



UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk – Holly Goring

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO A MEETING OF
UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
in
The Council Chamber, Civic Centre
on
Monday 31st July 2017 at 7pm**

AGENDA

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda. Should any Member consider that they require a dispensation in relation to any prejudicial interest that they may have, they are asked to make a written application to the Clerk well in advance of the meeting.

Notice should be given at this part of the meeting of any intended declaration. The nature of the interest should then be declared later at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE MAYOR'S DISCRETION

3.0. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

4.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5.0 MINUTES

5.1 To **RESOLVE** that the minutes of the meetings of Full Council on 19th June 2017 and 19th July 2017 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

5.2 Action list – For information only
(Attached)

6.0 COMMITTEE MINUTES

6.1 To note the acts and proceedings of the following committee meetings:-

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|
| (a) | Plans Committees | 3 rd July and 24 th July 2017 |
| (b) | Environment and Leisure Committee | 10 th July 2017 |
| (c) | General Purposes Committee | 17 th July 2017 |

7.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) The Uckfield Town Centre Regeneration Joint Committee
(Nothing to report at this time)
- (ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
(Nothing to report at this time)
- (iii) Gatwick Airport Consultation Group
(Nothing to report at this time)

8.0 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- (i) Civic Centre Working Group
(to be reported under confidential business)
- (ii) Dementia Friendly Working Group – Uckfield Dementia Forum
(Attached)
- (iii) Uckfield Events Working Group
(Attached)

9.0 QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2017-18
(to follow)

10.0 TO CONSIDER WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-20
(Attached)

11.0 TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS
(Attached)

12.0 SIGNING OF GRAVE CERTIFICATES AND TO NOTE TRANSFERS OF DEEDS OF GRANT

13.0 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED
None

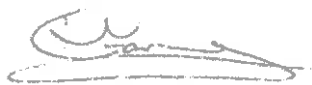
14.0 TOWN CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

15.0 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

16.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

To consider whether to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) during consideration of the following confidential business to be conducted:-

- 16.1 Update from Civic Centre Working Group
(to follow)
- 16.2 Update on the installation of a new CCTV system
(to follow)



Town Clerk
25th July 2017

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

ACTION LIST – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Full Council

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>FC.46.08.16</u>	To consider whether the Town Council should instruct a <u>Town Crier</u> Members subsequently RESOLVED to appoint a Town Crier on a voluntary basis for the purpose of communicating specific events within the town, and the Town Clerk be authorised to undertake the necessary requirements for advertising this position.	22.08.16	HG/CW	Recruitment process will commence shortly.
<u>FC.103.02.17</u>	12.0 To consider the funding of Speed Traffic Surveys Subject to clarification of costings, members RESOLVED to contribute to the funding of speed surveys in: - Eastbourne Road x 1; - Church Street x 1; - London Road (Ringles Cross) x 2; - Framfield Road x 1.	20.02.17	HG	Speed surveys have been undertaken at Ringles Cross. The data is currently being analysed. Further speed surveys to be arranged shortly.
<u>FC.105.02.17</u>	14.0 To sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve and West Park Local Nature Reserve Members RESOLVED to sign and seal the byelaws for Hempstead Meadows and West Park Local Nature Reserves.	20.02.17	CW	The byelaws have been sent to DEFRA as per procedure. In progress.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>FC.108.02.17</u>	20.2 To consider options (in principle) for a new CCTV system in Uckfield Town Centre Members reviewed the options available and RESOLVED to enter into the Sussex CCTV Partnership and install the latest modern camera technology as part of this review.	20.02.17	HG/CW	Liaison continues with BT Redcare and Sussex Police.
<u>FC.21.06.17</u>	7.0(ii) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Members subsequently RESOLVED to approve the decision of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to commission Action in Rural Sussex to support the group over the next 12 months and produce a robust Neighbourhood Plan for Uckfield.	19.06.17	HG	The Town Clerk and Chairman of the Steering Group have informed AIRS and a contract agreement has been drawn up accordingly. NFA.
<u>FC.22.06.17</u> <u>FC.23.06.17</u>	9.0 To consider the Annual Governance Statement for the Year ending 31 st March 2017 Members RESOLVED to approve the process undertaken by the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk to rectify the procedure for approving the Annual Governance Statement and draft Annual Return, in line with previous External Audit advice. Members reviewed the content of this report and RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2016/17, and authorise the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign and date this statement on behalf of the Council.	19.06.17	HG	The Annual Governance Statement was signed and dated by the Mayor and Town Clerk. NFA.
<u>FC.24.06.17</u>	10.0 To consider the Town Council's Draft Annual Return and Financial Statements for the Year ending 31 st March 2017 Members RESOLVED to approve the draft annual return and Financial statements for the year ending 31 st March 2017, and authorise for the Mayor to sign and date this return on behalf of the Council.	19.06.17	HG	The Draft Annual Return was signed and dated by the Mayor, and has since been published on the Town Council website for consideration by the public.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>FC.26.06.17</u>	12.0 To appoint a representative to the 'Wealden Works' Executive Committee Members RESOLVED to appoint Councillor P.Sparks as the Town Council's representative on the Wealden Works Executive Committee and for Councillor H. Firth to be appointed as a substitute, in his absence.	19.06.17	HG	Details of the new representative(s) were passed to Wealden Works for their information. NFA
<u>FC.27.06.17</u>	13.0 To consider signing up to the <u>East Sussex Against Scams Partnership (ESASP) Charter</u> Members RESOLVED to sign up to the East Sussex Against Scams Partnership Charter, and support this initiative using various methods of communication.	19.06.17	HG	The Town Clerk made contact to advise that the Town Council wished to sign up to the Charter. Information was circulated at the Big Day Out and information continues to be shared about scams, particularly those on the doorstep. NFA for Full Council other than continue to raise awareness.
<u>FC.28.06.17</u>	14.0 To consider a request for financial support from Uckfield Community Technology College's Young People's Counselling Service Members RESOLVED to decline the request for funding on this occasion, and for the College to be advised that any applications for grant funding would need to be processed through the annual community grants programme.	19.06.17	HG	Feedback was provided to UCTC following the meeting. NFA.

