

**WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING DELIVERY TEST
ACTION PLAN 2019**

August 2019



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

Context

- 1.1 The Council recognises the Governments' commitment to boost the delivery of new homes and has responded to this challenge by undertaking a full review of the existing adopted Worthing Core Strategy 2011, which helps to set the strategy for development across the Borough.
- 1.2 The existing Worthing Core Strategy was adopted at a time when there was not a strong relationship between the housing targets set for Worthing within Regional/Structure Plans and the need and demand for new homes within the borough. This is because the previous targets took account of the significant development constraints faced by Worthing and were therefore strongly influenced by the capacity of the borough to accommodate new homes in terms of its physical and environmental characteristics.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now requires that local planning authorities meet their full need for both market and affordable housing as far as is consistent with other policies in the Framework. In response to this significant change, together with other changes at national level, the Council committed to review the existing Local Plan.
- 1.4 In spring 2016 the first stage of Local Plan review (the Issues and Options stage) was published for consultation. At that stage the Council sought views and suggestions on how Worthing should grow and develop in the future. This consultation identified the challenges facing the borough and the options that could help address them.
- 1.5 All responses received at the Issues and Options stage informed the next stage of Plan preparation and the evidence that needed to be put in place to support it. In autumn 2018 the Council published its preferred options in its Draft Worthing Local Plan 2018 and work is currently progressing to prepare the Submission version of the Plan. This builds on the responses received at the two earlier stages and the emerging evidence. The current timescale of the Local Plan review is for Regulation 19 consultation in spring 2020 followed by Submission in autumn 2020. The Examination is expected to be held in winter 2020 / spring 2021 with the Plan then being adopted in summer 2021.
- 1.6 In line with the NPPF, the Council is seeking to plan positively to establish whether housing delivery could be increased significantly to help close the gap between the level of identified need and recent levels of housing delivery.
- 1.7 The most up-to-date assessment of objectively assessed housing need (based on the standard method as set out in national planning guidance and the 2016 household projections published in September 2018) is 12,801 dwellings over the Plan period (to 2033) which currently equates to 753 dwellings per annum (as set out in the Draft Worthing Local Plan (DWLP)). It should be noted that the Council are looking to amend the end date of the plan for Submission to 2036 and consequently all figures will be updated in due course).

- 1.8 The level of identified housing need for the plan period is a much higher level of housing delivery than the borough has previously planned for or delivered. To put this into context, the current adopted Core Strategy 2011 set a housing requirement of 200 dwellings per annum and the average annual delivery rate since 2006 has been 285 dwellings (which includes a significant level of housing delivered on a large greenfield site at West Durrington).
- 1.9 In light of the changes made to national planning guidance and the need to meet, as much as possible, the housing need for Worthing the spatial strategy taken forward in the emerging plan is similar to that incorporated within the Worthing Core Strategy (i.e. placing a strong emphasis on regeneration and transforming key sites within the urban area). However, a key difference has been the need to now look more positively at potential development options, including greenfield sites located around the edge of the borough.
- 1.10 The most significant constraining factor when considering future development is land availability. Worthing is tightly constrained and there is little scope to grow beyond the current Built up Area Boundary without merging with the urban areas of Ferring (to the west) and Sompting/Lancing (to the east) and without damaging the borough's character and environment. Furthermore, the town is relatively compact and there are very few vacant sites or opportunity areas within the existing Built up Area that could deliver significant levels of growth. Therefore, the reality is that when compared to many other local authority areas, there are relatively few options for growth.
- 1.11 The emerging spatial strategy seeks to achieve the right balance between planning positively to meet the town's development needs (particularly for jobs, homes and community facilities) with the continuing need to protect and enhance the borough's high quality environments and open spaces within and around the town. The overarching objective is therefore to maximise appropriate development on brownfield land and add sustainable urban extensions adjacent to the existing urban area. The core principles set out in the draft Plan take account of the characteristics of the borough and provide a clear direction for development in and around the town. The spatial strategy will help to steer new development to the right locations whilst at the same time helping to protect those areas of greatest value / sensitivity.
- 1.12 The emerging strategy identifies a total of seven sites for allocation which are considered to be key to the delivery of future housing in the borough. These comprise four urban sites that provide the greatest opportunity to deliver residential and wider regeneration and three edge of town sites that have been assessed as being suitable for allocation for housing development.
- 1.13 The plan also identifies six Areas of Change (AOCs) which are regeneration sites within the existing Built Up Area Boundary. Although change is expected and encouraged over the Plan period, they are opportunities that, in general, are less advanced than the other urban allocations and, as a consequence, there is less certainty about the likely mix of uses, site capacity and delivery timeframe. In addition to the more significant urban sites proposed for allocation and identified as AOCs it is expected that small sites will play a greater role in housing delivery.

