Stevenage Borough Council

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

Update

May 2024

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) was introduced by Central Government into the planning system in 2019 as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The HDT is an annual measurement on whether local authorities are delivering sufficient houses to meet their identified housing needs.

$$\text{Housing Delivery Test (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total net homes delivered over three year period}}{\text{Total number of homes required over three year period}}$$

The HDT compares the net homes delivered over three years against the number of homes required over the same period; in the case of 2022 the measurement years are 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The results are based on a percentage score which is published annually by Government[1]. The consequences are set out below:

Requirement	Consequence
Equal to or above 95%	No action required
Below 95%	a) The Local Planning Authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase in future years.
Equal to or below 85%	b) The Local Planning Authority is required to include a 20% buffer in their identified supply of specific deliverable sites as set out in paragraph 77, in addition to preparing an action plan.
Equal to or below 75%	c) Apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development, in addition to preparing an action plan and applying a 20% buffer.

Table 1 include HDT requirements / consequences

The new NPPF emphasises the significance of small and medium sized sites in achieving the housing requirements of an area. It requires that local authorities should through their policies and decisions, seek opportunities to support small sites to come forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custom build housing.

The latest revision to the NPPF removed the annual requirement to identify and update a supply of specific deliverable sites where a local planning authority has an adopted plan which is less than 5 years old and which identified at least a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites.

[1] Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provide guidance on how the housing the delivery test measurement is set out and should be read in conjunction with the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book (July 2018).

The presumption in favour of sustainable development may therefore no longer apply in those circumstances. In addition, the new NPPF allows those local planning authorities with emerging local plans[2] to identify and update annually a 4-year housing land supply as opposed to 5-years with a 20% buffer.

In the case of Stevenage, on 22 May 2024 Stevenage adopted plan will be over five years old therefore, paragraph 76 of the NPPF no longer applies. The Council now fall within paragraph 77 of the NPPF in which the housing land supply requirement returns to 5 years.

Stevenage Borough Council achieved 57% of its housing delivery target during the most recent Housing Delivery Test which requires that all of paragraph 79b consequences apply. In 2022 the Council published its first Housing Delivery Action Plan; this current plan should be considered an update on the Councils progress since 2022.

The consequences applied to Stevenage will continue until the subsequent Housing Delivery Test measurement is published. It is worth noting that the Council expected the HDT score to be published for 2022 data in January 2023. Unfortunately, as with all Local Authorities the results were delayed by 11 months taking publication of the results to December 2023.

Following the revised NPPF[3] also published in December 2023, there is a revision to the requirement to identify and update a five year land supply paragraph 76 now states that:

LPAs are not required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision making purposes if the following criteria are met:

a) their adopted plan is less than five years old; and

b) that adopted plan identified at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded.

Therefore, authorities under criteria A and B are not required to continually demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, so effectively have a housing land supply requirement of zero years.

[2] Which have been submitted for examination or reached regulation 18 or regulation 19 stage.
[3] National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 It has long been recognised that the housing supply and failure to build enough housing is a national issue which affects the economy, health, productivity, and wellbeing of individuals and the nation as a whole. As such, the Government has increasingly prioritised housing delivery within planning policy. In February 2017 the Government published the Housing White Paper "Fixing our broken housing market", which proposed a new initiative to measure the performance of local authorities via a Housing Delivery Test. This was taken forward as part of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that was published in December 2023.

1.2 The Stevenage Borough Council has prepared an update to its Housing Delivery Test (HDT) Action 2022. The Action Plan is to provide an overview of housing delivery within the borough. This includes an analysis of housing delivery, barriers to delivery, and actions necessary to increase the delivery of housing in the future. It is a live document that will be monitored and updated regularly.

1.3 As shown with the recent Housing Delivery Test result, between 01 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, Stevenage Borough Council has under-delivered on new housing achieving 57% of the new homes required over this period. Across Hertfordshire a total of 7 LPAs along with Stevenage now fall under the presumption in favour of sustainable development and are required to produce an Action Plan.

