

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CPPP – 1 AUGUST 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING
AND GOVERNANCE)

HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires councils to prepare an action plan where housing delivery has fallen below the housing requirement.
- 1.2 The plan seeks to identify the main issues associated with housing delivery in the borough and the main actions that can be taken by the Council and other parties to speed up delivery.
- 1.3 The plan reviews Government guidance, considers the views of relevant stakeholders and analyses existing data and other knowledge in order to identify a series of actions that will be taken over the coming months and years to help increase housing delivery.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Panel agrees the Action Plan and the series of actions that the Council will seek to implement over coming months and years.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Paragraph 75 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) states that *“Where the housing delivery test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the authority’s housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.”*
- 3.2 The [housing delivery test](#) is an annual measure of housing delivery which compares ‘total net homes delivered’ against ‘number of homes required’. Because the Council does not have a recently adopted Local Plan the number of homes required in Welwyn Hatfield is taken from the Government’s local housing need figures.
- 3.3 The Government published the housing delivery test results in November 2018. It confirmed that Welwyn Hatfield had built 1,493 homes in the period 2015/16 - 2017/18 against a target of 1,701 homes. This equates to 88%.
- 3.4 The Council therefore needs to prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.

3.5 The action plan reviews Government guidance to understand what is expected of it, considers the views of relevant stakeholders who were asked for their thoughts via an article in a recent Local Plan newsletter, analyses existing data and other knowledge to attempt to identify any issues that might be delaying housing delivery and sets out a series of actions that will be taken over coming months and years to help increase housing delivery.

3.6 In summary, the key actions are:

- Continue to determine planning applications for housing schemes as fast as reasonably possible.
- Continue to consider the necessity of planning conditions for housing permissions.
- Continue to discharge planning conditions for housing schemes as fast as reasonably possible.
- Continue to prepare Section 106 agreements as fast as reasonably possible.
- Progress the adoption of the Local Plan and the release of land from the green belt to enable urban extensions to come forward for development around towns and villages.
- Review the determination of minor applications, particularly those that are refused, to see whether there is more than can be done to get them approved.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. The NPPF requires councils in our situation to prepare an action plan, although it does not state what the implications will be if a plan is not prepared.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. The work to prepare the action plan has been carried out by officers and the actions will be implemented by officers as part of their day-to-day duties.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan will be a key document to consider when determining planning applications, particularly in circumstances where the Council is minded to refuse planning permission and especially if such decisions are appealed, as the plan will form part of the evidence base that the Council is doing all it reasonably can to bring sites forward for development.

7 Security and Terrorism Implications

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications associated with this report.

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

9 Climate Change Implications

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report. The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal recognises the climate change implications of housing development.

10 Human Resources Implications

10.1 There are no human resources implications associated with this report. The work to prepare the action plan has been carried out by officers and the actions will be implemented by officers as part of their day-to-day duties.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implications

11.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications associated with this report. The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal recognises the health and wellbeing implications of housing development.

12 Communications and Engagement Implications

12.1 There are no communications implications associated with this report. The action plan will be published on the planning pages of the Council's website and reported in the next edition of the Local Plan newsletter which is sent to about 2,000 organisations and individuals on the consultation database.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Business Plan 2018-2021 and particularly Priority 3 Our Housing to plan for current and future needs.

14 Equalities and Diversity

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

Name of author	Colin Haigh
Title	Head of Planning
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Appendices:

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan