which is currently in process. It is anticipated that this work will run through the early part of 2021 and will conclude at the point at which the outline planning application goes to the Planning and Licensing Committee which is anticipated in the second quarter of 2021. Subsequent phases of planning work will be determined during the course of the first quarter of 2021 and will largely be around the delivery of reserved matters.

Alongside this work the other major area on which the LLP will concentrate in the forthcoming 24 month period will be the preparation for the delivery of the first phase of the development. This will include the work to open up the area around the town centre and the early phases of residential development and the offsite infrastructure which will include everything from advanced planting to highway and other major built infrastructure development. This is a very substantial area of work and is currently being overseen by a group of specialist consultants with considerable experience in delivering major infrastructure but there is a need for a strong experienced client side officer to manage these consultants. The LLP is currently exploring two approaches to securing this experience, the first is

by way of an interim manager and the second is by way of a full-time appointment and it is anticipated that the choice in this area will be made early in 2021.

Clearly over time the needs of the LLP will change and therefore the resulting resource needs will also change. It is anticipated that resourcing needs will be kept under annual review and any changes to resourcing will be considered as part of the annual review of the business plan.

6. STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

For all development, early consultation is critical to the planning process, and especially so when the development proposed is at a Garden Town scale. One of the criteria for a successful bid to the government's Garden Cities, Towns and Villages programme was to be able to demonstrate local support, and this is something the Council took seriously from the inception of the proposed garden town. Early meetings were held with local partners including the Invicta Chamber of Commerce, East Kent College, parish councils, local Business Advisory Board and politicians at local, county and national level before the bid was submitted. Many stakeholders submitted letters of support that were included in the bid, including the local MP. The intention to bid for garden town status received unanimous support from council members at the Council meeting of May 2016. (Minute reference).

Since then, the masterplan and planning application has been the vehicle to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Use of social media and development of the Otterpool Park website ran alongside a series of drop-in events, workshops and briefings. The team has held workshops with primary and secondary schools and worked with college and university students. Early engagement allowed proposals to be explained to interested parties, stakeholders and local residents. It was also an opportunity to explore and seek solutions to various issues at an early stage, with the intention of gathering and testing ideas, reducing conflict and raising and resolving problems. Overall it resulted in a better quality planning proposal.

The team worked closely with two consultants who were initially appointed to lead on communications and community engagement for the planning application - Property House Marketing and Kevin Murray Associates. The overall strategy was aimed at reaching as wide a demographic as possible – young and old; the working population and those living locally and further afield. The programme of engagement activity is set out in the Statement of Community Engagement within the planning application. Communications and engagement is now being led by Pillory Barn, who will continue to work with the LLP.

Engagement and collaborative working with the LPA over the Core Strategy Review and planning application continue to be important for such a significant project. Separately the Council also met regularly with a range of local stakeholders, including Kent County Council, parish and town councils, the MP, the Local Enterprise Partnership, local amenity groups and other interested parties. It met with most of the individual households living within the planning application area.

Work with stakeholders to date has been focussed around the masterplanning work, but as the project moves toward delivery this will

need to be broadened out to cover a range of different themes, including health and wellbeing; transport and environmental matters such as heritage and ecology.

6.2 FUTURE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholders have changed as the Otterpool Park project has progressed during the past few years. Consequently the original stakeholder mapping exercise is being refreshed including the theme specific elements mentioned above. This will enable the team to identify audience segments and design targeted engagement strategies for each segment with the assistance of a specialist agency. Stakeholders vary from those with a specialist role in for example health, through to voluntary sector organisations and interested members of the local community who wish to be involved.

One of the core principles of a garden city is around engagement, and the LLP is committed to achieving this. The diagram below shows the range and depth of engagement that can be achieved, leading ultimately to partnerships involving stakeholders.



While some people will only wish to be kept informed rather than participate more actively, the LLP will explore a range of opportunities for working with local stakeholders and existing/ future residents, for example:

- Ongoing work with parish councils on masterplanning of each phase of development
- Involvement in heritage through community archaeological digs and projects at Westenhanger Castle
- Working with partners such as White Cliffs Countryside Projects to involve volunteers in environmental improvement projects
- Community arts projects
- Ensuring local representation on the governance body responsible for long term management and maintenance of assets, including green

space and community buildings. The potential to establish a town council in future has also been protected.

Otterpool Park will have a significant impact on current and future service planning for the Council itself, and the ongoing working relationship between the LLP and Council officers in planning and delivery of these services (beyond the Local Planning Authority) is important. The team will achieve this through regular meetings with key officers and landowner meetings.

6.3 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

An important consideration for a new community is how to ensure new residents feel welcome, supported and form social bonds within their new community. Forging relationships between existing and new communities is also important. The Otterpool team has looked at some examples of good practise and lessons learned from other garden towns and this work will continue and inform the community development strategy. It is important that, in addition to identifying and meeting stakeholder aspirations for Otterpool Park to become a vibrant community we also investigate the potential challenges for a new community for example mental health needs; potential isolation; debt; domestic abuse etc. We will work with stakeholders locally and in third sector organisations and the Council to map challenges and suggest mitigating strategies. We will also explore innovative and creative ways to secure and maintain community engagement for example through events, competitions, dedicated radio/TV channels; social media and the development of a Virtual Community to inform plans and feedback ideas to the Otterpool Park process.

6.4 **STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS**

Communication in the early days of the project was aimed locally, providing local stakeholders and the public with information, giving the opportunity to be involved and responding to concerns and objections. As Otterpool Park moved from an idea to a deliverable new town the strategy for communications has aimed to reach a wider audience regionally and nationally, promoting the site to potential developers, investors and future residents. This continues to be a primary objective, particularly increasing the reach to younger people and London-based businesses around St Pancras.

Pillory Barn has led communications and engagement since 2018, and has successfully helped the team set out the vision of the town; create a new website; run/ participate in several events and expand the social media reach.

Pillory Barn has prepared a communications strategy for the next 6 months that includes:

- preparing the Vision document and Investor Prospectus
- Preparing information notes for the website on a range of topics including ecology, housing, transport and Westenhanger castle
- Expanding the website and digital media footprint
- Running a consultation event at the time of resubmission of the planning application.

In addition each team member continues to be responsible for communicating with their own contacts within businesses, developers, agencies and community groups.

Other planned events and activities have been put on hold due to Covid restrictions, such as a promotional event close to St Pancras; a presentation at the Kent Construction Expo and Westenhanger Castle public open day (following a successful event in November 2019).

6.5 LEARNING FROM ELSEWHERE

With such an ambitious, long term project learning about best practice from elsewhere is vitally important, particularly where innovative and forward thinking ideas are being tested. Study visits have been run since 2016 for councillors, officers and other partners. Officers have met with a range of different public and private sector colleagues who have been involved with planning and delivering major sites, including other council-led developments.

Over the next 12 months the team will continue to be involved with the Garden Communities Forum run by Homes England, which offers a range of different learning opportunities. Colleagues in Ashford continue to be generous with their time sharing lessons learnt from Chilmington, in particular on long term stewardship. Learning will increasingly be focussed on specialist issues as individual projects take shape such as designing and building the health centre and first school. Priorities for learning this year include designing for zero carbon and sustainable transport.

7. THE MARKET

The Covid-19 Global Pandemic Lockdown has slowed transactions of development land at a time when, year on year, development land values are down 3.2% on Q1 2019. However, as lockdown measures eased off in June 2020 and the promoters and housebuilders returned to work from furlough, there were signs of an increase in activity and a desire to ramp up development to make up lost ground. Indeed, some of the falls from 2019, driven by Brexit uncertainty, were recovered by March 2020 only for the market to go through an imposed hiatus. Confidence has been gained in recent months as sales rates bounced back strongly on the back of pent up demand with the easing of restrictions on the housing market, particularly around a reduction in SDLT. But, there is a risk that this is partly pent-up demand and that sales rates will fall back as unemployment is predicted to rise as the winter of 2020 approaches. Throughout lockdown, fewer new sites have been brought to the market than normal, land deals have typically continued to progress, but at slower rates, and bid deadlines have been extended along with restructuring of payment profiles. Deferred payment structures are the new norm, and a prevalence of build-licence deals can be expected.

Regional developers, housing associations and the major housebuilders all continue to be active in the land market, buoyed in part by on-going government intervention. Despite many housebuilders being constrained by lack of staff resources throughout lockdown, appetite for the right type of site hasn't waned. The positivity is dampened, to a degree, by the prospects of further delays in the planning system, slower rates of delivery due to social distancing and rising development costs on the back of labour shortages and supply chain disruption. However, pricing for immediate and strategic land is unlikely to be much reduced due to the imbalance of supply and demand coupled with plans to extend help-to-buy and a mortgage and debt market willing to lend at historically low rates.

Strategic land, by its very nature, is less cashflow heavy and less impacted by short shocks in the otherwise cyclical land market. During the lockdown period, housebuilders and promoters were unable to fill their pipelines, which are integral to share price. As such, there is a willingness to acquire interests in strategic land and the pent up demand is holding values up. The difficulty, from a transaction perspective, is delays to planning decisions and working through a clogged market with fewer players as a result of furlough and job cuts. Main boards and shareholders become more risk averse in volatile times and the outlook for development land remains challenging as the UK looks to extract itself in an orderly fashion from the EU whilst coping with regional Covid-19 Lockdowns.

Appendix 3 contains the market report compiled by Strutt and Parker in August 2020, and gives an indication of the likely values that will be achieved at Otterpool Park

8. FINANCES

There are a number of funding options available to the Council and the right mix will depend on the peak amount of funding required and the length of time the Council requires the funding for. As the project cashflows become more certain, officers will work with the Council's treasury advisers to decide upon the correct approach.

Historically, the main source of funding for local authorities has been the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), a central government agency. However, although the PWLB has a very low administrative burden, its current relatively high interest rates and prohibitive repayment terms means that other options should be considered. Some of the borrowing requirement can be covered by short term, variable debt borrowed from other local authorities, however this will require the council to refinance on a regular basis and unless proper arrangements are put in place will expose the council to changes in interest rates.

Other funding options may offer more attractive rates of interest, but will come with a higher administrative burden, and in some cases may require the council to undergo a full credit assessment from prospective lenders. Tradeable debt such as Bills or commercial paper will provide a lower rate of interest and a wide range of lenders, but will have a significant set up cost. Direct lending options, such as loans from banks or institutions such as pension funds can represent a secure long term source of funding, but will come with terms and conditions that the council will need to take external advice on.

The Municipal Bond Agency may offer an alternative to the PWLB via a "club" issue allowing the council to issue debt with other local authorities. However, the MBA is yet to issue, and requires the council to borrow in the same maturity as the other authorities in the issue, and has guarantee requirements the council must consider carefully.

There are further options open to the council which are unlikely to be appropriate for the Otterpool project in its current form. For example, income Strips are used to reduce the development risk of a project, but this approach requires the resulting assets to be held long term, rather than the active management intended by the council. Similarly, a large public bond issue has the advantage of a low interest rate, but the likely size required, in the hundreds of millions, would not be feasible for this project.

It follows therefore that whichever funding route or combination of funding options the council chooses to secure the likely funding route from the Council to the LLP will be by way of a split of equity and loan. Further advice will need to be taken by the Council and the LLP in relation to the split but for financial modelling purposes the assumption at this point has been that approximately 5% would be by way of equity investment and the balance would be a loan. Should the LLP consider it prudent at the time, alternative means of funding either from commercial funders

such as banks and or pension funds may prove an attractive alternative. In addition of course a range of investment could come to the LLP in the form of equity for example from investment from Homes England or from housebuilders. The working assumption however remains that the LLP will secure funding from the Council and any alternative funding propositions would only be considered should they be more attractive to the LLP than Council funding.

The development has the potential to deliver significant returns to Company. Current modelling suggests that these returns will be over circa 28 years. Pace, and timing of these returns will be dependent on a number of decisions around infrastructure investment, and the timing of market cycles. We set out working assumptions below.

8.1 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Based on the assumptions set out below, our financial models produces the following headline figure.

Details			Profit	
Phases	Years	Units	Quantum	%
8	28	8,490	193,000,000	32

Assumptions

We have made the following assumptions:

Model

The model assumes the Land Owner, through the LLP, is acting as Master Developer ie is investing in the infrastructure and enabling works and selling the resultant serviced land parcels to house builders.

Inflation

All costs and revenues are day one, ie, do not include inflation. This approach has been taken because it is not possible to credibly forecast build cost inflation or house price inflation in the medium to long term. Past performance would suggest that the house price indices rises faster than the build cost index, and fluctuates to a greater extent. Both rise and fall over the economic cycle. Ultimately the spread between these indices over time will define profitability

We have also excluded 'betterment' from the above. ie we have not taken into account that buying a house in an established garden town with proven infrastructure, established schools and a strong local reputation will be inherently more attractive to a greater number of purchasers than the first

phase of houses when the full potential of the town will only be grasped by purchasers with the vision and experience to imagine its potential.

Whilst costs may rise, long terms trends suggest that house prices will rise by more than cost inflations making this assumption conservative.

Even in the absence of House price inflation, evidence from similar schemes suggest that values rise through 'betterment' when a scheme becomes established making the assumption that this does not happen at Otterpool very conservative.

Costs adopted:

We have adopted the Infrastructure costs provided by Arcadis version 2.4 review with amendments provided by F+HDC. This model is subject to ongoing review both in terms of the quantum of individual costs; and also in terms of the requirement of each cost item within a given phase of development.

Additional costs:

We have assumed:

- A contingency fund of 5% of the above costs,
- An additional allowance of 10% on all infrastructure costings for professional fees,
- Financing costs of 4.5% on all debt balances.
- All phases stand alone and profits are extracted, not reinvested in the next phase
- No credit balances produce a return.

Private Housing Land

We have assumed as detailed on the land strategy that the parcels of land are sold when fully serviced the value of these parcels will be determined by a number of variables. These will be individual to the different parcels with housebuilders focussing on different sectors of the market. We have considered the average assumptions the most significant of which is

Value of Private Houses and Flats:

We have assumed that the private accommodation is worth on average in the order of £340 sq ft. This is a conservative assumption in the current market, but will require sustained emphasis on place making and branding to place the Garden Town in the local and national consciousness prior to land or units becoming available.

Build costs

We have assumed housebuilder costs for houses at £130 sq ft with an additional £7,500 per plot for servicing, and assumed £150 sq ft for flat construction.

Profit requirement

We have assumed that house builders will seek to make a 20% return on capital expended.

Section 106 contributions:

We have assumed that developers will be required to provide a Section 106 Contribution of £18,500 per private unit in line with the calculations provided by Arcadis

Affordable Housing Land:

We have assumed that, in line with planning policy 22% of units are affordable. Of these 60% are social rent and 40% are intermediate (shared ownership). Given the relatively low affordability thresholds in the District, it is likely that the land for the affordable element of the scheme will not create a land value.

Discussions around affordable housing and viability will define the land receipts if any, and the timing of these across the scheme. The weighting of affordable housing away from less profitable phases could control finance costs

Commercial Land:

There are currently plans to create around 2m sq ft of: employment (B1 and B2) education (D1) retail and related (A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5) community (D1 and D2) hotel (C1) and leisure (D2) space within the town. These will be a combination costs included in the Arcadis costings, place making investment and revenue generating business land. It is likely that place making investment will take place early on with revenue to follow in later phases, but we have taken the conservative assumption that no non-residential land currently creates a land value. This is likely to be subject to a positive revision as plans develop

Timescale:

The timescale and expenditure of the enabling infrastructure will be controlled by the market absorption of the completed units. We have assumed that the market can absorb 300 units per annum (234 private units). On this basis the 8,500 houses can be delivered over 28 years, and assumes.

- Parcels are sold of 150 to 400 plots

- Five or six differentiated products to be continually available to potential house buyers over all the phases.
- Additional product types are introduced as appropriate in the market, for example age restricted and community build.
- Stronger sales during periods of market growth to compensate for low sales in recessionary periods.
- Careful management of the housing mix to ensure unit types are appropriate for the target end occupier.

Betterment ‘placemaking’

We have allowed for betterment in a parallel model. Betterment, unlike inflation, assumes that houses built in the future are more valuable than houses built today because the environment that they will be built into, ie in a flourishing and established Garden Town, will be considered more desirable than the environment the first phase of houses will be delivered into. If we were to allow for 10% betterment in land values after circa 10 years and another 10% after 20 years would create in the order of an additional £43,000,000 in profit. This would somewhat underplay the degree of betterment seen in other new towns such as Kings Hill.

Tax

The structures for any agreements will be designed to be as “tax efficient” as possible consistent with the achievement of the vision for the project

Conclusion

Our current modelling identifies the need for early investment in phase 1 creating a peak capital requirement of £65m in year 2022/23.

9. PLANNING STRATEGY

The LLP will support the allocation of the site in the Core Strategy Review of the Local Plan at the Examination in Public of that strategy which has now started.

This section sets out the planning strategy of the LLP in relation to the securing of a site allocation for the Otterpool Park development, within the Council's Core Strategy Review, and the obtaining of the necessary consents, permissions and agreements to allow the scheme to proceed.

9.1 SUPPORT FOR SITE ALLOCATION IN CORE STRATEGY REVIEW

As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) planning law requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At present the principle development plan document for the Folkestone and Hythe District is the Shepway (the former name of the district and the Council) Core Strategy that was adopted by the Council in September 2013.

In spring 2020 the Core Strategy Review (CSR) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. This will replace the current Core Strategy. This includes a series of policies (SS6-SS9) that support the principle of development at Otterpool Park for up to 6375 homes within the plan period (to 2036/37) and ultimately between 8000 to 10,000 homes.

In July 2020, in response to a number of matters, issues and questions issued by the planning inspectors (appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) the LLP, through its planning consultants Quod, submitted a series of responses and supporting evidence relating to a number of topics and in particular those relating to the supply and delivery of housing and the strategy for the North Downs area, that contains the site specific policies for Otterpool Park. A series of public hearing sessions (either virtual or face to face) will be held towards the end of 2020. It is important that the LLP are represented at these sessions, through Quod and the broader technical team, and that the appropriate experts witness are available to answer questions raised by the Inspectors. Whilst it is ultimately the role of Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that the CSR is both sound and legally compliant, the LLP will also have a significant role to play in terms of demonstrating that a financially viable scheme for Otterpool Park can be delivered that complies with the emerging policies in the CSR and supports the overall timeframe for the delivery of housing across the District.

More specifically it will be necessary for the LLP to demonstrate, as part of the examination process, that the scheme will achieve nitrate neutrality, and therefore not have an adverse impact on the European designated habitat

sites at Stodmarsh to the north east of Canterbury, and that sufficient improvements can be made to junctions and roundabouts on the strategic road network to satisfy the requirements of Highways England.