Why an Action Plan has been prepared

- 1.14 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) introduced a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as a mechanism to monitor housing delivery locally. The HDT measures additional net dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required. The consequences of failing the test are set out in the NPPF and these will apply until subsequent HDT results demonstrate that delivery in future years has improved:
- A local planning authority must produce an Action Plan within six months if the Housing Delivery Test result is less than 95%
 - A local planning authority with a Housing Delivery Test result of less than 85% must provide a 20% buffer to the five year housing land supply
 - The presumption in favour of sustainable development applies if the Housing Delivery Test result is less than:
 - i) 25% in November 2018
 - ii) 45% in November 2019
 - iii) 75% from November 2020 onwards
- 1.15 Where an Action Plan is required, this should be prepared within 6 months of the test results being published. There was a delay in the publication of the HDT and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the test results on 19 February 2019. This Action Plan will therefore be published by 19th August 2019, which is line with the Government's requirements.

How is the Housing Delivery Test Measured?

- 1.16 The methodology for calculating the HDT measurement is set out in the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rulebook. It is based on the MHCLG statistics for the total net housing completions in a local planning authority area over a three year rolling programme which includes student and other communal accommodation using a ratio to adjust for occupancy. The result of the HDT for each local planning authority is published annually by the MHCLG in November.

How did Worthing perform against the Housing Delivery Test?

- 1.17 For Worthing, housing delivery was measured against the adopted Worthing Core Strategy 2011 target of 200 homes per annum for Test Year 1 (being within the last 5 years). Given the Local Plan Adoption date, the calculation for Test Year 2 falls between the CS adopted target figure and the Minimum Local Housing Need Figure. For Test Year 3 the Minimum Local Housing Need Figure is used.

Worthing Housing Delivery Test results

Year	Delivery Figure (net)	Annual Housing Target
2015/2016	477	200
2016/2017	347	598
2017/2018	492	622
Total over 3 years	1,316	1,420
The Housing Delivery Test measurement for Worthing is $1,316 / 1,420 = 93\%$.		

1.18 Based on performance over the past three years Worthing does not have to provide a 20% buffer to the five year housing land supply and avoids the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It does, however, have to produce an Action Plan.

Purpose and Objectives

1.19 This Action Plan is the Council's response to the challenge set out in the NPPF to boost significantly the supply of homes. It sets out why the authority has not delivered against its housing requirements (as detailed above) and identifies a number of actions to increase and maintain housing delivery. However, it should be recognised that housing delivery is a complex matter, which includes the involvement of a number of different organisations in the delivery of new homes. Consequently, if this Action Plan is to succeed, then the cooperation of all partners will be essential, for example, landowners and developers.

1.20 This Action Plan covers the following issues:

- The historic performance on housing delivery
- Explains what the Council has been doing so far to boost housing delivery
- Analyses evidence on sites with planning permission (and sites allocated for housing development) to understand what barriers are preventing homes being built on these sites
- Sets out what actions the Council can take to increase the rate and number of homes built
- Monitoring

Relationship with other plans and strategies for housing delivery

- 1.21 This Action Plan together with the following key Council plans, policies and strategies provides a mechanism for delivery of local housing targets:

Platforms for our Places (Corporate Strategy) - is a plan that sets out Adur & Worthing Councils' ambition for our places' and our communities' prosperity and wellbeing. Platform 2 (Our Social Economies) encourages innovative actions around housing needs.

Economic Strategy 2018-2023 - this sets out ambitious plans for how the place will achieve “good growth” It seeks to ensure that this growth balances economic success with improvements to the quality of life for residents, including good quality housing.

Adur & Worthing Housing Strategy 2017-2020 - the strategy sets out the Councils' housing priorities and dovetails with the Councils' corporate priorities, other Council strategies and the strategies and priorities of other partners and stakeholders. The Housing Strategy is currently being reviewed.

Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership - this is a local business led partnership between local authorities and businesses and plays a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. It has a critical role in the delivery of local infrastructure to support growth in the local economy and helps unlock development. In turn, this helps to support the housing delivery priorities of the Borough.

Approach and Methodology

- 1.22 The Council already has in place a long standing monitoring arrangement with West Sussex County Council and also maintains its own comprehensive monitoring system. The Annual Monitoring Report provides updates regarding the housing land supply position. This monitoring has identified that there are significant challenges to the delivery of housing typical of an authority with limited land availability and recognised constraints to development.
- 1.23 A number of sources of information/evidence have been, and continue to be, used to identify and assess any opportunities for residential development and to understand any barriers to delivery that need to be addressed. These include the following documents that are reviewed on a regular basis:
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
 - Brownfield Register
 - Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register
 - West Sussex County Council Data
 - Empty Homes Strategy
 - Affordable Homes Delivery Group
 - Adur and Worthing Strategic Asset Management Group
 - Housing Implementation Strategy

2. Housing Delivery Analysis

Past Performance on Housing Delivery

- 2.1 Historically the housing targets for Worthing had been based on those set by Regional / Structure Plans and as previously explained, these did not have a strong relationship with the need and demand for new homes in the borough. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy Worthing had been meeting its adopted target and in fact had been delivering a surplus. However, it is acknowledged that this wasn't the case when the newer requirements of the NPPF were in place which required local planning authorities to meet their housing needs in full.
- 2.2 The table below (also incorporated within the housing trajectory 2017 - 2018) indicates the recent levels of housing delivery. This is a net figure, which consists of new build dwellings minus demolitions plus conversions.