Area	Year	Score	Consequence
Stevenage	2022	57%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
Broxbourne	2022	57%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
Dacorum	2022	77%	Buffer
East Herts	2022	125%	None
Hertsmere	2022	69%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
North Herts	2022	118%	None
St Albans	2022	55%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
Watford	2022	73%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
Welwyn Hatfield	2022	57%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan
Three Rivers	2022	46%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development and Action Plan

1.4 The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2022 assessed some of the key issues that were contributing to the under-delivery of new housing. The plan also assessed the challenges facing future delivery. This updated Action Plan still requires consideration within the current and evolving context of the Coronavirus pandemic and associated economic recovery.

1.5 The existing 2022 Plan's effectiveness and progress will continue to be monitored by assessment against future annual Housing Delivery Test results and data in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to considerably boost the supply of new homes and requires local planning authorities to have strategic planning policies that identify the minimum number of homes required over the plan period. Local Plans are also required to include a housing trajectory to illustrate the expected build out rate of housing delivery for each year across the plan period. In accordance with the NPPF, local planning authorities should also identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement as set out in their adopted Local Plan.

2.2 In order to support the Government's commitment to deliver 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020's, the Council are required to consider a number of documents;

- Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023
- Updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advice;
- Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book (July 2018); and
- Housing Delivery Test: 2018 Measurement Technical note (February 2019).

2.3 The Action Plan has been produced by Stevenage Borough Council's Planning Policy team in conjunction with other key service areas to ensure that it fully reflects how housing delivery is going to be achieved. The preparation of an effective Action Plan follows stepped process with stakeholder engagement running through each stage as follows:

Step 1 – Data gathering on housing delivery

Step 2 – Root Cause Analysis

Step 3 – Action Planning

Step 4 – Implementing actions

Step 5 – Monitoring outcomes

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The PPG Paragraph 050 provides guidance on how local planning authorities may wish to include an analysis of under-delivery. The following considerations were used in the 2022 Action Plan and are used as a guide (but are not limited to) the 2024 update[4]:

Planning Practice Guidance Considerations	Stevenage Borough Council Analysis
Barriers to early commencement after planning permission is granted and whether such sites are delivered within permitted timescales	There is no evidence that there are any significant barriers to early commencement in the Borough.
Barriers to delivery on sites identified as part of the 5-year land supply (such as land banking, scheme viability, affordable housing requirements, pre-commencement conditions, lengthy section 106 negotiations, infrastructure and utilities provision, involvement of statutory consultees etc.)	There is no evidence that there are any significant barriers to delivering sites that have obtained planning permission.
Whether sufficient planning permissions are being granted and whether they are determined within statutory time limits	92% of major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks (unless there was an agreed extension).
Whether the mix of sites identified is proving effective in delivering at the anticipated rate	There is no evidence that the mix of sites approved are adversely affecting delivery.
Whether proactive pre-planning application discussions are taking place to speed up determination periods	The council offers a pre-application (pre-app) service for developers whereby applicants can submit proposals and planning officers can offer advice on how policies will be applied to proposals, raise any issues that may arise and advise on the level of information that would be required as part of a formal planning application. There is no evidence to suggest that pre-app discussion require any further intervention.

[4] Paragraph: 050 Reference ID: 68-050-20190722

Planning Practice Guidance Considerations	Stevenage Borough Council Analysis
The level of ongoing engagement with key stakeholders (for example, landowners, developers, utility providers and statutory consultees), to identify more land and encourage an increased pace of delivery	The Council continues to work proactively with stakeholders to bring forward and accelerate strategic sites allocated in the proposed Local Plan.
Whether particular issues, such as infrastructure or transport, could be addressed at a strategic level – within the authority, but also with neighbouring and upper tier authorities where applicable	Infrastructure and transport have been addressed at the strategic level in work with HCC and with neighbouring and nearby authorities.

3.0 LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan 2011 – 2031

3.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan was adopted in May 2019. The plan seeks to provide around 7,600 new homes between 2011 and 2031. This can be annualised to give a figure of 380 new homes per year. The plan sets out a comprehensive strategy to support significant growth in and around Stevenage to help meet needs across the market area[5]. To date, the Council have already made progress towards this target. On 01 May 2024, the Council recorded 2,644 new homes had been completed since the start of the plan period. This leaves a residual requirement of 4,956 new homes to be developed up to the end of the plan period 2031.