9.2 NEGOTIATE S106 AGREEMENTS

As previously stated it will be necessary for the LPP, as part of the process of obtaining outline planning permission, to enter into a S106 legal agreement setting out a range of contributions and other obligations. Development of the S106 agreement is being progressed as a two stage process where firstly a detailed heads of terms will be agreed between the LLP and the LPA (that can be included as part of the officers report to the Planning and Licencing Committee) followed by the detailed drafting of the agreement. Initial discussions with the LPA have identified an initial list of topics for the head of terms to cover that will be subject to further discussion and negotiation:-

Transport Infrastructure

- Non-motorised user infrastructure
- Public transport infrastructure
- Highway infrastructure
- Monitoring Governance and Design Quality
- Long term stewardship
- Securing design quality
- Monitoring

Social and Community Infrastructure

- Affordable housing
- Community facilities
- Education
- Health
- Emergency services
- Retail and employment
- Open space
- Skills and employment
- Heritage and archaeology

Environmental and Utilities

- Waste
- Digital infrastructure
- Water
- Energy
- Bio-diversity
- Sustainable design and construction

The traditional approach to the development of a S106 agreement is for the developer to commit to making a series of financial contributions, triggered by different stages in the progress of the scheme. These are made to the appropriate provider such as the local education or health authority. However, given the role of the LLP as a master developer, consideration is being given to the role the LLP can play in terms of the direct provision of

infrastructure and how this should be reflected in the S106 agreement. An example of this might be the commissioning and construction, by the LLP, of the first primary school. This is covered in more detail below.

Given the long term nature of the Otterpool Park scheme it is considered appropriate to adopt a monitor and manage approach to the provision of infrastructure, for example in the areas of transport and education, whereby the level of demand and the need for infrastructure is monitored on a phase by phase basis and the infrastructure strategy and S106 obligations adapted as appropriate and to reflect advances in technology, behaviour etc.

In addition, as the Council has a land interest at Otterpool Park, and the Council is the local planning authority, it may be necessary for a third party public body, such as Kent County Council, to monitor the implementation of the S106 agreement. Legal advice is being sought in relation to this and the appropriate negotiations will be undertaken.

9.3 OBTAINING CONSENTS

In order for the Otterpool Park scheme to be delivered it will be necessary to secure a range of planning permissions and other consents over the lifetime of the project. It is therefore important that the LLP develops a clear strategy for the preparation and submission of the necessary applications in order to allow the scheme to progress.

An outline planning application, for a scheme consisting of up to 8500 homes, was submitted to the Local Planning Authority in February 2019. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the local community the scheme is being amended. It is anticipated that a number of documents, including an updated suite of parameter plans and an updated Environmental Statement will be submitted to the local planning authority in early 2021. The amended information will be subject to a further round of stakeholder and public consultation.

Consideration of the planning applications by the Council's Planning and Licencing Committee will be dependent upon the timescale for the adoption of the Core Strategy Review but it is anticipated that this will take place in early summer 2021. If the application is approved by the Committee it will then be necessary for the LLP and the LPA to agree and finalise a S106 legal agreement, with the aim that this will be completed by autumn 2021.

Given the scale and complexity of the Otterpool Park development it is has been agreed that that a three tier approach will be adopted in relation to the securing of detailed planning permission. Such an approach has been employed successfully at other garden town developments such as Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire. The three tier approach is set out below:-

- Tier 1: Outline planning permission granted and S106 agreement completed

- Tier 2: Defines the framework for each phase of the scheme and will include, for example, submission to the LPA of the masterplan and design code. It is anticipated that at this stage it will also be necessary to update other key documentation such as the transport strategy and heritage strategy, on a phase by phase basis, as part of the series of tier 2 submissions.
- Tier 3: Consists of the detailed reserved matters applications for the different elements of the scheme. Such applications will be numerous and varied and will include, for example, applications in relation to highway infrastructure, sustainable drainage system (SUDS), educational facilities, town centre public realm, houses and flats, employment uses, waste water treatment works etc.

In addition to achieving detailed planning permission, through the three tier approach, it will also be necessary to discharge a range of pre-commencement and other planning conditions, as well as monitoring ongoing compliance. There will also be the requirement to make a variety of contributions and deliver a series of obligations as set out in the S106 agreement.

As well as achieving planning permission for the various components of the scheme it will also be necessary to prepare and submit applications for other types of approval which are likely to include the following :-

- Building regulations approval
- S278 Highways Act 1980 agreement - to make alterations or improvements to a public highway, as part of a planning approval.
- S38 agreement – relating to the adoption of the highways by the highway authority, Kent County Council.
- Scheduled monument consent and listed building consent.
- Main rivers consent – for work within a specified distance of the East Stour River.
- Applications related to the stopping up and diversion of the highway, footpaths, bridleways or byway.
- Various technical approvals related to the provision of utilities such the onsite electricity supply, ultrafast broadband, SUDS and waste water treatment.

These consents are covered in more detail in Section 10 Infrastructure Strategy.

In considering the scheme as whole there will be a number of consent and approvals that will fall to the LLP, as master developer, and a number that will fall to third party developers for specific elements of the scheme. As such it will be necessary for the LLP to appoint a series of external consultants in relation to each of the consents and approvals for which they are responsible.

To conclude the process of obtaining the necessary consents to allow the Otterpool Park scheme to proceed is both complex and ongoing and will

involve close liaison between the LLP, the LPA, other public bodies, third party developers and the local community.

9.4 **ROLE OF THE LLP IN PLANNING**

The LLP team will be responsible for preparing and submitting the planning applications and documents associated with tiers 1 and 2, working with a team of planning and technical consultants who will be directly appointed by the LLP. In the main tier 3 reserved matters applications will be the responsibility of the developer unless they related to strategic infrastructure.

The LLP has an important role as the guardian of design quality, ensuring retaining design and development standards are retained for all housing, commercial development, public buildings and public realm. All developers will be expected to support the overall vision and objectives of the project. Procurement of housebuilders and developers will require them to follow the strategic and phased design codes and submit their proposals to the LLP for comment before submitting their applications to the LPA.

Community Services and Culture

Planning and delivery of a new community of this scale offers the opportunity to plan properly for delivery of all facilities that will be needed by the local community and learn from innovative approaches in service provision that can improve the quality of people's lives. An important consideration is the flexibility to respond to changing needs and technological innovation over the coming decades, and to learn lessons from early phases. Creativity, arts and culture and in important part of the vision and identity of the town and has the potential to educate, improve mental health and enrich the quality of the environment in the town.

Further details on the procurement and construction of community facilities including schools and health centre are set out below under Infrastructure Strategy.

Health and wellbeing

Otterpool Park is committed to providing residents with a Health Centre delivering high quality primary care and additional community, social and specialist services. The Public Engagement Agency (PEA) were commissioned to design the first steps for a health and well-being strategy that included stakeholder analysis; key health sector stakeholder interviews and workshop; producing terms of reference for an Otterpool Park Garden Town Health and Wellbeing Steering Group and five associated working groups: i) Population Health ii) Stakeholder engagement and co-design iii) Model options and estates iv) Finance and Funding v) Workforce recruitment, retention and training. PEA also produced first steps documentation for the broader health and well-being public engagement strategy. Future stakeholder engagement for health and wellbeing will focus

on taking these strands of work forward with PEA and other agencies as appropriate. It is also important to recognise that health and wellbeing impacts on and is impacted by many of the other thematic work streams at Otterpool Park including sport and leisure; culture/art/heritage; education and environment, so stakeholder engagement needs to integrate across thematic strands wherever possible.

Education and lifelong learning

Provision for up to 7 primary schools, 12 nurseries and one secondary school (with a reserved site for a second) has been made at Otterpool Park. It needs to provide one, possibly two 2 or 3 form entry primary schools by 2025 (depending on Kent County Council analysis of school places requirements) with associated early years learning provision. The Learning Company (TLC) were engaged to develop first steps for the Otterpool Park education strategy. Following in depth interviews with key stakeholders they produced the Otterpool Park Education Vision and Strategy in June 2020 and the Otterpool Park Schools Design Guide. Next steps will include deep engagement with education sector and third sector stakeholders to develop plans for the new primary schools and explore the concept of an education campus on site to accommodate future secondary and further education provision. A wider community stakeholder engagement strategy will be developed to feed into the co-production of a lifelong learning plan for Otterpool Park ensuring the schools link in to the cultural, business and sports/leisure pathways for the development.

Creative Otterpool

The Council has been working with Creative Folkestone since the early days of the project, and have worked together on the cultural vision for the town and the Cultural Strategy. The aims of this work are to ensure arts and culture are embedded in the design of places and spaces but also services, and also to create an environment that is attractive to creative industries (but complements rather than competes with the thriving arts scene in Folkestone). Through this work Creative Folkestone were engaged to consult with stakeholders and subsequently produced the Otterpool Creative Action Plan. This outlines a three year period of audience development and management to reach a wide set of inter-generational participants in order to co-produce cultural commissions including permanent installations, events and festivals. Ongoing community engagement will also feed into the overall design of Otterpool Park. The next stage of work during 2020/21 will be to refine and implement the Action Plan – circumstances have changed due to the challenges of Covid, so assumptions about making use of external match funding from eg the Arts Council may now be unrealistic. An early community arts project working with existing communities should still be achievable.

Westenhanger Castle

Westenhanger Castle is a scheduled ancient monument and listed building with a rich heritage going back to medieval times, and an important asset in

setting the character and identity at the heart of The council acquired Westenhanger Castle in 2019.

10. INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

10.1 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The following set up a proposed approach to the delivery of community infrastructure primarily focusing on schools and healthcare facilities in particular in phase 1 within which sits the town centre. The LLP has retained the services of Gen 2 a specialist public-sector property and construction consultant with expertise particularly in delivering new schools and the operation of the schools, and has a good track record in delivering on time and to budget whilst maintaining a high quality product with intelligent design to allow for cost-effective management of facilities and other services within the schools. In addition Gen 2 has been retained to assist with the design and costings of the initial community buildings within the town centre and again has extensive experience in providing modern cost-effective buildings with the emphasis on design and effective facilities management. Whilst the LLP is still at a fairly early stage in determining precisely how the schools and the community infrastructure in the town centre will be delivered the town centre master plan set out locations within which such buildings could be accommodated and located in such a way as to be operable in a complimentary way. They would also bring vibrancy to the town centre and support the commercial operations which we intend to bring and centre around the lake and town Square.

The clear intent is to have both the primary school in the first phase and the flexible community facility which could incorporate healthcare provision along with wider uses for the community along with perhaps the opportunity to relocate the Councils offices (it should be noted however that the Council has not made a formal decision to relocate its offices still less where any new office would be located). With these facilities along with a range of commercial leisure uses the LLP feels that there is a kernel of a town centre which would be usable from the very earliest point in the delivery of the first phase and would sit complimentary to the park which again would be open at a very early point in phase 1.

School delivery

There are two main ways that the schools at Otterpool Park could be delivered. The first is for the LLP to transfer the school land to KCC who would deliver the schools, including running a competition for an academy operator, themselves.

The second option is for the LLP to deliver the schools themselves. This could be in direct partnership with a school operator or in partnership with both KCC and a school operator.

At this stage KCC and the LLP have not yet finalised which option will be used at Otterpool Park – and the approach may differ from school to school.

The approach will be to put in place a timetable of milestones to ensure that the process of land transfer, detailed planning and design, construction and opening is managed to trigger schools opening when needed, in line with housing occupation.

The Section 106 will set out the commitments and obligations of the relevant parties, which will ensure that the schools can and will be delivered to meet the needs of the new residents, but the detailed delivery mechanism for each school can be determined as part of the detailed design and Reserved Matters process.

The LLP will pursue a principle with the provider of the secondary school (and potentially the primary schools) of sharing facilities with the community. This could include indoor and outdoor sports facilities, classrooms for adult education classes etc. The LLP will seek to discuss with the provider how the layout and planning of the school can be designed to cope with this and/or plan for community use as part of the detailed design process.

Phasing of schools

Construction Phasing

The construction of primary schools may be phased, with 1 or 2 forms of entry (FE) being built at the start and additional forms of entry added later. For operational reasons, secondary schools would tend to be phased in blocks no smaller than 4FE.

Constructing and opening schools in phases will help to ensure that school buildings are not constructed before they are needed. . By expanding schools as demand arises, this helps to ensure school places meet the needs of the children living within Otterpool Park, rather than attracting children travelling from elsewhere. Building schools in phases does add to construction cost, so the advantages and disadvantages will be considered.

The school designs may need to be planned with phasing or future expansion in mind so that core facilities are delivered early on (e.g. halls, kitchens and administrative blocks) with later phases predominantly delivering extra classrooms. Campus designs provide the most flexibility and will be considered if appropriate and advantageous. The size of the school will be a key consideration in design – larger schools should be designed with management, safety and effective circulation in mind.

The school design will need to facilitate cost effective phasing that does not significantly disrupt the schools' operation, for example:

- Block structures and layouts that allow future construction phases to be isolated from operational areas of the school
- Access arrangements for construction vehicles that are segregated from children's pedestrian routes
- Construction methods that limit noise, dust and other disruption.
- Approaches that allow construction to be completed over the summer months.

Phased opening

Children moving schools in the middle of a phase of education is relatively rare. Because of this, new schools tend to open and fill up from the bottom, with Nursery, Reception and Year 7 opening first, adding academic years in succession every year after that.

However, a new settlement on this scale may attract a disproportionate number of children moving schools in the middle of a phase of education. To address this, schools could have multiple entry points and multi-age groups in the early phases of development.

Children could start in the middle years of primary school and they may be in a class with other children who are slightly older or younger than themselves, as long as they are at the same Key Stage of education. A Key Stage is one of the four “blocks” of years around which the national curriculum is structured. At the end of each Key Stage, the teacher formally assesses children’s performance. Using multi-age classes in this way can be referred to as vertical teaching.

Decisions about design, layout, construction methodology and phasing will be made at Reserved Matters (Tier 3) stage for each school coming forward. Operational choices, such as the use of vertical teaching, will need to be made in partnership with KCC and the school operator.

Healthcare

The LLP want health and wellbeing to be embedded in the approach to design and delivery at Otterpool Park. This includes aiming to provide excellent primary care facilities on-site. It also includes a wide range of other design and management aspects.

The proposals include one large practice, which will be located in the town centre.

Delivering a Treatment Centre

The NHS is prioritising primary care, care in the community and interventions to help people manage long term health conditions more effectively at home or with their GP, rather than in hospital.

This approach is intended to relieve pressure on hospitals and treat illness early, before it becomes acute and before patients require A&E. This reduces cost and significantly improves patient outcomes and wellbeing.

At Otterpool, there is a significant opportunity to provide a GP practice with extended services. The exact model for delivering these services will depend on the strategic plans, objectives and funding available to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) at the time of detailed planning permission and delivery.

It is expected that the healthcare offer, whatever model it will take will also include dentists, opticians and pharmacies which will come forward in a mixture of private and NHS settings according to the NHS licencing programme for these facilities.

Treatment Centres

Urgent treatment centres are community and primary care facilities that are open at least 12 hours a day, are GP-led, staffed by GPs, nurses and other clinicians, and have some diagnostics facilities. Urgent treatment centres encompass current Walk-in Centres, Minor Injuries Units, GP-led Health Centres and other similar facilities. They are ideally co-located with primary care facilities including GP extended hours / GP Access Hubs. They may also be co-located with other services including mental health services, community pharmacy, dental, social care and the voluntary sector.

A Treatment Centre may also include a private, specialist wing which deals with a specific type of care or procedure and serves a wide catchment – for example hip replacements. Such a centre could provide private facilities directly to the public or via NHS commissioning.

10.2 CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY

The LLP expect that the health facilities will need to be phased. Phasing is important to reduce running costs/management liability in the early years. It can also assist with capital cashflow in the years before revenue from the sale of homes builds up.

There are several ways to phase a new health centre. The exact model for Otterpool Park has not been decided at this early stage and will be the subject of discussion and agreement between the LLP, the Council and the CCGs as part of the 106 agreement. Phasing options include:

- Before c. year 3 or 4 years of construction, a GP could operate temporarily from another building (e.g. a community or commercial building) provided that the facilities and setting are appropriate to provide the quality of service and care required.
- A portion of the health centre could be built the early years, with space that is not required for healthcare to be let out on a short-term lease to other retail or commercial uses.
- Delivery of a wider range of additional services (education, training, social care, specialist care) etc could support the sustainability of the surgery in the early years.

10.3 PROPOSED APPROACH

In general, the management, flexibility and sustainability of community floor space is more important than size or number of buildings. It is important to work with the community and with public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders to understand community needs and to carefully plan what facilities are needed, who will use them and how they will be funded (and allow for how this could change over time).

At this stage in the process, it is too early to have a detailed understanding of these needs. Therefore, a development specification has been developed which includes a broad allocation of floor space which could be used for community use. Relevant community uses could include:

- A community hall
- Healthcare facility
- A youth centre
- An education centre/training centre/library
- Exhibition space

The detailed planning process will require the LLP to engage with the Council, KCC, local parish councils and other local stakeholders and future operators to understand need at the time of delivery. The primary objective of the approach at Otterpool Park is to ensure that any community floor space:

- Is flexible to meet a wide range of needs or changing needs over time
- Is sustainable, with long term management, maintenance and funding considered and secured as part of the Long Term Stewardship of the Garden Town as a whole
- Does not threaten the sustainability of existing successful community facilities – working with them rather than competing with them.
- Considers opportunities to use existing community capacity (such as successful existing community organisations) to help to get the new facilities started and build on local experience especially in early years.

10.4 THE COUNCIL'S NEW OFFICE.

The Council is currently examining the feasibility of relocating council's accommodation from Folkestone to a new purpose-built office campus at Otterpool Park. Whilst still at an early stage of consideration there appear to be merits in providing such a facility both in terms of cost of operation for the council and the benefit of bringing vibrancy to the new town centre at optical Park. Work will continue on this feasibility in parallel with wider work on multiple Park and it is anticipated that an initial decision to take forward from feasibility to a potential design will be taken during the first quarter of 20 21.

10.5 STEWARDSHIP AND GOVERNANCE OF ASSETS

The Council on 18 October 2017 agreed the principles of the long – term stewardship of open spaces and other community assets at Otterpool Park (see minute 47, Cabinet 18 October 2017).

The principles approved are as follows:-

- The long term stewardship of open space, public realm (other than highways) and non-commercial community buildings will be the responsibility of a new body, i.e. not SDC*.
 - *The responsible body will form part of an approach to land value capture for Otterpool Park. Its income is likely to come from a range of sources including income generating assets, endowment and potentially service charges. However, income sources being reinvested in the new community will need to be balanced against income generation to SDC for investment in facilities and services for residents across the whole district.*
 - *While a trust or similar structure is likely to be the most suitable vehicle initially, potential future transition to a Town Council should be allowed for. SDC should retain representation on the body.*
 - *The body will be community-led (as distinct from a privately run management company). It should also allow for future residents and businesses to shape the objectives and governance of the organisation, and to influence the design of new community facilities and spaces.*
 - *High quality management and maintenance over the long term is of fundamental importance when setting out the objectives of the stewardship body.*

*SDC refers to Shepway District Council, the former name of the Council.

The intention is that the LLP shall form a community interest company to manage the open spaces and other community assets. The Castle, town centre and employment site will be the subject of separate consideration.