Historic Housing Delivery - Dwelling completions 2006/2007 - 2017/18

Year	Net Additional Dwellings
2006 – 2007	266
2007 – 2008	260
2008 – 2009	380
2009 – 2010	252
2010 – 2011	241
2011 – 2012	143
2012 – 2013	172
2013 – 2014	245
2014 – 2015	351
2015 – 2016	484
2016 – 2017	347
2017 - 2018	482
Total 2006 – 2018	3,623

- 2.3 A total of 482 (net) new dwellings were completed in Worthing in the monitoring period 2017/2018 (the latest reported monitoring period). This represents a surplus of 282 against the annualised housing requirement (Core Strategy) of 200 dwellings per annum and an increase on the previous year's figure of 347 dwellings.
- 2.4 To better reflect delivery trends, the latest return must also be considered within the context of a longer term timeframe. With this in mind it is clear that there has been a sustained period of 'over-delivery' in recent years (against the 200 dwellings / year requirement). In fact, the level of housing completions since 2006 is 3,623 dwellings which against the Core Strategy target, provides a 'surplus' over the last 12 years. However, it should be noted that there is no intention that the 200 dwelling / year target should be seen as a 'ceiling'. Furthermore, as explained above, changes to the planning system have meant that the Council has to reconsider this existing target in light of more recent evidence. Work on reviewing the housing target is currently underway as part of the Local Plan review.

Housing approvals and completions against housing targets 2006 - 2018

	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	2011 / 12	2012 / 13	2013 / 14	2014 / 15	2015 / 16	2016 / 17	2017 / 18
Housing Supply Target	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	598	622
New Residential Approvals	382	407	460	240	193	149	1216 *	224	145	206	479	267
Net Residential completions	266	260	380	252	241	143	172	245	351	484	347	482

* This year includes 700 dwelling permission at West Durrington and 265 dwelling permission at Worthing College. West Durrington is still under construction but close to completion.

- 2.5 As can be seen from the table above, the number of homes delivered has, in general, kept pace with the number of homes permitted.

Current Housing Supply

- 2.6 Worthing's current level of identified housing need for the plan period (753 dwellings per annum - DWLP 2016-2033) is a much higher level of housing delivery than the borough has previously planned for or delivered. To put this into context, the current adopted Core Strategy 2011 set a housing requirement of 200 dwellings per annum and the average annual delivery rate since 2006 has been 285 dwellings (which includes a significant level of housing delivered on a large greenfield site at West Durrington).

2.7 It is clear that the increase in need for new homes in Worthing required a step change in housing delivery compared with previous housing requirements. The Council is responding to this challenge and has the ambition, recognised across its key strategic documents and strategies, to increase and accelerate the delivery of new housing across the borough. Worthing is currently reviewing its adopted Core Strategy (April 2011). The Draft Worthing Local Plan (Regulation 18 - Published October 2018) is looking to allocate land to accommodate the minimum of 4,182 new homes (246 per annum), including a number of greenfield and brownfield sites. Whilst this figure is still some way below the level of need it does represent a very significant uplift on the housing requirement previously established for the borough within the County Structure Plan, the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Core Strategy.

2.8 Current housing supply is made up of the following sources which, where appropriate, the assumptions behind them are being robustly reviewed as part of the current Local Plan review :

Dwelling completions - using local and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) data to determine the level of completions each year.

Commitments - Those sites identified as commitments at 1st April of the monitoring year in the Housing Land Supply Study produced annually by WSSCC are those sites that can accommodate five or more units, which have planning permission but have not commenced or are under construction.

Small sites of less than five dwellings (previous threshold was 6 across the County) continue to come forward. It is not practical to identify and assess all of these sites in terms of their deliverability. Therefore, in forecasting house building on these small sites, it is assumed that all dwellings under construction and 45% of those with planning permission but not yet started will be built. This is based on past evidence of completion rates.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites - The Council's SHLAA has provided the mechanism through which the quantity and suitability of land potentially available for housing development has been determined. Informed by a number of 'calls for sites' the SHLAA has been monitored and updated regularly to give the most up to date picture of housing delivery for Worthing.

Strategic Allocation - The adopted Core Strategy currently has only one Strategic Allocation which is West Durrington. Planning Permission has been granted for 700 new homes and works have commenced with the final 283 homes expected to be delivered over a five year period 2018-2023.

The DWLP 2018 is proposed the allocation of eight key sites of which three are solely for new homes. Four of the other sites will deliver new homes as part of a mixed development.

Windfall Allowance - A windfall allowance takes account of housing development on sites which it is not possible to identify in advance (e.g. conversions, changes of use etc.). Historic small sites housing delivery data over a ten year period has been used to calculate a windfall allowance of 73 homes per year. To avoid double counting with the small sites commitments, the windfall allowance is not applied to the first three years of the projections.

