

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 24 JULY 2019

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER  
FOR PLANNING AND GROWTH

HOUSING DELIVERY TEST (HDT) ACTION PLAN JULY 2019

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

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

<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:</u> that:</b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, as set out in Essential Reference Paper 'B', be agreed and published on the Council's website.</b>

1.0 Background

1.1 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.

- 1.2 East Herts' first HDT Action Plan has been produced in response to the East Herts February 2019 HDT results where it was highlighted that the Council had met 76% of its housing requirements over the last three years up to March 2018.
- 1.3 A copy of the East Herts HDT Action Plan July 2019 is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

## 2.0 Report

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The results of the first HDT come only a few months after the Council adopted the East Herts District Plan in October 2018. 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 proposing a new 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.
- 2.3 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.

- 2.4 Section 2 of the HDT Action Plan explains what the Housing Delivery Test is and how it affects local planning in East Herts.
- 2.5 Section 3 provides an analysis of historic 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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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 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.
- 2.8 Section 6 identifies additional longer-term measures to improve housing delivery which may be worth exploring in the future.
- 2.9 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.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

#### Essential Reference Papers

- A – Corporate issues and consultation information
- B – East Herts HDT Action Plan July 2019

#### Background Papers

- Planning Practice Guidance – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – Paragraphs 55-75.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment#housing-delivery-test>
- Housing Delivery Test 2018 Measurement  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2018-measurement>
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- East Herts District Plan 2018  
<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/districtplan>

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