The funding of the community interest company will be through a combination of rent charges and other sources of income.

11. LAND DISPOSAL STRATEGY

11.1 APPOINT AGENT

In terms of maximising sales receipts, we see the role of BNP Paribas Real Estate or other appointed agent, over the course of the project to encompass the following key tasks:

- Formulate an appropriate marketing strategy on a parcel by parcel basis which will need to evolve to complement the market throughout the duration of future sales periods.
- Create a premium brand for the wider development which is consistent with the design parameters of the overall scheme.
- Oversee the production of comprehensive technical information packs relative for each parcel.
- Advise on early placemaking.
- Negotiate land sales and work alongside the wider legal team to successfully secure the completion of sales within targeted timescales

11.2 MARKETING AND SALE OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL LAND

In accordance with the masterplan vision, the following represents a summary of the Otterpool Park garden settlement outline proposals:

- Up to 8,500 new homes across a range of types, sizes and tenures.
- 82,418 sq m of employment (B1 and B2 use class) floor space including commercial business hubs, a commercial business park and a light industrial business park.
- 37,161 sq m of education (D1 use class) floor space including five primary schools, one secondary school as well as nurseries and crèches.
- 28,875 sq m of retail and related (A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 use class) floor space.
- 20,900 sq m of community (D1 and D2 use class) floor space including a health centre and potential for places of worship, libraries and community centres.
- 7,701 sq m of hotel (C1 use class) floor space.
- 8,250 sq m of leisure (D2 use class) floor space.

- Infrastructure and utilities including a new electrical substation, onsite and off-site gas and potable water network reinforcement and provision of a fibre-to-home broadband network.
- 289.1 ha of green infrastructure (approximately 50% of the application site).
- Blue infrastructure.
- Car, motorcycle and bicycle parking.

The Council has formed Otterpool Park Limited Liability Partnership (“the LLP”) to act as the Master Developer for the Project. Master Developers (MD) can explore a broad range of deal structures when timing individual land parcel disposals, ranging from outright freehold disposals, through to development partnership models, such as promotion, option and joint venture agreements.

The benefit to the LLP of playing the role of MD will be that it can control the wider urban environment, particularly in the context of design, quality and community services and facilities. MDs unlock raw land through:

- Early investment in planning matters and infrastructure delivery such as drainage and mains services upgrades;
- Flood defences and road works;
- Public open space;
- Cycle ways; and
- Schools and local community centres.

Serviced parcels can then either be sold to Housebuilders to construct new homes or alternatively delivered directly by the LLP. BNP Paribas would suggest targeting parcel sizes of around 150 to 400 dwellings. From previous experience in similar sites, it is considered that this quantum of opportunity generally proves attractive in encapsulating not only national Housebuilder demand, but also some larger local developers.

Some sites, with multiple points of sale, can accommodate up to five competing Housebuilder flags at any one time. However, attention must be paid to regulate the number of developers active on site at any one time, both in terms of construction and sales. Through limiting this number, sales values can be maintained with levels less likely to be cannibalised through an oversupply to the market. Added to that, construction management can be more effectively controlled, ensuring high quality housing delivery and overall construction management process.

MDs can either sell serviced land parcels outright, deliver directly or participate in joint ventures or build licence arrangements which in turn will create long-term income

streams over the life of a development project. A similar strategy is often adopted by The Crown Estate in their strategic development land disposals.

Deferred land payments have been a consistent feature of land transactions since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), but other arrangements such as build licences could become increasingly attractive to Housebuilders who are sensitive to cash flows and returns on capital employed in the midst of what may be transpiring as another recession in the wake of Covid-19. These types of transactions can be seen by Housebuilders as more capital efficient as many are now focused on the delivery and construction of new homes, rather than investing capital speculatively in development land.

In each parcel disposal scenario, targeted developers would be discussed with the LLP in advance of the marketing programme, with the view of drawing up a shortlist of those to approach who would be appropriate partners to maintain the quality of each area. Unless there is a particular requirement to demonstrate that a broad disposal programme is undertaken in order to achieve best value, it is considered that a targeted approach to a number of key Housebuilders could yield better engagement due to the more targeted and personal approach. BNP Paribas, for example, have unique access to main board personnel in each of the main housebuilding companies and often obtain a personal undertaking from the CEO or Managing Director that a particular transaction is in accordance with the relevant acquisition criteria at the time.

When marketing land, it would be necessary to oversee the production of a comprehensive technical information pack for the site, which needs to be fully understood by all parties so that one can answer as many questions as possible and provide a detailed presentation to each interested party. These presentations would be undertaken either on site or at the agent's offices. Site visits would be undertaken with interested parties so that they buy into the concept of the development and understand the content of the information pack at an early stage. This ensures the full attention of the relevant land buyer's team, improves the quality of bids and also reduces the opportunity for buyers to justify a reduction in price before an exchange of contracts. It would also be beneficial to have key members of the technical and planning teams present at these meetings.

Stage 1: Due Diligence

Before launching a parcel to the market, it is important to fully consider the opportunities and constraints present so as they can be appropriately communicated during the marketing process.

Firstly, a detailed planning report should be produced focusing on the anticipated allocation within the Otterpool Masterplan. In addition to clarity from a planning perspective, it will be important to provide a base level of technical detail in order for interested parties to understand the key constraints and to minimise conditionality at the bidding stage. It is important that letters of reliance can be provided for any technical reports.

It is suggested that detailed planning, infrastructure, and technical information is provided to parties during marketing.

Stage 2: Marketing Material

For each parcel sale, one would assemble a detailed marketing brochure, highlighting the opportunity that the site presents whilst encapsulating the site's branding ethos throughout. A brochure allows the opportunity to be easily circulated to the market amongst principals. One would host an online dataroom to which the information pack will be uploaded. The dataroom also allows one to track activity and downloads and therefore assess the level of due diligence undertaken by parties throughout the marketing process. It also allows ease off access for consultant teams.

Stage 3: Marketing Campaign

For each sale, one would initially approach an existing network through targeted phone calls, emails and HTML circulars. The campaign will involve approaching parties directly at an appropriate level, presenting the opportunity first-hand and creating interest through the personal nature of the marketing approach whilst providing an overview as to the scope of the wider Otterpool Park development. Site inspections would be managed solely through appointment by the appointed agent, allowing the site to be presented in the best possible manner. One would expect a marketing period of circa eight weeks per land parcel disposal in order to give prospective purchaser's sufficient time to undertake the necessary due diligence, whilst also keeping them focussed with a clear bid deadline. All bidders would need to submit their proposals on the same basis, on the same day so that the agent can compare and contrast the offers.

One would then select parties, jointly with the LLP, for interview in order to stress test offers and query any outstanding issues. Depending on the level of offers and competition, one might propose a second round of bidding having reviewed and discussed each proposal with the interested party. Formal recommendations would be made by the agent in terms of the preferred party who offers the most deliverable proposal in terms of timescales and funding structure, as well as the best price.

Stage 4: Legal Process

Following the selection of a preferred party, one would work expeditiously with the LLP's solicitors to achieve an exchange of contracts within an agreed timescale. It would be preferable to have a draft contract and transfer prepared at an early stage in order that there is no delay once a preferred purchaser has been identified.

11.3 **MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ON OUTLETS AND NUMBER OF PRIVATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLD MONTHLY PER OUTLET.**

Clearly, it is difficult to estimate future market trends, particularly for a project with an extended timescale such as Otterpool Park. It would be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to assumptions on sales per outlet in order to

reflect market absorption rates at the point of launching each parcel. This said, at the time of writing, current rates of roughly four to six units per outlet, per month are being achieved across the region throughout medium to large new homes schemes.

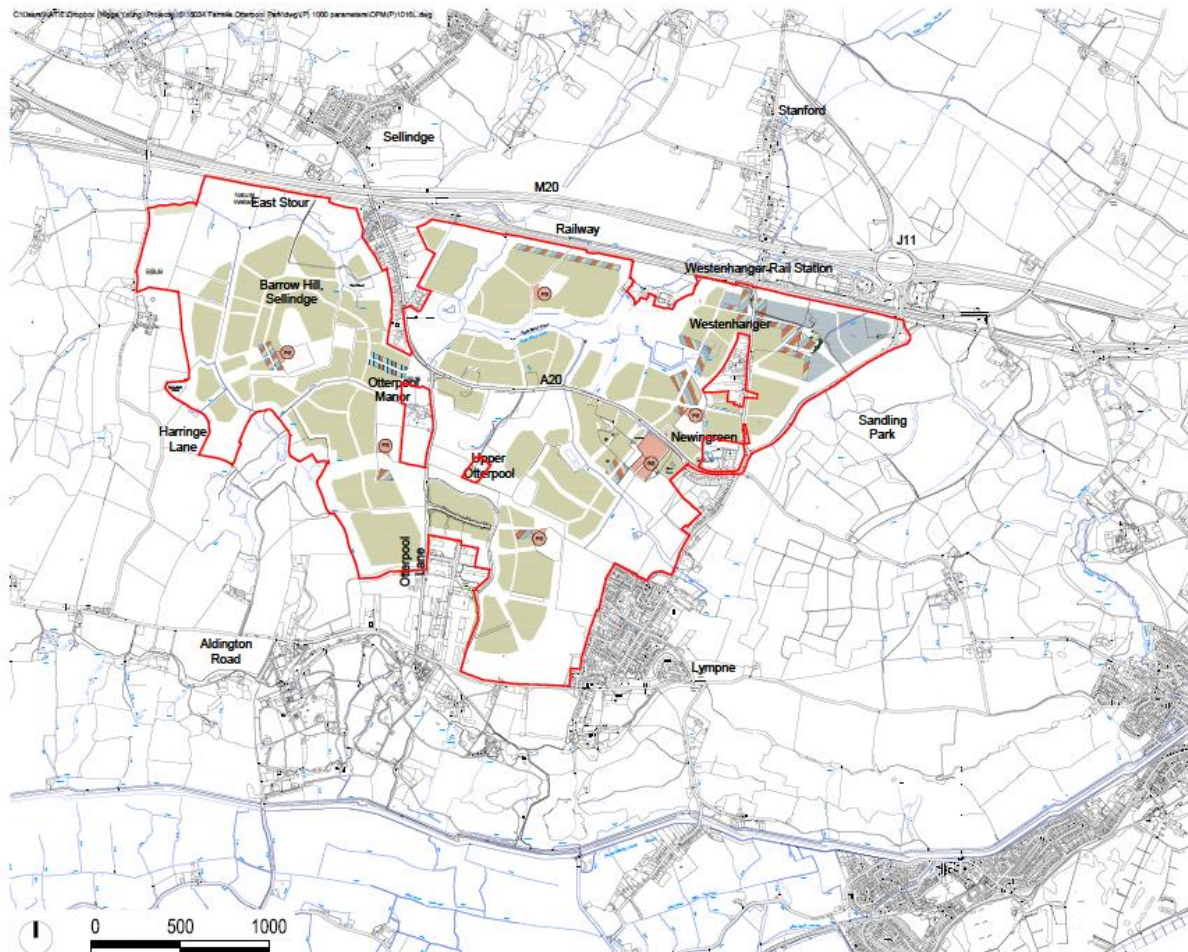
11.4 IDENTIFY PARCELS TO BE SOLD / PHASING / HAUL ROAD AND SALES ACCESS STRATEGY.