- 2.9 The most up to date SHLAA (2017-2018) undertook a reassessment of all potential site opportunities (and any new sites) to consider their development potential. Whilst the focus in previous SHLAA has been on previously developed sites in the built up area, a rigorous assessment of edge of town opportunities (including greenfield sites) was also undertaken. This work is continuing as part of the Local Plan review and as new evidence emerges this will help inform site assessments. The SHLAA is now under review as part of Annual Monitoring Report for the monitoring period 2018/19 and will be updated prior to the Submission Stage of the Local Plan Review. These updates provide an opportunity for a further 'call for sites' and other evidence gathering to ensure that the capacity figures and projected delivery rates are robust and that the Council can demonstrate a very positive approach to Plan making.

Housing delivery analysis

- 2.10 The Council has used the Data Standard spreadsheet, produced by the Planning Advisory Service, to bring together all existing evidence to help understand the components of housing supply and delivery performance. This integrates the planning pipeline, recent delivery and future supply of housing to identify barriers slowing down or preventing delivery. All sites of 5 or more dwellings have been included.
- 2.11 The first step has been to identify those sites where there are barriers to development or where sites have stalled completely.
- 2.12 The spatial strategy as set out in the adopted Core Strategy was set by its context. There was one strategic allocation identified in the plan - West Durrington which was to deliver 700 new homes on a greenfield site situated on the north western edge of Worthing. This site has planning permission and construction is well advanced.
- 2.13 Whilst there was only one allocation in the Plan the Council identified 12 Areas of Change (AOC) these are areas where change was expected and were promoted over the Plan period. Eight of the AOC included residential development either solely or as part of a mixed-use development.
- 2.14 A number of the AOC identified in the Core Strategy have been, or are currently being delivered. These include the Aquarena, which has planning permission, and development is underway to deliver a mixed-use development with 141 new homes. The Strand which has been subject to permitted development and new development and has delivered a significant number of dwellings. Northbrook College, which has also contributed to the Boroughs supply of homes. The remaining Areas of Change have been reassessed as part of the current Local Plan review and some of these are now potential allocations. In addition to the sites set out in the Core Strategy a number of other sites have been, and are being, developed having secured planning permission.
- 2.15 Against the backdrop of significant and growing housing need the Council has taken, where possible, positive steps to bring forward sustainable opportunities to deliver new development. Whilst the progression of the Local Plan provides the main mechanism through which sites will be allocated the Council has also considered ways in which housing delivery could be increased in advance of Plan adoption. In response to this two edge of town opportunities (Fulbeck Avenue and Land North of

West Durrington) have been given support for development in advance of the adoption of the new Local plan. These sites which sit within the existing built up area boundary, were included in the earlier Local Plan consultation 'Issues and Options' which raised the prospect of bringing these two sites forward in advance of the new Local Plan. In general this proposal was positively received and support was given to the Council taking this positive approach. Since that time an application for 240 new homes has been approved on the Land at West Durrington site pending the signing of a legal agreement and discussions are ongoing regarding the delivery of the Fulbeck Avenue site.

- 2.16 The new Local Plan must be informed by a robust evidence base. A number of background studies have already been progressed and some further studies and updates are being advanced to ensure that the Council's evidence base is up-to-date. This includes: a Landscape & Biodiversity Study transport studies; a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA); an Employment Study; and the Retail and Other town Centre Uses Study. These, and other studies, have helped to inform the assessment of sites for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan. In addition to the evidence base, the Council's proposal have already been subject to two rounds of consultation with key stakeholders and land owners to identify and address any issues and continues to engage with them through the review process. In addition, landowners and developers have also been invited to promote potential development sites (a call for sites) on a number of occasions.
- 2.17 The emerging Local Plan strategy identifies a total of seven sites for allocation which are considered to be key to the delivery of future housing in the borough. It also identifies six Areas of Change (AOCs) which are regeneration sites within the existing Built Up Area Boundary. Although change is expected and encouraged over the Plan period, they are opportunities that, in general, are less advanced than the other allocations and, as a consequence, there is less certainty about the likely mix of uses, site capacity and delivery timeframe. In addition to the more significant urban sites proposed for allocation and identified as AOCs it is expected that small sites will play a greater role in housing delivery.
- 2.18 The current evidence supports the allocation of the following sites:
- Caravan club** - a Council owned site that is currently leased to the Caravan Club. The lease is being negotiated to release 3 hectares of the site to allow for its allocation for residential development. A number of site issues identified through the landscape study and local features need to be considered in any detailed site proposal.
- Land west of Fulbeck Avenue** - a Council owned greenfield site. A number of site considerations will need to be considered at the design stage. Flooding will be considered as part of the SFRA. The Council is actively engaged in discussions with modular housebuilder to consider an innovative delivery mechanism and modular house build on the site with the potential to deliver a relative high capacity. A number of background studies have been commissioned for this site which will inform final delivery.
- Upper Brighton Road** - a privately owned greenfield site. There are a number of onsite considerations including landscape features/proximity to conservation area/heritage assets and the South Downs National Park which the Council is confident can be addressed through sensitive design.