Resolution No.	Details	Date Raised	Action By	Date Complete
<u>FC.29.06.17</u>	<p>15.0 To provide input into Wealden District Councils Review of Parking Issues in Uckfield Town.</p> <p>Members RESOLVED to accept the invitation to provide information to Wealden District Council as part of their parking review, and for the Town Clerk to send a letter to Uckfield District Councillors to request that they proactively contribute residents' views from their local areas.</p>	19.06.17	HG	<p>Feedback from the item at Full Council was reported to Wealden District Council to be considered as part of their parking review.</p> <p>Discussions continue with key partner agencies.</p>

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 31st July 2017

Agenda Item 8.0 (ii)

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS: UCKFIELD DEMENTIA FORUM

The Uckfield Dementia Forum met on Monday 17th July at Uckfield Civic Centre.

Attendees received an update from the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance. The Alliance had now helped to set up a Polegate Dementia Forum, which worked in a similar way to the Uckfield Forum.

Activities which took place during Dementia Awareness Week were well received. There were a total of 17 events held across the district during the week, which helped to raise awareness of dementia and how to support those living with dementia. The Information Day at Victoria Pavilion had gone well, with a good number of attendees of different ages, and a couple of attendees who had family members coping with pre-diagnosis. Mrs Dode-Angel and Mrs Scutt (local Dementia Champions) were commended for their presentation to the Uckfield Chamber of Commerce, which was particularly well received. Members felt that they had learnt a great deal in a short space of time. Freedom Leisure had also held a number of events offering tours around the leisure centre(s) to enable visitors to become familiar with their surroundings.

The Wealden Dementia Action Alliance would be creating a bulletin to circulate wider with information on the work of the forums, events and activities. Three more Dementia Friendly film screenings had also been booked at Hailsham Pavilion over the next few months.

Uckfield Dementia Forum would be arranging Dementia Friends awareness sessions shortly for local businesses and members of the public within Uckfield. These would be booked at a range of times (late afternoon and evening) and held across a range of easy to access venues in Uckfield. These would be taking place in September, after the holidays..

The Forum agreed that it would be good to hold a One Year Celebration of the Forum. The Forum will have been in existence 12 months in November 2017. Members discussed potential ideas for this celebration and agreed to share ideas, before sharing information amongst the partner agencies.

The next meeting of the Uckfield Dementia Forum is due to take place in October 2017.

Cllr. Paul Sparks

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 31st July 2017

Agenda Item 8.0 (iii)

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM FULL COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS: 'UCKFIELD EVENTS WORKING GROUP' (CELEBRATE UCKFIELD)

The working group has met on a much more frequent basis since the last report, as a result of carrying out detailed preparations in the run up to the event 'Weald on the Field' on Saturday 5th August. The working group met on 20th June, 12th July and 24th July to discuss logistics, and work through an action plan of tasks for the event.

'Celebrate Uckfield' is the working group's new name for 2017 onwards and has now launched on social media, with new branding. Social media accounts are being used to help share key information about Uckfield, in terms of the various events and activities taking place. The account is also being used to share key information about events organised by the group such as 'Weald on the Field' and 'Uckfield Revival.'

Recent meetings have focused on the detailed tasks that require completion in the run up to the day. This has included looking at tasks focused on marketing, communication, entertainment, stalls, facilities, and legalities.

The line-up of live music and entertainment has been confirmed for the event, along with the list of stallholders selling local produce, street food, drink and crafts. A fantastic selection of businesses are involved and we look forward to working with everyone.

Formal working group meetings will be replaced with short task based briefings in the next few days whilst the working group focus on the event.

Cllr. Donna French

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 31st July 2017

Agenda item 9.0

QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE ON UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PRIORITIES FOR 2017-18

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a reminder to both members and members of the public, of the Town Council's Annual Plan for 2017-18. These priorities consist of initiatives which are often additional to the day to day responsibilities of the Town Council, but will encourage further partnership working and be of benefit to the town and its residents.
- 1.2 It is often common for organisations to spend time producing plans or lists of priorities, but not review progress until the end of the year.
- 1.3 With this paper, the Town Clerk intends to provide a regular update to members, of the progress being made with our partners to deliver these priorities. This report will be presented to Full Council on a quarterly basis at the end of each quarter (July, October, January and April).

