

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 24 August 2020

Report by: Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Housing Delivery Test Action Plan: August 2020

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary:

- This report summarises and presents the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan and proposes to seek agreement to publish on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION: That:

(a) The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed and published on the Council's website.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 To seek agreement to publish the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) Action Plan on the Council's website.

2.0 Background

2.1 A number of changes to the planning system were introduced through the publication of the new NPPF in July 2018, one of which was the introduction of a new monitoring tool (the Housing Delivery Test) to assess housing delivery against housing requirements. In instances where local planning authorities do not deliver up to a certain proportion of their housing requirements they are required to produce an Action

Plan detailing how they intend to improve housing delivery going forward.

- 2.2 East Herts HDT Action Plan has been produced in response to the East Herts February 2020 HDT results where it was highlighted that the Council had met 88% of its housing requirements over the last three years up to March 2019.
- 2.3 A copy of the East Herts HDT Action Plan August 2020 is attached at **Appendix A**.

3.0 Reason

- 3.1 Preparation of a HDT Action Plan is a new national requirement outlined in national Planning Practice Guidance and is necessary in instances where at least 95% of the housing requirement is not met over a three-year period. The purpose of an Action Plan is to identify the reasons for under-delivery, explore ways to reduce the risk of further under-delivery and set out measures the authority intends to take to improve levels of delivery. They are required to be published within six months of the HDT results being published.
- 3.2 The District Plan introduced new policies and allocated sites for housing development to help deliver housing to meet housing requirements over the plan period. It provides an up-to-date planning framework and demonstrates a pro-active approach to growth, directing the majority of new housing to the district's main settlements as well as the allocating the Gilston Area which is now part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to the south-east of the district. The Council has therefore already taken a key step towards addressing housing delivery within the District. As a result, many actions and responses to increasing housing delivery are identified within the District Plan.
- 3.3 Consequently the Council is only proposing small scale measures at the current time, and it is unlikely to require

anything more significant over the next couple of years as the District Plan will take time to positively impact upon housing delivery.

- 3.4 Section 2 of the HDT Action Plan explains what the Housing Delivery Test is and how it affects local planning in East Herts.
- 3.5 Section 3 provides an analysis of housing delivery in East Herts and significantly it highlights that the Council is in fact granting planning permission for more than enough homes to meet housing requirements, and that there are issues after planning permission is granted that are affecting sites being built out. Vitally, since the District Plan has been adopted, this section highlights the projected increase in housing completions in the future.
- 3.6 Section 4 identifies some of the potential issues that may have an impact on housing delivery in East Herts, including how well the planning department is performing in approving and granting applications on time, issues around the local housing market and the changing affordability of homes over time, as well as issues affecting the build-out rate of sites nationally.
- 3.7 Section 5 reiterates that the District Plan is intended to be the main mechanism through which the Council seeks to improve housing delivery in the district. It also identifies a number of other actions and responses to the key issues outlined in Section 4 that the Council can explore implementing in the short-term to help increase delivery of homes.
- 3.8 Section 6 identifies additional longer-term measures to improve housing delivery which may be worth exploring in the future.
- 3.9 Guidelines on what an action plan should include are outlined in national Planning Practice Guidance. There is no requirement to publicly consult on the Action Plan and the

Council has opted not to do so in this instance. The report is required to be made publicly available however and it is intended that the document be published on the Council's website.

4.0 Options

4.1 The Council is required to publish an Action Plan in response to a Housing Delivery Test result below 95%.

5.0 Risks

5.1 If the Action Plan does not proceed to publication then East Herts will not have met its duty following the Housing Delivery Test results.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 None.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

All

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A – Housing Delivery Test Action Plan: August 2020

Contact Members

Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council

linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Jan Goodeve– Executive Member for Planning and Growth

jan.goodeve@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders – Head of Planning and Building Control

Tel: 01992 531656. sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

George Pavey – Principal Planning Officer, Tel: 01992 531623.

george.pavey@eastherts.gov.uk