



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 18 April 2017
Present	Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Peter Gane (Chairman), Clive Goddard, Mrs Claire Jeffrey (Vice-Chair), Len Laws (In place of Frank McKenna), Ian Meyers, David Owen and Mrs Rodica Wheeler
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Michael Lyons, Councillor Frank McKenna and Councillor Peter Simmons
Officers Present:	Dee Chambers (Policy and Improvement Officer), Katharine Harvey (Head of Economic Development), Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Pat Main (Head of Finance), Sarah Robson (Head of Communities), Suzy Tigwell (Leadership Support Manager) and Lee Walker (Group Accountant), Lynn Ward (Senior Finance Officer)
Others Present:	Councillors Ms Susan Carey, John Collier, Alan Ewart-James and Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee

60. **Declarations of interest**

Councillors David Owen and Mrs Claire Jeffrey declared voluntary announcements in respect of minute 65 - Quarter 3 Performance Report 2016/17. Their interest arose as they had family members who had or were applying for benefit support. They remained in the meeting during discussion and voting on this item.

61. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman with the following amendment:

Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey was in the Chair for this meeting.

62. **Review of the Core Strategy Local Plan**

Report C/16/117 sets out the progress that has been made on the review

of the Core Strategy Local Plan (CSLP), including updates on the various technical work streams being undertaken. It also sets out the necessary actions to continue progressing the review in accordance with a programme that envisages a public consultation, pursuant to Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, in January 2018.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Chris Lewis, Planning Advisor, informed members that the key documents referred to in the report are the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Sustainability Appraisal and the Shepway Growth Options Study.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment – to focus on housing needs going forward, taking into account environmental constraints. The council will need to take into account existing commitments and proposals in the emerging Places and Policies Local Plan in calculating the additional housing that will need to be identified in the CSLP review. The current evidence suggest a requirement to plan for an additional 6,300 homes up to 2037 in order to meet projected housing needs.

Sustainability Appraisal – a requirement by law that assesses the sustainability of proposed locations, tested against options and alternatives.

Shepway Growth Option Study – AECOM commissioned to do the study which has looked at the potential suitability of land across the district for strategic level development. Phase 1 of the study identified 6 character areas with the only area found suitable for strategic level development being the “Sellindge and Surrounding Area” (which includes substantial land south of the M20). Phase 2 of the study is assessing in greater detail specific areas of land within this character area, including the area of Otterpool Park

Mr Lewis informed members that other evidence based studies will need to be carried out to inform CSLP review and these are listed in section 7 of the report.

The next steps are to use the Sustainability Appraisal to test options that come out of the Growth Study and to carry out a Habitat Regulation Assessment. This work will inform the drafting of new policies for the Core Strategy leading to a further report to Cabinet in December.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor David Owen and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report C/16/117.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

63. Government White Paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market

Ben Geering, Head of Planning, presented members with an overview of the Government White Paper – Fixing our Broken Housing Market. The attached presentation provides the background to the paper and the main themes the government want to work to.

Members were informed that it is out to consultation on the first two chapters. A list of proposals is set out in the presentation attached with Mr Geering paying particular reference to the Policies in Local Plans to bring forward smaller sites - 0.5 hectares and under (around 15 dwellings) and local authorities are being asked to work with landowners to divide larger sites into smaller parcels to encourage competition between house-builders. Authorities are asked to work together in meeting the needs for housing, with a focus on authorities meeting their own need where they can.

This consultation will finish in May with further consultations coming forward once the government has finished developing more detailed proposals. A response from SDC will be made, to be agreed with the cabinet members for Housing and the Economy.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Potential for local authorities to consider track record of developer when granting planning permission.
- Time-scales for permissions to be reduced from 3 to 2 years, except where shorter timescale could hinder deliverability and if this would make a difference. Members noted that the application form is being changed and the developer would need to specify moving forward.
- Members were happy to see proposals to simplify and speed up process of serving Completion Notices on stalled sites.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor David Owen and

Resolved:

1. To note the presentation.

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

64. Review of the Major Emergency Plan and New Recovery Guidance

Report C/16/109 provides details of the recent review of the Major Emergency Plan and the new Recovery Guidance for the Council.

This report will be considered at Cabinet 19 April 2017.

Members noted the new updated version of the plan which is set out in a more concise and simplified form that will be easier to use in an emergency.

Members raised the following points:

- The emergency escape route from the Marsh area out of the district is, in members view, not fit for purpose as the roads are in disrepair and dangerous if an accident occurs during evacuation. Although this is a responsibility of KCC officers will note it and raise with KCC as an operational matter.
- Members asked what contingencies are in place if a disaster occurs and how will this effect European funding and were advised that this would be addressed as/when it occurs.
- Town and Parishes should have their own community resilience plan and members were informed that officers have offered support and will attend meetings at request. To date St Mary in the Marsh and Dymchurch have plans in place.

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report C/16/109.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

65. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2016/17

Report C/16/119 provides an update on the Council's performance for the second quarter of 2016/17, covering 1st October 2016 to 31st December 2016. The report enables the Council to assess progress against the approved performance indicators for each service area.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Members paid particular attention to section 2 of the report in respect of performance issues namely those issues surrounding housing benefit and the time it is taking to process applications.

Members are aware that significant changes have taken place, including that of a new online customer self-service facility, but it then raised concerns surrounding the length of time applications are processed.

Proposed by Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded by Councillor David Owen and

Resolved:

- 1. To ask Cabinet to put extra staff resources in the benefits section to help with the impact of the new processes.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report C/16/119.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

66. Equality and Diversity Policy and Annual Report 2016

Report C/16/116 presents the draft Equality and Diversity Policy for 2016-2020 for consideration by Cabinet. The existing Policy covered the period 2012-2016 and therefore a refresh was required. The duties with regard to equality and diversity have not changed and therefore the proposed changes to the Policy are minor. The aim of the Equality and Diversity Policy remains the same; to ensure everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using the council's services.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

In line with statutory duties the policy is updated every four years with the last one covering a period of 2012 to 2016. The policy is largely unchanged and those changes that have been made are shown in section 2 of the report.

Members asked if this information could be shared with Parish and Town Councils to encourage them to introduce and officers were happy to take this on board.

Proposed by Councillor David Owen
Seconded by Councillor Ian Meyers and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report C/16/116.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

67. Draft Corporate Plan 2017-2020

Report C/16/124 presents the draft Corporate Plan for consideration by Cabinet. The Corporate Plan set out the framework for delivering the Council's priorities over the next three years, outlining the strategic objectives, priorities and key outcomes to meet the vision for the council and district.

This item will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Members noted the key changes listed in section 2 of the report.

Proposed by Councillor David Owen
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/16/124.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

68. Review of Shepway Housing Allocation policy 2017

Report C/16/122 sets out details of proposed changes to the council's Housing Allocations Policy. The proposed changes will ensure that the policy takes full account of current Government guidance and good practice.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note this report C/16/122.**

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

69. Folkestone Community Led Local Development (CLLD) - Accountable Body and Programme Strategy

Report C/16/118 seeks agreement for Shepway District Council, as the programme's Accountable Body, to submit a stage 2 application for european funding for the Folkestone Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Programme and to provide the public sector match funding for the programme management costs.

This item will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey
Seconded by Councillor Peter Gane and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/16/118.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 1)

70. General Fund Capital programme budget monitoring 4th Quarter 2016/17

Report C/16/111 provides a projection of the latest financial position for the 2016/17 General Fund capital programme, based on expenditure to 28 February 2017. The report identifies projected variances to the approved capital programme to 31 March 2017 including slippage on schemes from 2016/17 to 2017/18.