2.0 Quarterly Progress report

- 2.1 As you can see from appendix B, a simple template for reporting progress has been created. This could be developed further to identify key milestones.
- 2.2 As we are only at the end of quarter one, it is unlikely that much progress will have been made at this point within the year, but work should start to take shape in the next few weeks and months to enable us to achieve these priorities by year end.

3.0 Quarter 1 – Progress Update

- 3.1 At present, just over three quarters of the priorities are on schedule for delivery. The remaining priorities have, in general, made some progress, but should see progress over the next few weeks/months.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to review the template used to report on quarterly progress, and note the work undertaken to date.

Appendices: Appendix A – Annual Plan for 2017-18
 Appendix B - Quarterly Progress Report Template and quarter one information.

Contact Officer: Holly Goring







APPENDIX A – Our Annual Plan for 2017-18







Our Annual Plan 2017-18



PEOPLE	PLACE
1. Support local groups and charities through the provision of community grant funding	6. Implement the Town Council's litter bin policy
2. Support initiatives within the town to encourage good health and wellbeing amongst our residents, and an increased awareness of health conditions	7. Work with our partner agencies to lobby for a reduction in the amount of litter on public highways
3. Work with local businesses and organisations to create a Dementia Friendly town, starting with the creation of an Uckfield Forum	8. Implement improvements to the operation of CCTV in Uckfield Town Centre
4. Increase signposting of existing facilities and explore the provision of additional public conveniences	9. Work with our partner agencies to continue to educate school pupils about road safety
5. Support an increase in the provision of events and activities for the town	10. Work with partner agencies to identify further improvements to accessibility and safety on our pavements and highways
	11. Promote the town's green spaces and, allotments to encourage greater leisure and recreation
PROVISION	
12. Improve communication and engagement with residents through increased use of noticeboards and social media	
13. Increase communication with local community groups to enable greater sharing of information and support	
14. Strengthen partnership opportunities with local service providers to ensure delivery of good quality services to our residents	

APPENDIX B – Quarterly Progress Report Template and Q1 Update

Our Annual Plan 2017-18		Quarter 1 – Progress Update		Notes
Priority	Status			
1.Support local groups and charities through the provision of community grant funding.				The application process for the Town Council's 2018-19 Community grants programme has commenced with a deadline of Friday 25 th August by which applications need to be submitted. Those who have expressed an interest and those who have previously applied have been contacted. Further information has been advertised within Uckfield Matters and on the Town Council website.
2. Support initiatives within the town to encourage good health and wellbeing amongst our residents and an increased awareness of health conditions.				The Town Council continues to support the health of its residents and is looking to work with partner agencies to better promote the facilities available across the town which can improve health and wellbeing.
3.Work with local businesses and organisations to create a Dementia Friendly town, starting with the creation of the Uckfield Forum.				The Uckfield Dementia Forum is now well underway and has started to engage with local businesses within the town, to help spread awareness about dementia and how to support people living with dementia. A wide range of organisations and businesses are involved with the Forum, and Dementia Friends awareness sessions will be held for the public and businesses in September.
4. Increase signposting of existing facilities and explore the provision of additional public conveniences.				Information has been shared about the town's community toilet scheme – members of the public are able to access facilities at Costa Coffee, Thyme for Food & Friends and Uckfield Civic Centre (posters were placed in shop windows and on social media). Feedback was also provided earlier in the year to partner agencies, to recommend that public conveniences be considered in future improvement plans for the town.
5.Support an increase in the provision of events and activities for the town				Events – Weald on the Field and Uckfield Revival are in the planning process, with Weald on the Field (a day festival selling local produce, street food, drink and crafts) taking place on Saturday 5 th August bringing residents into the town and attracting new visitors. The Civic Centre has started to build on its own events programme for the year and has supported a number of fantastic events such as the Uckfield Festival by hosting entertainment throughout the festival period.
6. Implement the Town Council's litter bin policy				The Town Council has implemented the litter bin policy and now refers to this, when enquiries are received.

Our Annual Plan 2017-18 Priority		Quarter 1 – Progress Update		Notes
		Status		
7. Work with our partner agencies to lobby for a reduction in the amount of litter on public highways				No progress has been made on this action to date, but will commence shortly. Grounds staff and Brighter Uckfield, along with members of the public continue to look after and clean our streets, but it is too unsafe for these groups to address the litter which gathers on the public highways (A22 etc).
8. Implement improvements to the operation of CCTV in Uckfield Town Centre				The Town Council is currently liaising with BT Redcare and Sussex Police to arrange for new cameras and transmission software to be installed for Uckfield Town.
9. Work with our partner agencies to continue to educate school pupils about road safety				The Town Council held its annual road safety day on 21 st June, which saw pupils from 11 local primary schools attend and learn about the importance of road safety via interactive tasks and activities. Liaison also continues with local residents' associations to support changes which will encourage road safety in residential areas, and in particular near to schools.
10. Work with our partner agencies to identify further improvements to accessibility and safety on our pavements and highways				The Town Council has provided a comprehensive list of issues on the access corridors leading into the town, to the County Council, to be considered as part of a fourth phase of highway improvements; The Town Council has funded speed surveys in the area of Ringles Cross to help understand the behaviour of vehicles in this area, and the Town Council will shortly be arranging for speed surveys to be undertaken on the other main access corridors leading into the town; The Town Council has also provided a comprehensive list of parking issues within the town, and hotspots to Wealden District Council as part of their parking review.
11. Promote the Town's green spaces and, allotments to encourage greater leisure and recreation.				Limited progress has been made on this action, as it also relates to work undertaken in priority 2. An allotment conference will be taking place for allotment holders in September where this topic will be further discussed.
12. Improve communication with residents through increased use of noticeboards and social media; 13. Increase communication with local community groups to enable greater sharing of information and support; 14. Strengthen partnership opportunities with local service providers to ensure the delivery of good quality services to our residents.				Resource has been secured to assist the Town Council with its communication, and the Civic Centre/Luxfords Restaurant with its marketing. This will result in a more proactive way of working.