Affordable housing targets

3.2 The Stevenage Local Plan Policy HO7, requires a 25% affordable housing contribution on new homes on previously developed sites and a 30% contribution on new homes elsewhere and that, the affordable housing provided is appropriate to the mix of homes required for the future housing in Stevenage. Policy HO8 requires at least 70% of units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing Team.

3.3 However, on the 24 May 2021, the Government announced its First Home policy through a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) and accompanying changes to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). As a result, these changes came into effect on the 28 June 2021.

3.4 First Homes are designed to support local first time buyers onto the property ladder, by offering homes at a discount to the market price and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

3.5 The latest Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA) Part II update was carried out in 2023. To reflect the current housing needs across Stevenage Borough Council the following tenure mix for affordable housing under Policy HO7 of the Local Plan 2011 – 2031 will be:

- 25% First Homes
- 70% Rent
- 5% the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing team

3.6 In the event of First Homes being provided as a component of any affordable housing provision this preferred tenure split will supersede that published within the https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan.

[5] Policy SP7: High Quality Homes

4.0 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS / STRATEGIES AND COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

4.1 The Council have a number of overlapping plans and strategies in place that prioritise regeneration and renewal in Stevenage. These measures all have the full support of local leadership teams and Councillors:

- Accelerating Housing
- Town Deal
- Area Action Plan – Station Gateway
- Future Town, Future Transport Strategy
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

4.2 The Council has recently adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) linked to the Local Plan 2011 – 2031. These will provide support for new developments prior to submitting an application:

- Impact of Development on Biodiversity
- Developer Contributions
- Parking Provisions and Sustainable Transport
- Stevenage Design Guide

4.3 The Council recognises that the population forecast in Stevenage indicate a substantial increase in the older population during the period 2022-2031. In line with these forecasts the council is currently progressing / updating:

- Housing for Older People's Strategy

This includes but not limited to:

- Development of Stock Condition Survey for both public and private housing
- Collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council Adult care services, Stevenage Extra Care and Social Care Housing Development teams.
- A cross departmental approach to establish a Housing for Older People Strategy Action Plan.

CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

4.4 The Council's updated Corporate Plan, Future Town Future Council strategic priority (FTFC) 2023/24 sets out the Council's ambitions for Stevenage.

4.5 The key priorities most relevant to housing delivery are to ensure that our continued significant investment (£24.6 million) in our social housing stock in 2023/24 is clear, the FTFC priority of 'More Social and Affordable Housing' has been amended to include a focus on the provision of good quality homes. Therefore, in 2023/24, 'More Social and Affordable Housing' has been amended to include 'Good Quality'.

5.0 HOUSING DELIVERY TEST 2022 RESULTS

5.1 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results were published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 22 December 2024.

Stevenage Borough Council's results for the last three Housing Delivery Tests are as follows:

HDT	No. of homes required	No. of homes delivered	Score	Consequence
2019/20	1,094	702	64%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
2020/21	982	775	79%	Buffer in addition to preparing an action plan
2021/22	982	563	57%	Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Table 4 – HDT Test Results 2021– 2022

5.2 The results of the Housing Delivery Tests dictate that although there is an adjustment for 2020/21 changes are still required to address under delivery of housing in the Borough. As shown within the recent Housing Delivery Test result in Table 2, from 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2022, the Council has under-delivered on new housing achieving 57% of the required supply. Therefore, the Council must now:

1) Prepare an Action Plan showing how it will increase housing supply;
2) Include a 20% buffer in its 5-year housing supply calculations
3) Presumption in favour of sustainable development

5.3 This Housing Delivery Test Action Plan Update 2024 assesses some of the key issues that have contributed to an under-delivery of new housing as well as the challenges facing future delivery.

6.0 ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

6.1 During the 2022 Action Plan process there were several points which summarised the root causes for local housing delivery falling short of government targets. These points have been updated to reflect the latest position as of May 2024:

- The Council still relies on a number of relatively large strategic sites to meet its housing requirements.
- Larger sites still require longer lead in times to progress and agree planning obligations., particularly if planned to a high standard.
- The long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rate of housing delivery and resultant economic uncertainty during 2020-2022 resulted in some developers being more cautious in progressing schemes during this period.
- Completions in the borough by private developers means the Council need to assist developers and rely on developers build out rates to align with the Stevenage housing targets rather than what suits the market demand.
- Affordability of dwellings for purchase relative to Stevenage's average income in 2020-2022.
- The housing market was entering a period of uncertainty during 2022 as interest rates were set to rise. A rise which would not only impact mortgaged properties. Typically, as interest rates rise then the house price would fall to maintain an even level of monthly outlay but also affecting the number of people wishing to purchase a property during uncertain times. This meant developers build out rates were focused on the market as opposed to the Councils housing targets. However, over the period late 2022 to the end of 2024, the Office for Budget Responsibility, who provide independent economic forecasts on behalf of the government, project a drop in house prices of 9%.

UPDATED ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF EXTERNAL IMPACTS

6.2 A professional consultant team roundtable review highlighted, borne out by both anecdotal and empirical evidence on site that 2022 – 2023 brings added pressures of larger than expected build price inflation which is reported to be at 10 – 15%.

6.3 Evidence from monitoring supply chains, interviewing contractors and witnessing activity on site corroborates the difficulties faced by contractors in delivering fixed price contracts. Indeed, one main contractor has issued stark contractual warnings that they are in financial difficulty, with the possibility of liquidation.

6.4 In response to the above pressures and as an employer of contractor services and development partner for a proportion of newbuild development activity in the town we have adopted a flexible partnering approach to contracting that includes a review of and bespoke payment terms for contracts. This helped to ensure contractor liquidity and supply chain certainty.

6.5 A major risk factor to timely delivery of new housing projects is the industry hiatus and uncertainty in meeting the Government important high rise building regulations and the mechanics of the gateway approval process that traditional forms of contracting need to adjust to. Whilst local Building Control teams and Housing professionals are working to meet these important demands, we had witnessed a localised delay of 12 months on key projects starting on site that deliver 98 new homes.

6.6 As a result, delivery continue to be be supported by a more pragmatic approach to contracting, and joint ventures that allow for an element of profit share. In this way build price inflation can be countered by corresponding rises in sale revenue that can be shared giving a more balanced distribution of risk and reward. Additional actions are as follows:

- Longer programmes for delivery are being designed for new schemes with an in built 25% (4 month) extension to what would have been a normal 16-month programme. This is now at 20 months.
- Extensions of time are being granted on existing contracts.
- Variable supplies of quality internal and external finishes are being accepted as substitutes from original specifications.
- Schemes that are delivered through Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) are also being investigated & piloted. Evidence: Oaks Cross modular scheme of 11 x 1 bed bungalows completed in September 2022.

6.7 It is clear the pandemic impacted the construction industry affecting not only the progress of large strategic sites but also current housing commitments in general due to continued construction industry disruption.

Planning decision performance

Planning Application Category	Completion target	% determined in 2021/22	On target?
Major	60 % in 13 weeks	92%	Yes
Minor	65% in 8 weeks	90%	Yes
Other	80% in 8 weeks	90%	Yes

Table 7 - Source: Stevenage Borough Council, 2022

6.8 Stevenage Borough Council has a good track record of progressing planning applications. The Council has been determining applications for housing with a high level being granted during 2020 and March 2021. More recently, during April 2021 – March 2022 the Council granted 1,801 new net gain housing units.

6.9 Stevenage Borough Council has a good track record of processing planning applications within the required time frames. In the monitoring period 2021 – 2022, 92% of major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks (unless there was an agreed extension). The national average is 60% therefore; the Council is working 32% above national set targets.

7.0 BEST PRACTICE GUIDES

WHAT CAN LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES REVIEW AS PART OF THE ACTION PLAN?

7.1 The action plan sets out key information relating to the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan and how Stevenage Borough Council are committed to identify ways to support housing delivery in the Borough.

THE PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE

7.2 The Planning Advisory Service[6] (PAS) has published guidance to help support local authorities prepare an effective Housing Delivery Test Action Plan. PAS highlight the importance of looking backwards as a starting point in order to understand the issues that have affected housing supply over the last three years and to look forward to potential issues affecting future delivery. The guidance recommends authorities produce plans to look beyond planning and engage with stakeholders to understand how they can affect housing delivery and what issues or barriers they face when progressing with proposals for new housing development. For effective action planning, the guidance recommends that authorities consider both short-term and medium and longer-term remediation measures.

8.0 HOUSING SUPPLY AND DELIVERY CHALLENGES

8.1 This section of the Action Plan considers the housing supply and delivery challenges.

8.2 There are a number of factors that can impact building new homes some of which fall out of the scope of the local authority.

SECONDARY LEGISLATION

8.3 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain(BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better quality natural habitat than there was before development[7].

8.4 New research from national green space management charity, the Land Trust, in partnership with the Land Promoters & Developer Federation (LPDF) and the Home Builders Federation (HBF) has found that despite the challenges it presents, 95% of respondents support the launch of BNG regulations, with only 5% in opposition.

However, (69%) of respondents are concerned that BNG requirements may impact the overall viability of a site, with a further 48% concerned about the cost to the developer[8]. This may present a new challenge to the delivery of housing.

[6] Planning Advisory Service 'Housing Delivery Test Preparing Effective Action Plans' (June 2020)
[7] Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[8] Delivering-mandatory-biodiversity-net-gain-2024-1.pdf (thelandtrust.org.uk)

8.5 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Regulation made changes to the use class system in England in September 2020. The regulation created a new broad 'Commercial, business and service' use class (Class E) to incorporate previous use classes for shops, financial and professional services, offices, restaurants and cafes. As a result, expanded the type of businesses and service not considered to be development and therefore does not require planning permission.

8.6 More recently, permitted development rights have been extended to allow a change of use class from E use to residential. Consequently, could have a detrimental impact on commercial uses in Stevenage as residential land values lean more favourably to residential. As with many local authorities Stevenage could see a rise in the number of new net dwellings over the coming years having a similar affect to the office to residential change back in 2016 which saw the loss of a large number of office space and gain in residential units.

8.7 In a response to national changes to widen the scope of changes of certain use classes to residential development to support vacant and derelict buildings for housing the Council has reviewed the existing Article 4 Direction across specific employment areas in the borough. The Directions require planning permission to be sought for changes of use from E(g)(i) (offices) and E(g)(iii) (light industrial) to C3 (dwelling houses) within Gunnels Wood and Pin Green. The principal aim is to protect employment uses within the designated Employment Areas[9].

8.8 Recent government figures show nationally planning application submissions in 2023 plunged to a record low. There was an 11.7 per cent fall in the number of planning applications submitted to English local planning authorities in the year to December 2023, the stats released 07 March 2024 by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) reveal. This is another challenge which may affect not only Stevenage but other local authorities housing delivery over the coming years.

OPTIMISING SITE DENSITIES

8.9 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order introduced permanent permitted development rights in August 2020 to allow for the construction of additional storeys on free standing blocks and on buildings in a terrace that are houses or in certain commercial uses, and in mixed uses with an element of housing, to create additional self-contained homes. In addition to a new right added in August 2020 for demolition of single detached building for office, research & development, industrial process or free standing purpose built block of flats and replacement by an individual detached block of flats[10].

8.10 One of the key challenges within Stevenage is the limited availability of land for new housing other than sites allocated in the Local Plan. Therefore, to meet the borough's housing targets it is crucial to ensure that land is used efficiently, and the number of homes delivered on sites is maximised. In line with this, the Local Plan housing policies support the optimisation of site densities in specific areas and the Council would expect to see more properties coming forward for additional self-contained housing development.

[9] https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/article-4-directions

[10] The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)

INNOVATIVE HOUSING DELIVERY

8.11 The Local Plan seek to support innovative methods of housing delivery such as Build to Rent to help boost housing supply and provide choice to meet different housing needs. Build to Rent is defined by the NPPF[11] Glossary as:

Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

The Council will continue to support the delivery of Build to Rent for bringing forward affordable housing options.

WHAT ELSE CAN THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY DO TO BOOST DELIVERY?

Accelerated Housing

8.12 The Hertfordshire Authorities (with the support of Hertfordshire County Council) continue to work together to identify support that delivery Hertfordshire's housing pipeline needs. The evidence gathered to date identifies a combination of works required to unblock delivery and overcome market failure throughout the County[12]. These include measures such as;

- Site assembly.
- Site remediation.
- Fund uplifts in affordable housing delivery (where viability issues are resulting in low or non-existent levels of affordable housing being delivered).
- Builds on the potential to maximise the contribution of publicly owned land for the delivery of affordable housing.

Most relevant to Stevenage are;

- Site remediation.
- Infrastructure.
- Land / site assembly.
- Affordable delivery.