This report will be considered at Cabinet 19 April 2017.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/16/111.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

71. Housing revenue account revenue and capital budget monitoring 2016/17 - 4th Quarter 2016/17

Report C/16/112 provides a projection of the end of year financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue expenditure and HRA capital programme based on net expenditure to 28 February 2017.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Proposed by Councillor Clive Goddard
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Claire Jeffrey and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/16/112.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

72. General Fund Revenue budget monitoring - 4th Quarter 2016/17

Report C/16/113 provides a projection of the end of year financial position for the General Fund revenue expenditure, based on net expenditure to 28 February 2017.

This report will be considered at Cabinet on 19 April 2017.

Proposed by Councillor David Owen
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rodica Wheeler and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/16/113.**

(Voting: For 8; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

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The Housing White Paper

Ben Geering
Head of Planning

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
18th April 2017

‘Fixing our broken housing market’ – The Housing White Paper



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“We need to build many more houses, of the type people want to live in, in the places they want to live. To do so requires a comprehensive approach that tackles failure at every point in the system.”

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

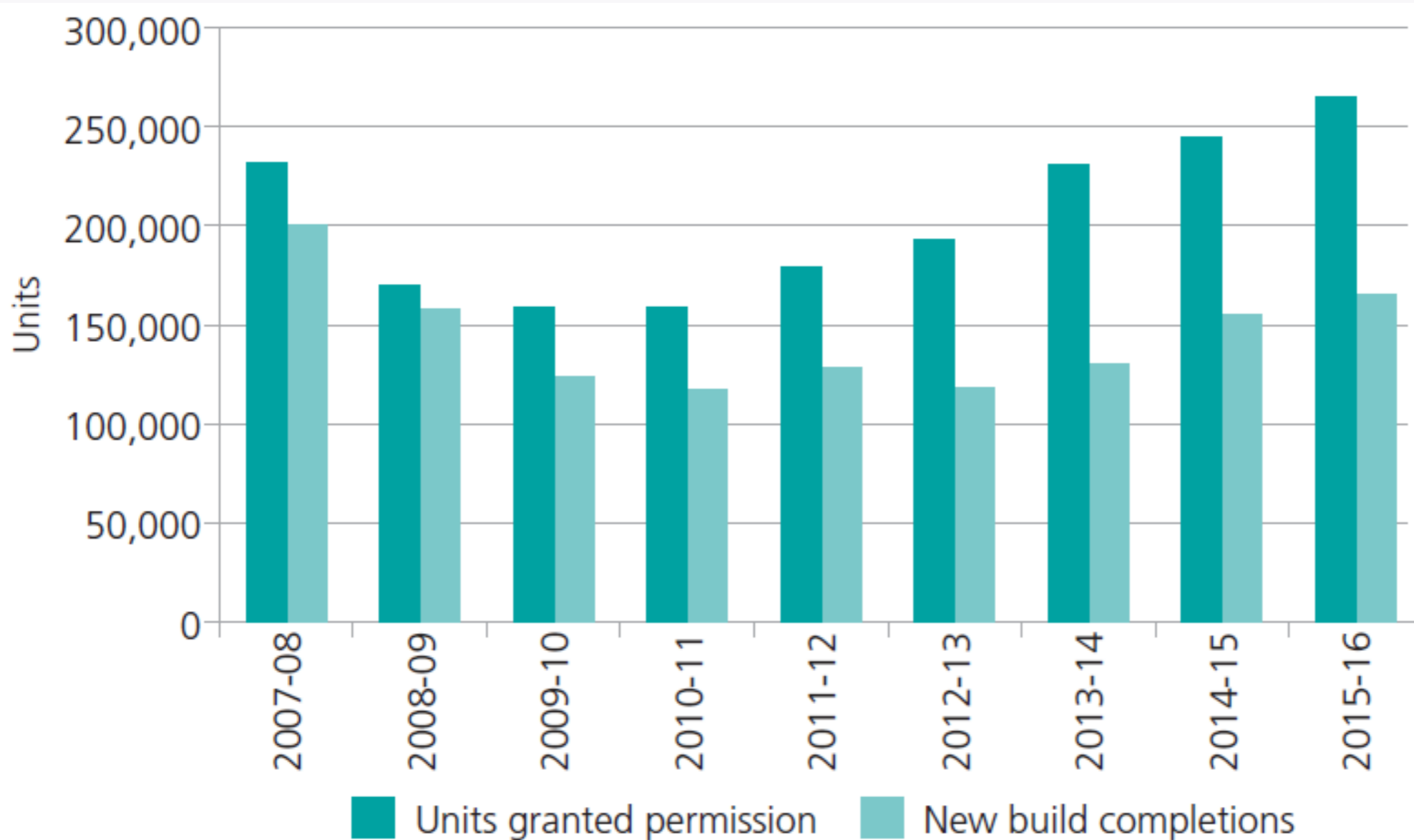
Background



- Since the 1970s an average of 160,000 new homes built each year
- 225,000-275,000 homes needed a year to keep up with population growth and tackle previous under-supply
- Since 1998, ratio of average house prices to average earnings has more than doubled
- Falling levels of home ownership
- Increasing rents – average couple in private rented sector now spend roughly half their salary on rent

Background

- Rising permissions coming out of the recession, but housing completions yet to catch up



Source: Glenigan planning permissions data; DCLG Live Table 120

White Paper - main themes



- 1. Planning for the right homes in the right places** – local plans, neighbourhood plans, housing delivery test
- 2. Building homes faster** – implementation of permissions
- 3. Diversifying the market** – encouraging small- and medium-sized house-building firms
- 4. Helping people now** – Help to Buy, Starter Homes
 - 38 consultation questions – questions on Chapters 1 and 2 only
 - Further consultations on detailed proposals to follow

Key planning-related proposals – Chapters 1 and 2

Plan-making



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- Up-to-date plans – regulations will introduce requirement for a review every 5 years