- 2.19 The following sites that are being proposed as allocations in the DWLP had been previously considered as AOC in the current Core Strategy. A robust reassessment of these sites has concluded that these sites have a realistic prospect of being delivered within the first five years of the new Plan that they and will deliver much needed new homes.

Teville Gate - this key town centre site is one of the most high profile sites in the town, linking the railway station to the town centre. This site presents a key opportunity for delivering mixed use scheme including in excess of 300 new homes as well as new retail, leisure and commercial uses. The Council has been proactive on this site gaining funding for the demolition of the vacant buildings and multi storey car park. The site is now cleared and has temporary permission for surface car parking. On-going engagement with the site owners has now resulted in the submission of a planning application.

Union Place - a complex site which had previously been under private ownership until an intervention by the Council. The Council's proactive involvement has resulted in a number of funding and delivery initiatives including more recently a land-pooling agreement with publicly owned development company LCR. The site will provide much needed new homes alongside new commercial and leisure floorspace.

Grafton Site - a council owned site which is subject to some complex legal arrangements with neighbours. The Council has worked closely with interested parties with a view to finding solutions and funding initiatives that will allow the site to come forward. The Council is confident this site can be delivered and provide a significant contribution to the new homes needed whilst at the same time contributing to a number of regeneration objectives.

Civic Centre Car Park - Council owned site in close proximity to the town centre. Discussions are continuing with NHS Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group to look at a healthcare hub with a level of residential development.

- 2.20 In addition to these Local Plan allocations the Council has also identified a further six Areas of Change where it is considered development is likely to occur during the Plan period but that in general, as less advanced and have less certainty about mix of uses, site capacity and delivery time frame. The assessment of these sites will continue to establish whether more certainty can be achieved to justify their inclusion as an allocation.
- 2.21 As previously explained, consideration has been given to all potential development sites in and around the borough. This included greenfield sites on the urban fringe and, as set out above, a number of these have been allocated for development. In reality, other than those sites there are very few other opportunities. However, three other edge of town sites were promoted for development and, in response, a robust and positive review (including consultation) of these has been made to assess whether they were potentially suitable for residential development. These are currently referred to as 'Omission sites'. However, at this stage, it is the view of the Council that development constraints and landscape sensitivities mean that these sites should be protected from development. Despite this, work will continue to see whether the identified constraints can be satisfactorily overcome before the Local Plan is submitted for Examination.

- 2.22 In working towards the Submission stage of the Plan all sites will be robustly reassessed to justify their continued inclusion in the delivery strategy and to provide greater certainty of their capacity and delivery timescales. Assuming the Inspector at examination agrees to the inclusion of these sites the Council will regularly monitor their delivery and seek to address any obstacles that may arise.

Potential barriers to delivery

- 2.23 The physical and environmental constraints of the borough strongly influence the capacity to accommodate new dwellings, with the sea to the south, the South Downs National Park to the north and sensitive gaps to the east and west forming an important component of the landscape setting of town. A key challenge is to balance the need for development against the need to minimise the impact on the countryside and landscape character. There are also flooding and key infrastructure constraints which impact on the availability of land for development.
- 2.24 Additionally, many parts of the Borough are already intensely developed or the local characteristics are such that they make it very difficult to facilitate further significant development. For example, there is a predominance of suburban housing with relatively few open areas where larger scale growth and change can be easily accommodated.
- 2.25 There is also a significant reliance on a relatively small number of larger sites in and around the town centre to bring forward major development. An associated problem is that the housing market in the area is dominated by a relatively small number of key landowners and major developers, reducing possibilities for the smaller developers. Additionally, some sites are subject to complex planning histories or other complexities such as multiple ownership. However, as set out above, where possible, the Council is working proactively to address these issues.
- 2.26 The provision of appropriate infrastructure is important to support new development, and this remains a key aspect of Local Plan preparation and progression. In 2018, the Council has published a new working draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to ensure the right levels and types of infrastructure essential to support new homes, economic growth and to protect the environment are delivered. The Council continues to work with key service providers to update its IDP.

Development costs and viability

- 2.27 The new Local Plan will be supported by a Whole Plan Viability Assessment (WPVA) to provide an appraisal of the Plan in terms of the impact of its policies on the viability of development expected to be delivered during the Plan period. It will assess whether the key sites (both greenfield and brownfield) which are key to the delivery of the housing strategy are viable.
- 2.28 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is now the main way in which the Council collects contributions from developers for infrastructure provision in Worthing. It largely replaces the use of S106 planning obligations with the exception of affordable housing provision and some site specific requirements. As charging authority, Worthing Borough Council has the responsibility for managing, monitoring and

reporting on CIL. Although the CIL 'pot' is growing, it is accepted that CIL will not generate enough funds to completely cover the cost of new infrastructure needed to fully support the planned growth. As a result, infrastructure providers will also have to apply for funding from other sources, with CIL used as match funding where appropriate. It is also clear that there will be many competing demands on CIL funds which means that it is important that a clear and justified process for the spend and prioritisation of CIL is established. Consultants have recently been appointed to undertake a review of the current Charging Schedule and the findings and implications for proposed CIL rate and zone options will be considered.

3. Key Actions & Responses

- 3.1 The Council has already undertaken a significant amount of work to identify the barriers to bringing forward some of the key sites in the borough as discussed above. It will continue to be proactive in searching for additional opportunities to bring forward both existing and new sites. The following are those identified areas where it is considered that regular reviews are undertaken to ensure that potential opportunities are identified, robustly assessed and delivered expediently:

Ensure Housing Delivery Remains a Council Priority

- 3.2 Given the very significant housing pressures within the town housing delivery is already a high level corporate and political priority for Worthing, as detailed in the Council's new Corporate Plan - Platforms For Our Places which is currently being updated. Strong corporate leadership will be an ongoing requirement to ensure housing delivery remains a focus across the Council.
- 3.3 The Council will therefore undertake to:
- Continue to provide a Council wide strategic approach to housing delivery, and ensure the delivery of new homes is a primary consideration in decision-making.
 - Ensure existing policies, strategies and other relevant documents and databases are updated and put in place to support housing delivery and are implemented to achieve specific goals.
 - Ensure that Councillors are fully aware of the importance of delivering new homes and supporting related policies and strategies.

Review of Local Plan

Draft Worthing Local Plan

- 3.4 Worthing needs a new Local Plan to conform with the updated NPPF and to identify how the Council intends to meet housing, employment and infrastructure needs. The current Core Strategy does not address these changes and in particular new requirements and tests for meeting housing needs. Work commenced on the new Local Plan in 2015 and in spring 2016 the first stage of Local Plan review (the Issues and Options stage) was published for consultation. In autumn 2018 the Council published its preferred options (Regulation 18) in the Draft Worthing Local Plan. Work is currently underway to prepare the Submission version of the Plan. The current timescale of the Local Plan review is for Regulation 19 consultation in Spring 2020, Submission Autumn 2020, Examination Winter 2020 /Spring 2021 and adoption Summer 2021.
- 3.5 An up to date policy framework will create greater certainty for those wanting to bring forward sites for housing delivery, supporting investment decisions and minimising areas of disagreement as to how policies are applied and the weight that needs to be attributed to different policies. Housing can also be facilitated through site allocations.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.6 A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Review is currently underway in response to changes to legislation and the timeline for the emerging Worthing Local Plan. In particular, this will: respond to recent changes in guidance; 'test' greenfield development; update viability tests; and address some elements of the existing Charging Schedule. Importantly, the review (and the Whole Plan Viability Assessment that will follow) will help to ensure that the infrastructure requirements and contributions placed on development are not impacting on development finances to such a degree as it might make schemes unviable.

Planning Policy

- 3.7 There are a number of policy approaches that can help with the delivery of new homes whilst balancing the wider sustainable, community and economic needs of the borough. In order to deliver sites and respond to changes in the economy the Council can, depending on circumstances, take a flexible approach to the application of its adopted policies. This includes residential tenure mix, loss of employment and other land use, where appropriate.

More effective use of land

- 3.8 A key policy in the Worthing Core Strategy encourages the most efficient use of land which will usually mean, where appropriate, developing at densities above those of the surrounding areas. The optimum density of a site should be achieved through a design led approach to determine the capacity of a site.
- 3.9 The expectation is that residential development of a family housing scheme should achieve minimum densities of 35dph whilst flats, mixed residential developments in or close to town centres or near public transport hubs should be achieving densities far in excess of this. Where developments do not demonstrably optimise the housing density of a site then permission is refused. Unlike some, more rural, authority areas this is not a common issue in Worthing as the nature and character of the borough means that the vast majority of proposals for development seek to maximise development. Despite this, further work is currently being undertaken to inform density policies to be included in the emerging Local Plan. This work will assess whether there are any mechanisms that could be used to further increase residential densities whilst at the same time ensuring that the characteristics valued in the surrounding area are maintained / enhanced and that a high standard of living accommodation is provided.

Specific Site Policies

- 3.10 These policies identify the key development sites and set out the requirements for delivery. This provides developers and landowners with clear guidelines of the mix of uses, level of development, infrastructure requirements etc. with the aim of speeding up the decision making process.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.11 There are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) relevant to the delivery of housing:

Tall Buildings Guidance SPD - This document provides clear and consistent guidance on the design and location of tall buildings in Worthing.

Guide to Residential Development SPD - The purpose of this document is to provide general policy and design guidance for all residential development. In particular, it gives more detail on how a number of Core Strategy policies will be applied.

Space Standards SPD - Since the introduction of national space standards relating to internal space this SPD is only used to inform applications for conversions and external space.