The phasing and timing of parcels going forward will be critical to ensuring best value is achieved across all future land sales. With development at Otterpool Park likely to contribute substantially to the delivery of new housing across the region for the foreseeable future, it is imperative that the phasing, timing and quantum of parcel delivery is carefully considered in line with local planning objectives.

The Core Strategy commits FHDC to delivering a minimum of 350 dwellings (Class C3) per annum on average over the plan period (until 2030/31 - inclusive from 2006/7) while seeking to deliver an uplift of 400 dwelling per annum up to 2025/6. This totals approximately 8,000 dwelling by the end of 2025/26 (Policy SS2 of the Core Strategy). Delivering “8,000 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 would result in a rate of house building in line with trends of recent decades” (paragraph 4.47 of the Core Strategy).

BNP Paribas’s or another agent’s advice on the phasing strategy and land parcel identification from a marketing perspective would be based on a number of factors including:

- Maximising ultimate land value for the Council via the LLP;
- Promoting the delivery of a range of products and tenures concurrently across the site to ensure a consistent rate of housing delivery;
- Taking into consideration that FHDC plan to manage housing supply through the objective that at least half of new homes by 2026 are three bedroom (or larger) (Policy CSD2 of the Core Strategy);
- Ensuring the quantum released to the market is carefully managed so there is not an oversupply at any one time; and
- Maintaining a policy of a limited number of developers on site at any one time to ensure a smooth and harmonious housing and infrastructure delivery programme.
- In accordance with Parameter Plan OPM(P)1016 L from the application for outline planning consent dated 6th December 2018, residential development areas have been suggested as illustrated in brown in the image below:



To remain aligned with the outline planning application, it is recommended that the LLP refers to agreed Parameter Plans alongside any development timelines seen in the Design and Access statement to educate the collective opinion on phasing strategy. As the statement suggests, careful consideration would need to be paid in order to provide the necessary mix and quantum of development to maintain a strong combined trajectory of housing delivery alongside necessary social and physical infrastructure. Considering these factors will help ensure that each parcel is delivered successfully both individually and in terms of the wider Otterpool Park development.

In accordance with the Design and Access Statement, the phasing plans associated with the outline application have taken into consideration the programme for necessary infrastructure, associated cost and resulting viability assessments for 5-year intervals. As such, each phase must consider the level of infrastructure necessary on a physical and social level to accompany the quantum of development proposed across the wider site.

The outline application identified that the first phases should be focused around two areas in order to establish Otterpool Park and compliment all future phasing:

- To the north and east establishing the Town Centre, Westenhanger Castle and Gateway character areas
- To the west in the distinct character area of Otterpool Slopes

It is understood that the LLP will be responsible for undertaking the initial infrastructure works as master developer. This initial phase of works will add value and differentiate the site further. Given the site's distinctive landscape characteristic, it is paramount that primary landscaping works are implemented to promote a sense of place.

Through past experience with schemes of this nature, it should be recognised there will be the requirement to secure early cash receipts to begin the recovered of initial capital investment. Launching the marketing of the first phase(s) of the site shortly after obtaining outline planning consent is recommended, in line with the timing of infrastructure delivery both on a basis necessary for individual parcel delivery and from a strategic point of view considering the wider site.

The indicative phasing will inevitably evolve but it would be necessary to understand the key financial objectives and discuss between the LLP and agent the rate of land sales over the course of the project and how this can be enhanced without adversely affecting land values. With this in mind, to ensure the first phase of development does not prejudice the wider landholding and marketability of subsequent phases, it is recommended that consideration is given to a comprehensive, architecturally led design code. This strategy has been particularly successful at the Kingsmere project in Bicester, for example, and has enhanced design quality and serviced land values.

Whilst at present the site has been divided indicatively into a number of parcels for planning purposes it may well be that the approach differs slightly if there were perceived to be a requirement for a larger or smaller land parcel at any one point in time, or if indeed the LLP's cash flow requirements were to change over the course of the business plan. In this context, the site is considered to be deliverable in a variety of ways, which can be explored with the wider technical team in due course

11.5 IDENTIFY INITIAL LAND RECEIPTS PER PARCEL.

Assuming a plan or accommodation schedule is available for each parcel within the submitted planning application documents, BNP Paribas or another agent would undertake a development appraisal, considering the sales values per unit and associated development costs. This would be cross referenced against the current financial model which would be updated according, both a time of appraisal and again following disposal, when value is crystallised.

The agent would also undertake research into comparable land transactions within the surrounding areas/similar projects in order to estimate plot sales and prices per acre.

As the scheme has garden town and place making status, the agent will review and assess the value of each parcel when sold, which will allow all stakeholders to project future land sales throughout the lifetime of the project.

11.6 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

In accordance with the Planning and Delivery Statement, Affordable housing will be distributed through the development in clusters, with their size determined having regard to the location within the development to ensure the new garden settlement develops as a mixed and sustainable community. It would be worth noting that, during the course of parcel disposals, Housebuilders will undergo a competitive Registered Provider tender process when bidding, ensuring value is driven.

11.7 **COMMERCIAL**

Recognition for the importance of the Commercial and Community uses in a scheme such as Otterpool is growing after many years in the shadows of the residential elements. Where traditional neighbourhood centres used to mean only convenience retail, the BNP PRE team are at the forefront in developing a sustainable shift towards a mix of uses, including residential, workspace, healthcare and other community facilities.

BNP Paribas are firmly of the opinion that the recent coronavirus pandemic will result in long-term changes in the way we live, work, shop and communicate which will heighten the importance of delivering a desirable mix of uses going forward.

From our extensive experience in this sector, we have learnt that understanding and establishing levels of demand from different non-residential uses is vital. This task should form a key element of the early stages of the development strategy as it ensures that the town centre and other commercial areas are relevant to the scale of the residential development and is crucial to its long-term success.

Early engagement is also essential to placemaking and creating real lasting social value for the town centre. Often, this will entail bringing together community groups, developers and councils to achieve a consensus about the town centre and finely tuning it to the needs of the local community and wider catchment. We also

need to be mindful that, whilst the social benefits of such schemes are easily documented, demonstrating a commercial benefit to investing in the non-residential uses can be challenging in certain situations.

It is important to engage in analysis on determining the best location and layout for the commercial Centres within the wider masterplan. Contradiction can exist in balancing community preferences and commercial viability. Understanding the drivers and influencing factors on the location of non-residential uses is crucial in striking the right equilibrium.

Timing for the delivery of the non-residential uses is an important consideration when strategising. Whilst it may not be financially viable to open some uses when the first residential units are occupiers, activating the non-residential areas on a temporary or “meantime” basis may be important. This is becoming an increasingly important facet of development and as such, the range of meantime uses has grown significantly.

Opening and activation a town and commercial centre from an early stage is beneficial to longer-term placemaking; it provides residents with the built infrastructure from the moment they move in. Rather than allowing people to create patterns in the absence of the town centre, the centre can set the tone for the rest of the development and start to build a community.

It can often be difficult to generate key occupier interest and engagement at an early stage and engagement with local and regional businesses is important during initial stages.

Important to the success of the new town and commercial centre and its attractiveness is its ability to draw people in, creating footfall throughout the day and maximising dwell time and spend. We recognise that there needs to be multiple reasons to be there not just traditional convenience retail. We often advise on the benefits in linking the town centre with schools, nurseries, care homes, doctors’ surgery, leisure centre, gyms, collection points and the like.

Non-residential development needs to be designed and built with flexibility in mind, allowing uses to change over time, responding not only to the demands of the local communities which they serve but also the changing landscape of retail and technology. This will ensure the future sustainability of the centre.”

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING

Risk management

RISK	Original risk			MITIGATION MEASURES	ACTION TAKEN	Mitigated risk			Change in risk level	Milestone drop off	RESPONSIBLE OWNER
	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	SCORE			PROBABILITY	IMPACT	SCORE			
Project becomes unviable due to unforeseen additional cost, particularly up front infrastructure, required for phase 1	3	5	15	Ongoing update of financial model and infrastructure schedule to monitor changes and assess options.	Infrastructure costs and phasing being reviewed to maximise efficiency of spending.	2	4	8	✓	Outline Planning Application	JB
				Take advice from BNP Paribas and PWC on maximising financial efficiency of the project and pursuing other additional sources of income (eg council housebuilding).	Discussion with Homes England.						
				Be ready to bid for future funding sources from central government, including ongoing discussions with Homes England about funding.	Participation in East Kent Infrastructure Deal negotiations with bid for funding for OP.						
Slowdown of economy due to Covid results in stagnation of housing market and lower property and land values	5	2	10	Viability planning takes long term view and allows for scenarios of lower economic and housing growth. Given early stage of project the immediate impacts are limited, but longer term impacts eg on council borrowing should be planned for.	Discuss with advisors as part of financial risk management	3	2	6	✓	Developer Led - Tier 3 Works (Residential)	JB
Political and reputational risk if Council's financial spend on project is seen to be imprudent or not in best public interest	2	3	6	Set out financial planning in Business Plan		2	3	6	→	Enabling Works - Tier 3	JB/ AJ
No / inadequate funding for infrastructure, and therefore risk of inability to deliver vision/objectives; piecemeal delivery, infrastructure delays and housing delivery not accelerated	3	3	9	Financial model assumes no external funding.	Ensure delivery vehicle tasked with forward delivery of infrastructure. Lobbying Homes England and MHCLG	2	2	4	✓	Outline Planning Application	JB
				Be prepared for bidding opportunities for government and other funds. Review infrastructure programme and delivery rates to ensure realistic.							
Dispute between Board and council Members/ dismantling of LLP	3	4	12	Use shareholder meetings to ensure political direction agreed	regular liaison and review of priorities through business planning	2	4	8	✓	Last Developer signed up	JB/ Board
				Set out objectives clearly at start	legal advice on protecting future of the company						
				Maintain good working relationships with officers and members							
Board underperforms or fails to fulfil its duties/ fails to agree	1	3	3	Use recruitment process to ensure right skills are included	Legal advice taken on governance matters and all policies	1	3	3	→	Last Sales Received	JB/Chair of board
Site allocation not supported in Core Strategy Review (CSR) by Inspector or plan found unsound. Nutrients flagged as a substantive issue by Inspectors, which raises this risk of delay	3	5	15	Take advice on evidence base.	Counsel advice provided	2	5	10	✓	Outline Planning Application	AJ/DS/JW
				Involve PINS early for informal and formal advice on process. Benefits from having a live application to demonstrate intention to deliver.							
Technical constraints and challenges require additional work and time prior to application being determined, including water nutrient issue	4	5	20	consultants working on on-site proposals for waste water treatment to address nutrients.	Critical path being reviewed; tier 2 work underway	3	4	12	✓	Outline Planning Application	JW
				focus for programme remains getting to start on site rather than achieving PP.							
Agreement not reached with Homes England over its role as partner and development of its land. Relates to agreeing funding for infrastructure.	3	3	9	Continue discussions with contacts at Homes England on landowner and planning side, reinforcing importance of shared objective of allocation in CSR. Proposal options expected Oct 2020.	Set up meeting with Paul Kitson/ Barry Cummings	2	3	6	✓	Outline Planning Application	JB/AJ
Local government reorganisation, eg formation of a unitary authority	2	3	6	It would take several years to implement, likely to affect later years		2	3	6		Last Developer signed up	JB/AJ

i Board decision 15 July 2020 minute 3

ii Board decision 15 July 2020 minute 4

Appendix 1



OTTERPOOL PARK

COUNTRYSIDE • CONNECTED • CREATIVE

VISION



Welcome

Just over three years ago in 2016 the Government published a prospectus to local authorities asking them to express an interest in providing settlements within their administrative areas.

After carefully considering the potential of a garden settlement in the Folkestone & Hythe District to meet our housing need, we submitted an Expression of Interest to the Government in July of that year, proposing Otterpool Park as a new garden settlement. On 11 November 2016 the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government announced its support for Otterpool Park and our journey to deliver on Ebenezer Howard's garden city movement became a reality.

During the past three years we have achieved a number of milestones; from the publication of our Charter to set out our aspirations for a garden community of the future, successful land assembly, the development of a masterplan and the submission of an outline planning application.

We have advanced the project to a stage where we have now established Otterpool Park LLP, who will take on the role of Master Developer and assume responsibility for the principle of development all the way through to implementation of a new community phased across a 30-year timeline.

We are in a unique position as sole landowners and custodians of Otterpool Park to curate the development at the highest level. We commit to delivering on our promises to our project partners, local people and new members of the Otterpool Park community as it grows over the next three decades.

This is a unique approach to delivering large-scale new homes development and communities and recognises a project of the size and ambition of Otterpool Park; at the heart of this approach is a team who can demonstrate experience of delivering at scale, quality and pace.

Otterpool Park is an exciting opportunity for us to deliver an exemplar garden town, bringing homes across a range of tenures, green spaces, leisure facilities, healthy economy, good quality of life, and major infrastructure improvements.

This document sets out the vision for our garden town, set against the principles for garden communities; it underpins the strong case we have developed for Otterpool Park and starts to lay out our objectives for the site. Stakeholders, businesses and residents have generously informed and influenced the project to date and it is greatly appreciated.

It is now the task of Otterpool Park LLP and its newly appointed board to deliver a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver the most exciting new community.

COUNCILLOR DAVID MONK
LEADER, FOLKESTONE & HYTHE
DISTRICT COUNCIL





OUR VISION

Countryside, connected, creative

The plans for Otterpool Park are being led and driven forward by Otterpool Park LLP, to deliver a next generation garden town that will support sustainable living and a healthy economy; provide the best quality of life for existing and future residents; and respond to local landscape and character.

Otterpool Park will offer the very best of a rural and urban lifestyle. Everything that's needed will be there – homes, workspaces, schools, shops, community facilities, spaces for leisure, arts and culture.

It is well positioned in the heart of the Kent countryside, just a few miles from the coastal towns of Folkestone and Hythe and offers excellent connectivity to London and Europe by road and rail.

Set around the historic Westenhanger Castle and park, Otterpool Park will be a special place respectful of its past and designed for its future.

It will be a healthy and aspirational place to live, work and visit, characterised by large amounts of green space and its strong culture and community.

Otterpool Park will be an attractive location for businesses to succeed and will make the most of its connections to the thriving creative and digital communities in nearby Folkestone.

Over the next 30 years, Otterpool Park will move the garden town concept into a new era, place-making a new community fit for today's lifestyles and relevant for generations to come.

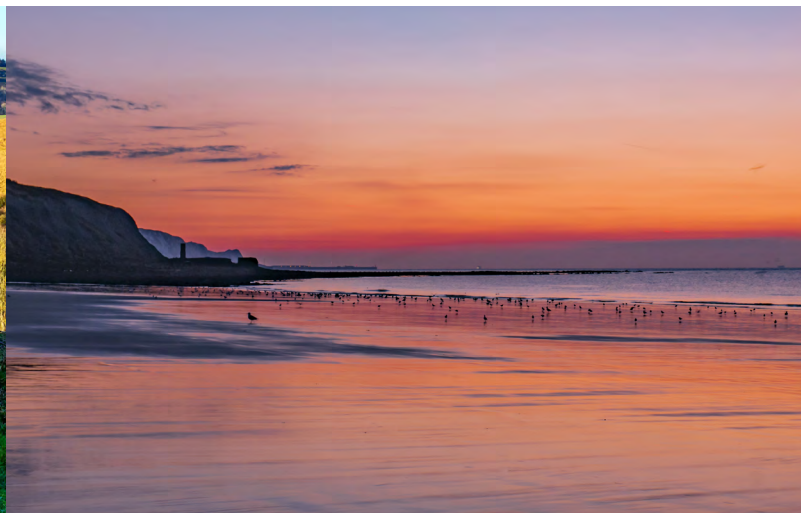
Countryside and coast

Living and working in Kent, the Garden of England, means enjoying the feeling of fresh air and green, open spaces.

The sea is just minutes away, so you can have the best of coast and country.

Walks and bike rides, nature trails and pond dipping.
Or just sitting watching the world go by.

Otterpool Park will offer an exceptional quality of life, whether you prefer action and adventure or quiet and contemplation.



Connected

Get to where you need to be from our strategic location, with plenty of options for how to get about.



54 minutes

FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS



35 minutes

FROM FRANCE BY EUROTUNNEL



LESS THAN
2 hours

FROM PARIS, BY EUROSTAR FROM ASHFORD



FLY FROM

London Ashford Airport,
Gatwick or Heathrow



FAST ACCESS TO
M20 and M2



Superfast broadband

MEANS WELL-CONNECTED HOMES,
WORKSPACES AND SCHOOLS



Creative soul

As part of a district that champions all things creative, Otterpool Park will be a whole new place inspired by the very best design and influenced by the culture and heritage of the area.

Everyone can find a home here, helping to form a new community with its own identity, values and traditions.





Garden communities explained

A garden city (or garden community) is a holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities. The garden city principles are an indivisible and interlocking framework for their delivery, and include:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Visit tcpa.org.uk for more information on garden community principles.

The case for Otterpool Park

Otterpool Park is an opportunity to create an exciting new garden town which, over 30 years...

ADDRESSES THE AREA'S GROWING HOUSING DEMANDS

Creating a mixed, balanced and vibrant community with up to 10,000 homes for everyone – keyworkers, families, older people, vulnerable people. Presented in a variety of styles and sizes, every one of them a beautiful place to live.

USES ITS STRATEGIC CONNECTIVITY AND PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Maximising existing connectivity by rail and road and proximity to Folkestone, London and Europe and developing sustainable transport strategies to promote healthy options for walking, cycling and public transport.

SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY BY PROVIDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKSPACES

Delivering around 9,000 job opportunities and up to 127,244sqm of floorspace for businesses to locate, relocate or expand.

SUPPORTS THE CREATIVE AND DIGITAL INDUSTRIES

Expanding capacity for the large concentration of these industries in the local area, attracting and retaining businesses within the district while providing access to housing and social infrastructure.

PROVIDES EVERYTHING ITS COMMUNITY NEEDS AND IS SUSTAINABLE

Incorporating the infrastructure, education, medical, community and leisure facilities required for a sustainable and healthy new community.

IS EXEMPLARY IN EVERY RESPECT AND BECOMES A REFERENCE POINT FOR THE WAY NEW PLACES ARE DESIGNED

Accounting for today's lifestyles and flexible in its nature to adapt to future advancements and ways to live and work, incorporating the very best design, technology and innovation.



Placemaking for Otterpool Park

We envisage a place where a new community grows over several decades. It will be inspired by, integrate and bond with the natural landscape, character and heritage of this special place.

Otterpool Park will be distinctive in its own character, culture, diversity and traditions. That said, it will have strong associations with the countryside and communities around it, in particular aligning with the culture and creativity of nearby Folkestone.

The new garden town will be enriched with green spaces that create plentiful spaces to walk, play, explore and socialise.

Residents will be able to put down roots for themselves and their families in characterful, socialable and distinctive neighbourhoods. All facilities are within an easy distance, with plenty of ways to travel further afield.

There are lots of ways to work or run a business at Otterpool Park too, whether from a home office or studio, or in the workspaces available in the town centre.





*Otterpool Park
will be:*

*Green
and blue*



*Reflective
and engaging*

*Creative and
innovative*



*Resilient and
self-sufficient*





Connected and walkable

Healthy and accessible



Biodiverse and sensitive

Diverse and distinct





LUKE QUILTER
CHAIRMAN OTTERPOOL PARK LLP

This vision is an important step on the journey of our newly formed board towards the delivery of Otterpool Park. Our objective for the coming year is to establish ourselves as a locally accountable organisation that will enable the delivery of the Garden Town and support residents, partners and stakeholders to create a 'Garden Community' in a district that is extraordinary.

It's already home to all types of people – from artists to musicians, innovators to educators, makers to entrepreneurs; they come together in Folkestone and Hythe to enjoy our countryside and miles of stunning coastline, a world-class cultural scene and fantastic connections to Europe and the rest of the UK.

Our aspiration to deliver 10,000 homes, around 9,000 jobs, across a 30-year period makes sense for a place that consistently attracts from London and the wider south east. When we see the profound effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our day to day lives, the concept of a community that has over 50% green space, walkable neighbourhoods, leisure on the doorstep and the very best of modern health and education provision, the opportunity becomes all the more relevant – right now.

Over the coming months, as we move towards presenting Otterpool at planning committee, we look forward to building delivery relationships to enable on the ground regeneration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, in both the public and private sectors. We want to work with forward thinking house builders, developers and investors to build a new community; to bring together all this district has to offer and communicate it far and wide.

Our focus is centred on enabling a people-led Garden Town that not only turbo charges our local economy but delivers a remarkable community for the next generation.

A place that is a beautiful, countryside, Kentish town, close to the sea.





OTTERPOOL PARK

COUNTRYSIDE · CONNECTED · CREATIVE

Otterpool Park LLP - Board Meeting 13th November – Summary Note of Meeting

The main purpose of the meeting was to present the draft vision and Business Plan to the Board to seek their approval of the recommendations below. All board members attended via Zoom. The Managing Director introduced the report and explained the background and purpose of the plan before the Chairman opened the discussion. The board had a very constructive two hour long discussion where each member was given the time to comment and ask questions. A number of comments were made and discussed and subject to some minor amendments, the plan was unanimously approved by the Board.

Recommendations:

- 1: The board approves the draft business plan and vision at respectively appendix 2 and 4 and recommends these to the owners of the LLP;
- 2: That the Managing Director in consultation with the chairman be authorised to make minor amendments to the plan in the light of any comments by the owners of the LLP and the council's overview and scrutiny committee;
- 3: A formal request is made of the owners for funding support in accordance with the business plan;
- 4: The first tranche of funding is made available from the council to the LLP on the 1st of April 2021 in the sum of £5 million;
- 5: A further £70 million is made available over the subsequent 3-5 years as required for infrastructure and related investment;
- 6: That the necessary financial instruments be entered into for the funding to be obtained;
- 7: That a strategic land agreement as outlined in this report be entered into on terms to be agreed by the Managing Director in consultation with the chairman; and
8. That the council be approached with a view to exploring the possibility of entering into a management agreement for the site and that should be the council be willing to enter into an agreement it be on terms to be agreed by the Managing Director in consultation with the chairman.

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Otterpool Park

A new garden town in the Folkestone & Hythe district



Introduction

In 2017 we produced a Charter for Otterpool Park that set out in more detail our aspirations for the new garden town. The document built on the high level principles set out in the Expression of Interest submitted to Government in June 2016 and the Sustainability Wheel. The Charter focused on creating a place that is truly sustainable; as the plans for Otterpool Park develop these principles continue to guide our vision and are reflected in our council ambitions below.

We have a clear picture of what we want Otterpool Park to deliver.

A sustainable new garden town

Sustainable development is about maximising the environmental, social and economic benefits that development can bring, enhancing the environment, building strong communities and providing jobs; not trading one benefit against another but building in a way that delivers gains across all three and enables us to invest in communities across the district.





Enhancing the environment

A real garden town

The garden town will provide a minimum of 50% green space reflecting existing landscape features and providing three new distinctive destination parks, giving public access to a diverse natural environment. Allotments and orchards will be provided for people to grow their own food, and neighbourhoods will have easy access to playing pitches and play areas.

Creating habitats for wildlife, providing food and adapting to a changing climate

The town will be designed to provide new habitat corridors so that wildlife flourish. The government is introducing a requirement for new development to improve biodiversity by 10% - Otterpool Park will go beyond this and deliver gains of at least 20% across the lifetime of the development. Green spaces, ponds and watercourses can also be used to provide shade, reduce flooding from storms and filter waste water, using natural processes.

Promoting walking, cycling and public transport

Walking, cycling and public transport will be at the heart of the new town, using new technologies to help people plan their journeys and order and share rides. Westenhanger Station will be enhanced to become a new transport hub where travellers can easily switch between the train and buses, bikes or taxis to get to their destinations quickly.

Reducing our environmental impact

Otterpool Park will be designed to deliver the overall ambition of a low-car and low-carbon destination by developing an integrated approach to energy, water, travel and digital planning. New buildings will be designed to minimise energy use and be carbon neutral wherever possible.

Creating strong and healthy communities

Giving residents a voice in how their town is run

The original garden towns gave residents a strong voice in how their neighbourhoods were run and this continues today, more than a century after they were founded. Otterpool Park will be developed and managed in perpetuity with the direct involvement of its residents and businesses; residents will be directly engaged in long-term management and stewardship, fostering a shared sense of ownership and identity.

Preserving cultural heritage and inspiring the new

Westenhanger Castle will be a focal point within a restored parkland and garden setting. This rich cultural heritage will inspire new contemporary design, which in turn will enhance that heritage. Development will be shaped by design codes, which will set out rules about how the town's neighbourhoods, streets, squares and buildings will be laid out.

A diverse range of housing types and tenures

Otterpool Park will deliver up to 10,000 homes across a range of housing densities, types and tenures to provide the right mix of homes for people at all stages of life and for all budgets, including more than 2,200 affordable homes. Plots will also be provided for people who want to build their own homes (known as self-build or custom-build), either working on their own projects or as part of a group with other self-builders to build their own neighbourhoods.

Innovative Approaches to Delivery

A new medical centre, drawing on the best examples from elsewhere and the latest digital technologies, will provide a 'one-stop shop', including GPs and primary care treatment during the early stages of the town's development, to pioneer new models of care and reduce pressure on hospitals.



Creating jobs and building new businesses

Diverse Employment Opportunities

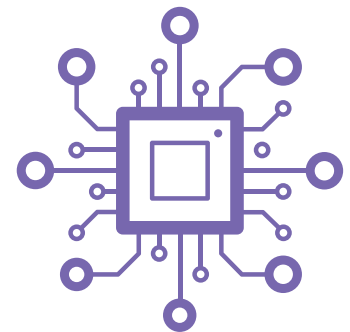
Otterpool Park will help to grow businesses, both existing and new; an Innovation Centre will be built early on in the town's development, and easy access to London and Europe through High Speed rail links will help businesses access professional services and new markets. Building the garden town also offers opportunities to start new businesses in energy efficient construction and renewable technologies, and for young people to train in the new skills that our economy needs.

New town and neighbourhood centres

While the future of many of our traditional high streets is uncertain, people will still want to meet, exchange ideas, shop, relax and have a meal. New town and neighbourhood centres will be created that will provide flexibility for people to set up shops, cafes, workshops or office spaces on a temporary or longer-term basis, to share space and try out new business ideas.

Secure a digital town of the future

Otterpool Park will support advanced digital technologies, including the emergence of 5G and the IoT (Internet of Things); ultra-fast fibre optic broadband will be expanded to the premises at Otterpool Park to improve connections for new residents and immediate neighbouring communities where there are problems with broadband speeds and connectivity.



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