[11] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a8334c03bd75b81e2329ac4/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf

[12] Hertfordshire Growth Board Growth and Housing Delivery Prospectus 2021 August 2021 v.4

9.0 ACTIONS

9.1 Stevenage Borough Council's last action plan identified a number of actions which are carried forward. These actions are reviewed in the table below:

	Action	*Progress / Review*	
9.1	Determining applications	Ensure planning applications and permissions continue to be determined in a timely manner.	Ongoing
9.2	Collaboration	Proactively work with developers to design and bring forward the strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan whilst promoting schemes on its own land and windfall sites.	Ongoing
9.3	Brownfield Register	Maintain and update the Brownfield Land Register	Ongoing annually
9.4	High Quality Homes	Continue to provide good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need in a continued commitment to build over 7,600 new Council home by 2031.	Ongoing
9.5	First Homes	28 June 2021, First Home policy came into effect and accompanying changes to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	Position Statement published May 2024
9.6	First Homes	First Homes design and eligibility	Refer to Page 9 HDT action plan update May 2024 and First Homes Position Statement May 2024.
9.7	First Homes Policy	Prepare First Homes Position Statement	May 2024
9.8	North East Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).	Spatial Development Strategy to cover five local authority areas: Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield and Broxbourne. Plans the wider sub-region to 2050.	Stage 1 Baseline produced 2022/23 Vision document Summer / Autumn 2024 Stage 2 Settlement Study from 2024/25

	Action	*Progress / Review*	
9.9	Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA) Volume II 2016	In collaboration with North Herts the Council plans to commission an update to the SHMA II 2016.	SHMA Part II updated November 2023
9.10	Small site contribution	Review evidence on small site completions based on historic housing delivery	Continues to be monitored annually
9.11	Council built housing	Progressing delivery of three local plan housing sites	See Appendix A update
9.12	Local Plan Review	As part of the local plan review the Council has identified a number of sites which do not have planning permission therefore, these sites will form part of the 2024 viability test	Ongoing
9.13	Monitoring	Five-Year Land supply update	Due to delayed HDT publication the Council published a Five Year Land supply update May 2024

10.0 NEXT STEPS

10.1 The Action Plan needs to be considered within the current and evolving context of the Coronavirus pandemic and associated economic recovery. The Plan's effectiveness and progress will be monitored by assessment against future annual Housing Delivery Test results.

10.2 The actions set out above will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Council will continue to monitor the Five-Year Land Supply and maintain a robust evidence base to support increase housing delivery across the borough.

Appendix A: Progress at Local Plan sites

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update July 2022
HO1/1	Bedwell Crescent neighbourhood centre	45	Flood Risk Assessment required for any development of 1 hectare or more. The Council will continue to work with developers to evidence the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/2	Bragbury End sports ground car park	8	Permission granted 21/00847/FP for 5 dwellings. Currently under construction.
HO1/3	Burwell Road neighbourhood centre	20	Permission granted 17/00586/FPM for 15 dwellings completed 2020. Permission granted for a further 20 dwellings 22/00437/FPM.
HO1/4	Dunn Close garage court	21	This site is owned by Stevenage Borough Council. Permission for 21 units 21/00944/FPM currently under construction.
HO1/5	Ex-play centre, Scarborough Avenue	15	Permission completed 19/00136/FPM for 29 dwellings in 2023.
HO1/6	Former Pin Green school playing field	42	The site is a vacant, greenfield site in public ownership of Hertfordshire County Council. The site has not received planning permission and does not currently have a planning application reference. The site is owned by Hertfordshire County Council who has confirmed their intention to bring a scheme forward to meet the service needs of their Adult Care Services Directorate.
HO1/7	Fry Road day nursery	6	The Council will continue to work with developers to evidence the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update July 2022
HO1/8	Ken Brown car showroom	36	Investigate whether previous uses have led to any contamination of site. The Council will continue to work with developers to evident the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/9	Kenilworth neighbourhood centre	65	Permission granted 18/00398/FPM for 169 dwellings. The site is due to complete in June 2024.
HO1/10	Land at Eliot Road	16	Permission granted 20/00053/FPM for13no Affordable semi-detached and terraced dwellings completed March 2022
HO1/11	Land West of North Road (Rugby Club)	149	Developers submitted a pre-application in January 2020 which the LPS responded positively to in spring 2020. Development requires the relocation of the existing Rugby Club. The developers have confirmed that a replacement site has been secured.
HO1/12	Marymead neighbourhood centre	60	The Council will continue to work with developers to evidence the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/13	Scout hut, Drakes Drive	18	The Council will continue to work with developers to evidence the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/14	Shephall Centre and adj. amenity land	34	The Council will continue to work with developers to evidence the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/15	Shephall View	25	This site is owned by Stevenage Borough Council. Application submitted for a 57-unit scheme subject to a s106 agreement Planning Reference 22/00965/FPM.