Sustainable Economy SPD - The primary purpose is to provide additional information to Core Strategy policy 4 (Protecting Employment Opportunities) and 5 (Visitor Economy). It sets out the detailed criteria that will be used to assess any loss of employment or tourism related uses. Where appropriate, residential uses will be encouraged.

Developer Contributions SPD - The purpose of the SPD is to summarise the different mechanisms which will be used and the relationship between them. This will help to provide clarity for developers when considering new development opportunities.

Development briefs

- 3.12 Development briefs are prepared, where appropriate, to guide the future redevelopment of specific sites. By providing more detailed site analysis and development principles they provide landowners and developers with a clear indication as to what proposals are likely to be granted planning permission which, in turn, reduces uncertainty.

- 3.13 The purpose of development briefs is to:

- Improve the quality and consistency of advice provided to developers;
- Improve the efficiency of the planning and development process; and
- To improve the quality of the built environment.

- 3.14 Worthing will keep its guidance under review to ensure there is adequate information for a developer to know what is expected from new development, including at the stage of the initial investment/land purchase, and to ensure the relationship between local and national policy guidance is clear. There will also need to be a full review of all guidance to ensure it 'dove-tails' with new Local Plan policies in due course.

Improving our Planning Application Processes

- 3.15 Whilst the Council has not identified the Development Management planning process as a barrier to delivery it does recognise the importance of monitoring its performance and addressing any issues that may arise swiftly.
- 3.16 It can be seen from the data below on determining planning applications that the Council's performance and the speed of decision making is good and delays in the system are minimal. It can therefore be concluded that the authority has an efficient decision making process in place.

Percentage of applications determined within the prescribed timetable

Year	Total Applications	Majors	Minors	Others
2014/2015	1,102	79%	74%	80%
2015/2016	689	92%	77%	80%
2016/2017	716	94%	85%	89%
2017/2018	731	92%	83%	85%
2018/2019	749	71%	84%	90%

Appointment of Principal Planning Officer (Major Applications)

- 3.17 There are a number of major development sites that are due to come forward over the Plan period. In order to ensure that are dealt with in the most efficient manner the Council has recently appointed a Principal Planning Officer (Major Applications) with responsibility to provide detailed pre-application advice, enter into early stage negotiations in respect of S106 Agreements/CIL and liaise with other Council departments and other stakeholders. The aim is to ensure that the application process through to decision making is as smooth as possible by providing continuity and greater certainty for all parties involved.

Pre-Application Advice Service

- 3.18 To save unnecessary delays in the planning application process the Council has successfully introduced a Pre-Application Advice Service.

Planning Performance Agreements

- 3.19 In the last few years the Council has entered into planning performance agreements with a number of applicants to provide a tailored project management framework for handling a development proposal from pre-application stage through to decision and any compliance with conditions. These have been used successfully on some of the major development schemes and will continue to be used where appropriate.

Standardised Legal Agreements

- 3.20 It is recognised that the drawing up of legal agreements has the potential to delay the decision making process. In addition to the pre-application service and the appointment of the dedicated Major Applications Officer the Council is undertaking a review of its S106 process to standardise the format of the legal agreements. This will speed up this stage of the process.

Establishment of Major Projects & Investments Team

- 3.21 An experienced cross-discipline Major Projects and Investments team has been set up to allow the Council to be more proactive in identifying issues and barriers to housing delivery on major sites. Part of their remit is to develop close working relationships with land owners/developers of the key sites across the borough together with infrastructure providers and other departments in the Council in order to unlock barriers to delivery. This includes a full review of the Council's own 'estate' and a more proactive land assembly and 'commercial' approach to site delivery if required. They have been successful in leveraging public funding where available and developing business cases to help unlock sites.

Other initiatives to support housing delivery

Council Owned Land

- 3.22 The Council as a landholder has identified a number of its own sites that may be surplus to requirements and is currently considering further sites to bring forward additional homes as part of an asset management review. This allows the Council to prioritise and use resources to unblock any barriers to delivery as well as providing more delivery certainty.

Asset Management Working Group

- 3.23 The Asset Management Working Group was formed to focus on the review of the Councils' own land and property holdings in terms of identifying any surplus land or buildings, which could potentially be suitable for residential development. The Council is keen to maximise the use of its own land and property assets to drive regeneration forward.

Land in Private Ownership

- 3.24 A number of the major/strategic sites, which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy, are controlled by the volume/national housebuilders who are also developing large sites in neighbouring local authorities. This could be a significant factor in slowing delivery rates as volume housebuilders are known to limit the release / commencement of development sites in order to maintain strong demand within the housing market area. The Council continues to work closely with these key developers/landowners and others to ensure the housing trajectory reflects the most realistic delivery timescales.

Affordable Homes Delivery Group

- 3.25 The Council has recently set up a cross service group to address the significant shortfall of affordable housing provision across the borough. The primary focus of the affordable homes delivery group is to identify opportunities for the delivery of

affordable homes through more efficient use of Council owned land, together with the acquisition of land and premises for redevelopment.