- Amending ‘tests of soundness’ set out in national policy – making evidence and examination procedures more proportionate
- Firmer expectation in national policy that development needs should be met unless there are “strong reasons” to restrict development

Key planning-related proposals – Chapters 1 and 2

Plan-making

- Strengthened requirements in national policy to plan for the housing needs of the elderly and disabled people
- Policies in Local Plans to bring forward more smaller sites - 0.5 hectares and under (around 15 dwellings)
- Local authorities to work with landowners to divide larger sites into smaller parcels to encourage competition between house-builders
- New standard approach to assessing the need for housing through Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs)
- Amended definition of Affordable Housing
- Garden Towns and Villages
- Custom and Self build housing

Key planning-related proposals – Chapters 1 and 2

Increased scrutiny



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- Amendments to national policy to allow local authorities to ‘fix’ their five-year housing land supply on an annual basis through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)
- **New Housing Delivery Test** to be introduced:
 - Assesses numbers of homes built over previous 3 years against housing targets in Local Plan
 - Penalties for not meeting test - policies could be found out-of-date, presumption in favour...

Key planning-related proposals – Chapters 1 and 2

Neighbourhood Plans

- Clarification of status of neighbourhood plans where there is no five-year housing land supply in place

Other proposals

- Potential amendments to Regulations to allow local authorities to dispose of land that they have granted planning permission for
- Potential for charging fees for planning appeals
- Renewed focus on delivering housing on brownfield land
- Questions about introducing minimum density requirements for new housing development
- Review of Nationally Described Space Standards (minimum space standards for new development) – support for ‘compact living models’

Key planning-related proposals – Chapters 1 and 2

Implementing permissions



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- Potential for local authorities to consider track record of developer when granting planning permission
- Time-scales for permissions to be reduced from 3 to 2 years, except where shorter timescale could hinder deliverability
- Proposal to simplify and speed up process of serving Completion Notices on stalled sites
- Agreement of pre-commencement conditions

Next steps



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- Consultation runs until **2 May 2017**
- 38 set questions - on certain proposals only (Chapters 1 and 2)
- Further consultations to come forward as Government develops more detailed proposals
- Officers preparing draft responses to 38 detailed questions – to be agreed with Cabinet Members for District Economy and Housing and submitted to DCLG by deadline

Any comments or questions?

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