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update July 2022
HO1/16	The Glebe neighbourhood centre	35	The Council continue to work with developers to evident the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/17	The Hyde neighbourhood centre	50	The Council continue to work with developers to evident the deliverability of this site over the forthcoming year.
HO1/18	The Oval neighbourhood centre	275	Planning application submitted 23/00954/FPM for 349 dwellings.
HO2	Stevenage West	1350	The Council has received an application for development of land to the West of Stevenage from Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon Homes. The application is for 1,500 new homes. Hybrid Application 21/00356 submitted in April 2021 for 390 homes in detail and up to 1,110 in outline. Awaiting completion of the S.106 agreement.
HO3	North of Stevenage	800	Completion of the S.106 agreement for a new neighbourhood comprising of 800 dwellings. 23/00526/RMM approved for 243 units is currently under construction. A further 442 dwellings reference 23/00890/RMM approved in April 2024. Phase 1D Reserved Matters approval 22/00806/RMM approved 115 Units and permission issued 30th Jan 2024.
HO4	South East of Stevenage	550	This site is in two parts. The land to the south of the A602 is the larger of the two sites and is relatively unconstrained. This site will accommodate around 400 of the new dwellings. The site to the north will accommodate the remaining 150 homes. The Council continues to work with developers to evident the deliverability.

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update July 2022
SG1	Town Centre	2000	The first phase of the 526 new homes on the Former Matalan site permission reference 20/00643/RMM is under construction. 143 homes are expected to be ready in spring 2025. Permission granted for 250 new homes on the Former BHS site 19/00647/FPM. Demolition has been completed. It is anticipated dwellings will be delivered by the end of the five year period. 85 - 103 Queensway Planning reference 18/00268/FPM for 94 units completed June 2022. SG1 Development Site Planning reference 19/00743/FPM for 1864 dwellings approved 30 May 2023. 58 - 90 Queensway and Forum Chambers Planning reference 23/00502/FPM for 74 Units granted subject to completion of S.106 agreement. Unit 11 The Forum Planning reference 21/01002/FPM for 224 units approved 25 October 2022.

Appendix B

Update on progress at other sites not in Local Plan

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update and Actions as at July 2022
19/00123/FPM	Land West of the A1(M) and South of Todd's Green	133	133 dwellings completed March 2023.
19/00647/FPM	Land West of Lytton Way	576	Planning permission granted in 2022 following an Appeal. Site is currently under construction.
21/01204/FPM	Land adj to 108 Oaks Cross	11	11 dwellings complete September 2022.
19/00485/FPM	Land At Webb Rise	85	85 dwellings completed September 2022.
20/00624/FPM	North Park Corner of Six Hills Way and London Road	64	Permission granted for 64 dwellings.
21/00971/FPM	Courtlands, Todds Green	17	Site is currently under construction.
19/00136/FPM	145 Scarborough Avenue	29	29 dwellings completed December 2023.
18/00740/FPM	12 North Road	21	21 dwellings complete February 2022.
24/00064/FPM	18-24 Ellis Avenue	11	11 dwellings pending decision.
24/00058/FPM	Land at Redcar Drive	38	Planning permission for 38 dwellings. Pending decision.

Reference	Location	Indicative Net Dwelling no.	Progress Update and Actions as at July 2022
24/00047/FPM	Walpole Court (Kenilworth Phase 2)	24	Planning permission for 24 dwellings. Pending decision.
21/01283/FPM	North Car Park, Corner of Six Hills Way and London Road	94	Planning permission granted subject to completion of S.106 agreement.
22/00377/FPM	Stewart House, Primett Road	21	Planning permission granted subject to completion of S.106 agreement.