Working Groups and Cross Boundary Working

- 3.26 Planning Officers meet regularly with other districts and boroughs in West Sussex as part of Duty to Co-operate and to consider a range of cross boundary issues, including addressing the delivery of housing. This has allowed for best practice to be disseminated that when implemented could help to 'unblock delivery constraints. Work under the Duty to Co-operate has also included the consideration of development proposals within Worthing that could, in turn, help to deliver additional housing growth within neighbouring authority areas.
- 3.27 The Council is also a member of the West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board, which seeks to jointly address strategic planning and development issues. It maintains a close working relationship with the Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership. Housing delivery is a key consideration and the Borough Council has made it known at each relevant stage that, despite taking a very positive approach to development, that Worthing will not meeting it's housing need. As a consequence, requests have been made to neighbouring authorities to ask whether they had any potential to help meet some of Worthing's housing shortfall.

Agents Forum

- 3.28 The Councils Place and Investment Team has recently set up an Agents Forum comprising key residential and commercial agents. The purpose is to create an open forum for dialogue about trends and issues impacting on development arising across the Borough.

Corporate Marketing

- 3.29 The Council has sought to raise the profile of the Borough and the key development opportunities it offers. Initiatives include a dedicated website 'Adur and Worthing Invest' and the production of magazine 'Building Adur and Worthing' which is published regularly. This keeps residents, businesses and prospective investors up-to-date with all the latest developments.

Worthing Investment Prospectus 2016

- 3.30 Worthing Borough Council, with the support of West Sussex County Council and other partners, has developed a vision for how the town will continue to be transformed in the future. The Council and other local partners are offering a 'ready to deliver' commitment. In practice, this means investors in Worthing can expect, direct contact with Council leaders and senior officers, a dedicated Economy Directorate with an experienced cross-disciplinary team. Where appropriate, the Council will be willing to consider flexible approaches to planning, development and tenure mix and a willingness to use public sector land assets directly and indirectly. Furthermore, the Council will provide a 'commercial' approach, encourage proactive land assembly and lever public funding where available for developing business cases.

Relationship with developers, landowners and agents

- 3.31 The Council recognises the fundamental importance of building relationships with developers, landowners and agents within the borough.
- 3.32 Contact with these partners is an essential part of assessing whether sites are available for development as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This is carried out on a regular basis to ensure that only those sites that are genuinely available can be considered as part of the potential housing land supply. As part of this, a 'Call for Sites' exercise is undertaken regularly.

4. Monitoring and Next Steps

Monitoring

- 4.1 Housing delivery is monitored jointly by West Sussex County Council and Worthing Borough Council and is reported through the Annual Monitoring Report published each December (to cover the preceding financial year). This includes an update on sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register. In addition, the Council maintains and updates annually the Brownfield Register.
- 4.2 Whilst the Council has excellent monitoring systems in place, as good practice, the Housing Delivery Test Root Cause Analysis Datasheet, produced by the Planning Advisory Service, has been used in an effort to improve this. This tool will continue to be populated as information on the progression of individual sites through the planning process becomes available.
- 4.3 The results of the Housing Delivery Test will be reported through the Worthing Members Working Group and, where necessary, the Action Plan will be reviewed and published in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Any changes in legislation, government policy or practice guidance will also be reflected in any update.

Next Steps

- 4.4 This is the first Action Plan produced by the Council and annual reviews are anticipated in future years. To help increase future housing delivery, the Council would welcome suggestions on any future actions from interested stakeholders.

5. Conclusion

5.1 This Housing Delivery Test Action Plan demonstrates the proactive approach being taken by the Council and its partners to increase the level of housing delivery in the borough. Significant steps have been taken within the Planning Service and beyond to help bring forward development sites and identify new ones. Some of the key steps identified in this Action Plan include:

- Commitment to produce a new Local Plan and allocate new development sites;
- A focussed approach to bring forward existing development through land assembly, improved marketing and partnership working (often led by the Council);
- A regular 'call for sites' to ensure that none have been 'missed';
- A full and positive review of all potential development opportunities (including greenfield site) within a robust and comprehensive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
- Improved Development Management processes;
- Agreement to bring forward two greenfield, edge of town development sites in advance of the Local Plan;
- Encouragement for all appropriate developments to deliver a residential density higher than the surrounding area;
- The appointment of a Principal Planning Officer (Major Applications) and the establishment of a Major Projects & Investments Team;
- Alignment of plans and strategies (internal and external) to deliver housing objectives;
- A clear Corporate commitment to deliver development on its own sites and to work with partners and other landowners to facilitate delivery on theirs;
- Continued cooperation with neighbouring local authorities.

5.2 Despite these efforts being taken by the Council and its partners it is very apparent that the level of housing delivery, whilst forecast to be higher than many previous years, will still fall significantly short of meeting the housing requirement established using the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rulebook. As demonstrated, although actions and interventions have been put in place that will help to increase housing delivery in the borough, the Council has no way of addressing the main constraint, which is a tightly drawn borough boundary, environmental constraints and extremely limited land availability.