Key



= Progress behind schedule



= Completed



= Some progress has been made



= On schedule for completion.

Meeting of Full Council

Monday 31st July 2017

Agenda Item 10.0

TO CONSIDER WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-20

1.0 Summary

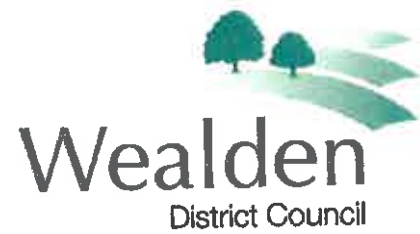
- 1.1 Wealden District Council has prepared its new Housing Strategy, which is currently out for consultation.
- 1.2 The Housing Strategy sets out the council's priorities in relation to housing for the next three years. It also sets out how they plan to deliver those priorities, as well as the process for reporting back on what they have achieved in recent years.
- 1.3 Key partner agencies, community groups and members of the public are invited to comment on the draft strategy. The deadline for responding to the consultation is 14th August 2017.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider Wealden District Council's draft Housing Strategy and advise the Clerk accordingly.

Appendices: Appendix A: Copy of Wealden District Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2017-20

Contact Officer: Holly Goring



Wealden District Council Housing Strategy 2017-2020

Index

- 1. Chapter 1: Strategic Vision**
- 2. Chapter2: Introduction and Background**
- 3. Chapter 3: Increasing Housing Supply**
- 4. Chapter 4: Improving Housing Quality**
- 5. Chapter 5: Providing Housing advice and support for individuals and communities**

CHAPTER 1: Strategic Vision

The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out the Council's priorities which are:

To continue to work with our partners to support:

- Sustainable economic growth and sound financial management
- Engaged, resilient, active communities
- Access to suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities and leisure opportunities.

The three key areas for the Council are:

- Communities
- Environment
- Local Economy

To meet these priorities, the Council will:

- Provide more homes that local people can afford, maintaining a balance between our rural settlements and market towns.
- To contribute positively to people's health, well-being and quality of life by striving to meet housing needs.
- To improve the standard of homes in Wealden and to assist in the creation of a safer and more pleasant environment for all.

We will do this by:

- Increasing housing supply.
- Improving housing quality.
- Providing housing advice and support for individuals and communities.

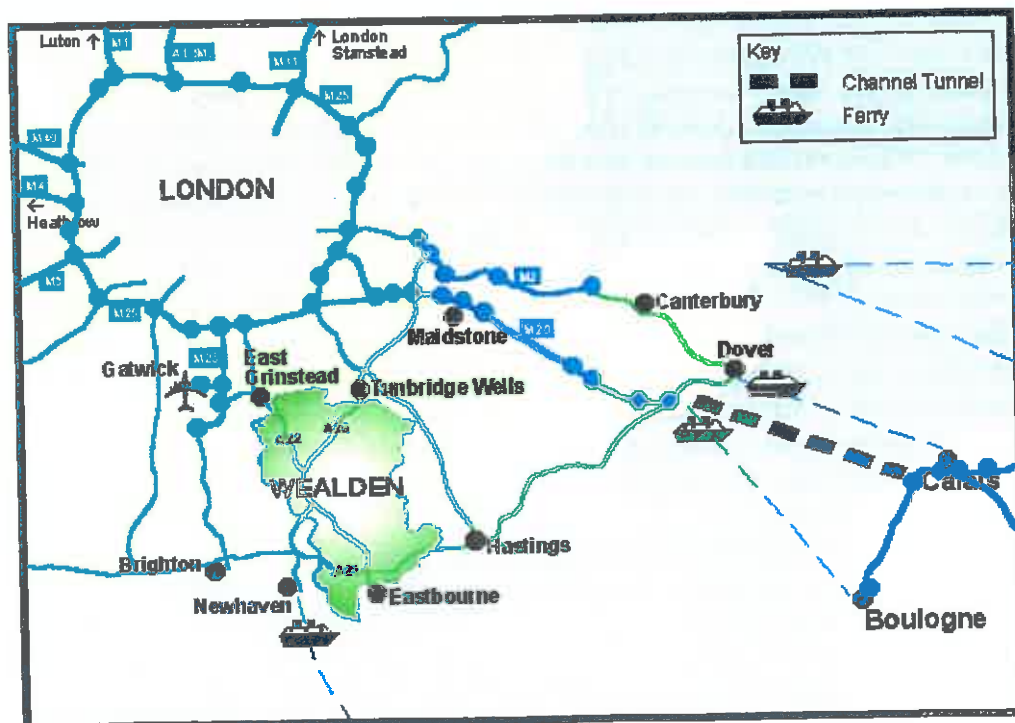
Our strategic objectives continue to be underpinned by a set of key principles:

- **Reducing inequality** - making sure that services are welcoming and responsive to the needs of Wealden's whole community.
- **Improving neighbourhoods** - making sure services contribute to creating safe sustainable communities.
- **Accountability to local people** - making sure that local people are involved in decisions about the services that affect them.
- **Value for money** - making sure services are efficient and provide maximum impact
- **Partnership working** - making sure the Council works with other agencies that can help improve the quality of life residents in the District.



About us

- Wealden lies within East Sussex which consists of 5 districts and boroughs with Wealden being the largest covering 323 square miles.
- Half of Wealden's population live in the five main towns of Polegate, Hailsham, Heathfield, Uckfield and Crowborough. With the remaining population living in the 37 smaller rural parishes in Wealden.
- The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park together cover some 60% of the District. The Ashdown Forest is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation & Special Protection Area.
- In addition Wealden has 34 conservation areas and 32 sites of special scientific interest.
- Wealden has more than 2,500 listed buildings.
- The largest contributor to Wealden's economy is tourism.
- Economic development is predominantly across the coastal strip.
- Wealden has a poorly developed infrastructure and environmental constraints which affect the development of housing and business.
- Wealden has an increasing population as well as an aging population.
- Men in Wealden have a life expectancy of 81.3 years which is the highest across East Sussex and higher than the national figure of 79.3. Women have a life expectancy of 84.7 in Wealden the second highest in East Sussex behind Lewes but above the East Sussex average of 83.9 years and the national figure of 83 years.
- Wealden has lowest crime rate in East Sussex and one of the lowest crime rates in the Country.
- Wealden is the least deprived district in East Sussex.
- Wealden is the most expensive area in East Sussex with the average property price being £322,141 compared to the East Sussex average of £260,428.



CHAPTER 2: Introduction and Background

Our Housing Strategy is now more comprehensive than ever and incorporates the Private Housing Renewal Strategy. Between the last strategy developed in 2014 and this update although our housing priorities remain the same, the sector continues to experience significant change and faces further challenges and uncertainties. There have been national and local policy changes including the Crime and Policing Act 2014, Retaliatory Eviction and Deregulation Act 2015, the conservative Government elected in May 2015, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the decision to leave Europe and resultant new Prime Minister.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduces a number of changes to housing and planning legislation, which will result in some significant impacts on our residents and the services we provide. It includes extending the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants with stock-holding Councils (like ourselves) funding this through the sale of higher value Council homes. The Act also includes charging market rents on Council homes where the tenant is earning over £31,000 (this has recently been stopped indefinitely) and at the same time, local authorities must reduce rents by 1% per year for the next four years. Fixed term tenancies will also become mandatory. The new Act introduces starter homes on new developments for first time buyers to include a 20% discount for under 40 year olds. The emergency budget in July 2015 reduced the benefit cap from £26,000 outside London to £20,000, removed housing benefit for under 21 year olds (subject to exceptions), imposed a benefit freeze for 5 years and introduced a 2 child cap for tax credits and housing benefit.

Background data

Since our last Strategy the 2011 Census results have been released and the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been published.

- The need for affordable housing is 331 dwellings per annum (SHMA 2014).
- Based on the 2011 Census, in Wealden 42% of dwelling stock is owner occupied (outright), approximately 37% is owner occupied (with a mortgage or loan), 11% is private rented, 8% is social rented, 2% are living rent free and 1% is shared ownership. This shows a decrease in owner occupation and a slight rise in social rented, the largest rise being in the private rented sector.
- Wealden has a very small proportion of BME non-white groups within the population (2.5%). The Asian population makes up 1.2% of the population.
- The number of households on the waiting list for housing has remained static since the last strategy at 1012 (as at September 2016). The greatest demand continues to be for one bedroom properties.
- 512 properties became available for letting (including new builds) in 2015/16 of which 271 were council properties and the remaining 241 Housing Association homes.
- The number of Homeless Applications dealt with in 2015/16 was 192 an increasing trend we expect to continue. Homelessness prevention increased to 928 cases in 2015/16.

- Only three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within Wealden fall into the most deprived 20% in England and all three are in Hailsham. The most deprived LSOA is in Hailsham South and West, and the other two are in Hailsham East.
- As at 1st April 2016 there were 5,557 affordable rented properties in Wealden (3000 council and 2557 housing association),
- Wealden is a more expensive district as a whole than local, regional and national comparators. Our median house price to median earnings ratio in 2013 was 10.98, compared to 8.53 for the South East and 6.72 for England. For the lower quartile ratio (the cheapest 25% of house prices and lowest 25% of earners) it is 10.2 compared to 6.45 for England and 8.96 for the South East (SHMA 2014). Meaning that since the last strategy Wealden has become less affordable.
- Wealden continues to have the lowest Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) rate in East Sussex at 0.6% as at January 2017.
- The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2015 reported that the median weekly income for all employees working in Wealden was £321.00, which is lower than the England figure of £430.00, the South East median figure of £447.00 and the East Sussex figure of £342.00. However the median weekly income of Wealden residents is £421.00, higher than the East Sussex average of £388.00 (but still slightly lower than the England and South East figure) and second highest in East Sussex. This figure is inflated when compared to the workplace based figure due to high levels of commuting out of the District.
- 281 households are affected by the housing benefits under occupancy charge for social tenants (June 2016). This figure has remained static since its introduction.
- 20 households were affected by the "Benefit Cap" of £26,000 (for couples or families), but this has risen to 108 households since the cap was reduced to £20,000 in November 2016.
- Migration into and out of Wealden remains fairly balanced with 9,330 moves into the district and 7,150 moves out in 2014. The most active group is those aged 25-44 whereas 15-24 are more likely to move out of Wealden and 45-64 into the district.
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 highlighted that Wealden is not a self-contained Housing Market area but is part of a wider market which includes Mid Sussex, Tunbridge Wells, Rother, Hastings, Lewes, Eastbourne and Brighton & Hove.
- 2011 Census show that of those residents who were economically active (in employment), 42% (21,579) worked within the local authority area. A further 13% (6,556) of residents worked in neighbouring Eastbourne, 8% (4,119) worked in Tunbridge Wells, 6% (3,145) worked in Lewes, 5% (2,375) worked in Mid Sussex, 3% (1,381) worked in Rother, and the remaining 24% worked elsewhere.
- According to the 2011 Census, Wealden has a population of 148,915 people across 62,676 households. These are housed in 65,200 household spaces.
- There are a number of data sets for estimating future population growth. One of the more reliable ones is the 2012 based sub-national population projections published in May 2014 and taking into account 2011 Census data.

It predicts the annual population growth in Wealden to be 921 per year until 2037.

- The 2011 Census has again highlighted that Wealden has the substantially largest proportion of detached stock (45%) compared with the, South East (28%) and England and Wales (23%) comparators. 11.5% of Wealden's stock is flats which is approximately 10% less than the proportion for the other comparator areas. The proportion of semi-detached stock in Wealden is closely comparable to the national level and approximately 3% greater than the proportions for the South East region. It has the lowest proportion of terraced stock (13%), which is 9-11% less than the proportions for the South East and England and Wales.
- Wealden has an extremely low proportion of caravans or other stock types (1.2%) (2011 Census).
- In Wealden, 3 bedroom stock has the highest representation, at 35% of total stock, followed by 28% for 2 bed stock and 20% for 4 bed stock. Only 7.6% of stock has 1 bedroom, with a slightly higher proportion of 8.4% for stock with 5 or more bedrooms (2011 Census).
- Most notably, settlements in the north of the District have higher proportions of larger 4 and 5+ bedroom stock (particularly in Crowborough) and settlements in the south of the District have higher proportions of smaller 2 bedroom stock (particularly Polegate and Hailsham) (2011 Census).
- Properties to buy or rent remain more expensive in north of the district than the south (SHMA 2014).
- Based on Census 2011 data, Wealden has an average SAP rating of 55 for energy efficiency in private sector housing.
- In 2011 Wealden had 8.8% of its LA stock falling below the decent homes standard, significantly above the proportion for Lewes (0.1%) and below the proportion for Eastbourne (17.6%) (Census).
- House prices and private rented properties are much more expensive in the north of the district compared to the south (SHMA 2014).
- 2011 Census highlighted that the largest ethnic group in Wealden is White and Asian or Other Asian at 0.2%, followed by Chinese or Indian at 0.3% then Gypsy and Traveller or Other mixed at 0.2%.
- Market rents in Wealden have increased by 11.2% between 2010 and 2014 (SHMA 2014).
- 56% of private renters are aged 25-44 years (English Stock Condition Survey (ESCS) 2013-14).
- 68% of private rented tenants are satisfied with the repairs carried out by their landlord and 69% are satisfied with the housing services their landlord provided (ESCS 13/14).
- The majority (62%) of private rented sector accommodation was rented to someone who was in full-time employment (ESCS 13/14).
- Stock quality is good within the District. The proportion of households with central heating (a proxy for the availability of modern facilities) is 98% (2011 Census).
- Owner occupiers were more likely to be satisfied with their accommodation (94%) than either social renters (81%) or private renters (82%). Mortgagees

were slightly less likely to be satisfied with their accommodation (92%) than outright owners (95%) (ESCS 13/14).

- Just under a third (29%) of homes in the private rented sector were classified as non-decent according to the decent homes standard. This was considerably higher among particular sub-groups of private renters. For example 43% of households where the Household Reference Person (HRP) was unemployed were classified as non-decent compared with 27% of those where the HRP was in full-time employment. Similarly those in the lowest income group were more likely to be living in non-decent accommodation (35% compared with 24% of the highest income group). Older renters, those living alone, and those who have been resident for ten or more years were also relatively more likely to be living in non-decent homes (ESCS 13/14).
- The housing market is diverse with four broad rental market areas for Local Housing Allowance rates covering the district.

CHAPTER 3: Increasing Housing Supply

Background

There are a number of challenges to increasing housing supply in Wealden:

Environmental:

- Environmental constraints in the North and south of the district. High Weald Area is designated as an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ashdown Forest is designated as a Special Area of Conservation & Special Protection Area and the South Downs National Park.
- The lack of capacity for sewage waste in the south of the district presents challenges for new developments.

Financial:

- Despite being a self-financing Housing organisation there are a number of restrictions placed on how we operate our Business Plan and limit our ability to develop.
- Reducing numbers of housing stock lost through the Right to Buy due to the increased discounts offered by central Government, together with only 30% of receipts ring fenced to build or purchase new stock.
- Potential further loss of stock due to the requirement to sell high value housing or pay a levy to the treasury.
- Wealden has a buoyant housing market with high property prices and land costs.
- Wealden District Council like all Local Authorities with housing stock have a Government imposed Housing Revenue Account cap on the amount that can be borrowed.
- The 1% reduction to rents will affect the Council's ability to borrow and develop new council homes and is also affecting housing associations' development programmes
- Grant rates from the Homes and Community Agency are very low meaning that housing associations need to use their own borrowing capacity to make it viable to build.
- The extension of the Right to Buy to Housing to housing associations will reduce their stock within the district.
- The potential future introduction of "Pay to Stay" meaning council tenants pay higher rents based upon their income without Councils keeping the extra income, adds to stock-holding authorities financial uncertainty.
- As council tenants on benefits switch over to Universal Credit there is less security for the council in terms of rent payments.
- Private rented homes are becoming less affordable due to welfare reform and Local Housing Allowance rates freeze which will continue to impact on the demand for affordable housing.

Other:

- Public opposition to new affordable housing developments continues to be a challenge.

- We need to plan for new housing that meets the needs of an ageing population.
- We need to consider new homes that are adaptable for people that may have physical disability/mobility problems or learning disabilities.
- We need to make sure that developers build the right private homes required in the district, particularly smaller properties.
- The Housing and Planning Act aims to encourage local authorities to approval planning applications through the removal of the new homes bonus if the planning approval is obtained at appeal.
- The Housing White paper 2017 aims to address barriers to delivering homes and to speed up delivery.

Achievements since the Housing Strategy 2014-16

- Make better use of the Council's housing stock including:
 - Using Flexible Fixed Term Tenancies to ensure that Council homes are occupied by those that need them.
 - Reviewing and extending the Tenant Incentive Scheme to provide financial assistance to under occupying households that move to smaller properties.
 - Continuing to carry out tenancy audit visits to ensure that council homes are occupied by the correct people.
 - Ring-fencing 1% of lets a year for social tenants who need to move to take up employment under the government's 'Right to Move' policy.
 - Reviewing our assets to ensure that those that best use is made of our properties.
- Completed a scheme for people with learning disabilities in partnership with ESCC and a Private Register Provider PRP.
- Completed a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- In 2014/15 we built 604 new homes across the district, with 520 in 2015/16..
- In 2014/15 we delivered 193 affordable homes and 172 in 2015/16.
- Delivered 64 new build council homes, purchased 6 properties and a 21 unit scheme for older people.

Actions to increase housing supply?

Planning Policy

- Identifying sites to deliver up to 11,000¹ new homes to be delivered up to 2028 through the Core Strategy.

¹ As at 13 March 2017

- Reducing the affordable housing threshold to 5 (net) on sites of 0.2 hectare or more (from 10 in urban areas and 2 or more dwellings in rural areas) to increase the supply of affordable homes.
- Increasing the percentage of affordable housing on sites of 5 or more units from 30% to 35%.
- Developing an Affordable Supplementary Planning Document once new Local Plan is finalised.

Housing

- Enabling the provision of 52 additional pitch spaces for Gypsies and Travellers through the Local Plan.
- Reviewing assets owned by both the HRA and those owned corporately to identify suitable sites for building new homes.
- Buying back ex-council properties purchased through the Right to Buy as well as other market properties if affordable.
- Continuing to tackle fraud through checks on housing applicants and future work through Housing Partners on current tenants as well as through the tenancy audit visits.
- Deliver subject to planning and finances phase 2 of the new build council homes programme looking to deliver up to 160 properties across 8 sites.
- Explore the potential to deliver phase 3 of the new build council homes programme.
- Delivery of new homes through the Housing and Regeneration Company for “generations rent” and “generation stuck”.

CHAPTER 4: Improving Housing Quality

The Council's Housing service aims to ensure that all properties in the district regardless of tenure or type (including mobile homes) are decent, safe, warm, secure and healthy. Ensuring residents are able to live in decent homes that are suitable for their needs enhances quality of life and impacts on health and wellbeing. We recognise that poor housing has knock on effect in terms of crime, education and health.

There are a number of challenges to improving housing quality in Wealden:

General:

- 21% of home owners over pension age live in non-decent dwellings.
- Wealden has increasing levels of disrepair in the private rented sector this could be due to the growing sector with many landlords taking advantage of the "buy to let market" without understanding the responsibilities of being a landlord.
- More migrant communities are living in unsatisfactory housing and are struggling in some cases to access necessary advice and support.
- Increasing levels of condensation and resulting mould reported due to poor ventilation/lifestyle choices of tenants which is further exacerbated by the welfare changes.
- The ring-fencing for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding which was incorporated in the Better Care Funding and distributed through plans drawn up by the countywide Wellbeing Boards is to be removed which could cause challenges for future funding.
- The cut in social rents by 1% for the next 4 years (until 2019/20) will impact on the available resources to repair and improve council properties.
- The 'Pay to Stay' policy if implemented at some point in the future will not enable local authorities to use the money to improve their stock since the extra money raised will go to the Treasury.
- We are no longer financially able to provide grant funding to help improve properties in the private sector and have to rely on providing loans which households are often reluctant to take up.

Legislative

- The Housing and Planning Act 2016 seeks to drive up housing standards in the private rented sector by introducing enforcement tools and establishment of a rogue landlords and property agents database.
- Retaliatory Eviction & Deregulation Act 2015 – seeks to provide protection for assured shorthold tenants in the private rented sector against retaliatory eviction, where such tenants are suffering from poor or unsafe property conditions. The aim being to rectify the standard of the accommodation.
- We are awaiting the outcome on the recent consultation on extending mandatory licensing to all houses in multiple occupation.

Achievements since the Housing Strategy 2014-16

- Providing a Community and Environmental Budget with £130,564 being allocated in 2014/15 and £100K in 2015/16 (with an additional £9710 made

available). The budget has funded a variety of projects ranging from sports and play facilities, notice boards, parking, community facilities, buggy shelters for Retirement Living Courts, garden improvements and shared equipment for sheltered schemes.

- The capital spend 2014/16 on improvement works to council properties was £7.3million. This included the following works:
- 121 properties received new kitchens.
- 313 properties received new bathrooms.
- 355 properties had new windows and/or replacement doors.
- 293 properties had new boilers installed.
- 87 properties had new insulation and/or insulation upgraded.

We also carried out a lot of other works in the two years such as replacement fencing, footpath repairs, etc.

- Dealt with 223 service requests with regard to property conditions.
- Procured a new responsive repairs contractor for works to council properties.
- The Council continued to run an energy efficiency' programme to help council tenants both in terms of affordable warmth and with fuel cost savings. The programme included the installation of Solar PV and LED lighting on 9 retirement living housing schemes resulting in a reduction of between 50 and 70% electricity consumption in the communal supply. Installation of LED lighting to all communal areas and external lighting in all 100 small blocks of flats.
- Issued 4 licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation falling within the mandatory licensing criteria.
- We completed 2 decent home loans bring our loan capital lent to £105k since 2008.
- We continue to work closely with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service carrying out a number of joint visits particularly to high risk dwellings, i.e. flats over restaurants.
- The Council continues to fund adaptations to properties to both council and private homes (including Housing Association properties) via the Disabled Facilities Grants Procedure. In 2014-16 there were 241 major adaptations such as stairlifts, level access showers of which:
 - 79 were Council tenants.
 - 117 were Owner Occupiers.
 - 8 were private tenants.
 - 2 right to occupy.

- Contractor procured to "My Home" project (funded by successful bid to Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)) which resulted in 145 Energy Performance Certificates being produced and 60 households receiving free energy saving measures.
- Promotion of free loft and cavity wall insulation to the private housing sector.
- Working with the private sector to make ECO and Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (GDHIF) grants available to those living in the private housing sector including park home residences.
- Working with Southern Gas Networks (SGN) to extend the gas network and install gas central heating to previous electrically heated properties for all housing tenures in the vicinity.
- Pop-up Energy Shops offering advice and bill checking to nearly 450 people across the district.
- Redevelop a Retirement Living Court in Uckfield.

What are we doing/going to do to continue to improve housing quality?

- Working with landlords and partners to implement and ensure compliance with the new regulations with regard to the redress scheme.
- Work with private landlords and the National Landlords Association.
- Continuing to ensure that all new homes meet Secure by Design Standards.
- Ensure our properties meet the decent homes standard.
- Redevelop a Retirement Living Court at Uckfield.
- Invest up to £250,000 every year in adaptations to council properties. To ensure this money is spent wisely the Housing Solutions Officer helps explore tenants' options before an adaptation is carried out, this may include moving to more suitable accommodation.
- The Local Plan ensures renewable energy opportunities are maximised for example through the site layout. It also requires all developments contribute to the provision of infrastructure and reduces the need for car travel. Carry out improvement works to Council properties ensuring all council properties have double glazed windows and doors, cavity wall and loft insulation to properties with less than 270mm loft insulation.
- Explore energy efficiency measures, such as air source heat pumps to ensure that homes meet the decent home standard and are affordable for tenants to run.
- Work to bid for funding for advice, bill checking and energy efficiency measures via the cross-county (East and West Sussex) Your Energy Sussex (YES) partnership and the East Sussex Energy Partnership (ESEP).
- Exploring community energy switching initiatives.
- Continue to work across the county to provide a fuel poverty co-ordinator, to deliver the Warm Homes Healthy People Programme and on partnerships such as East Sussex Energy Partnership.
- Work with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and other East Sussex and districts and borough on the new smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm requirements for private landlords. Continue to work in partnership with Social Services to assess individual's needs for DFG and to carry out the work.

CHAPTER 5: Providing housing advice and support for individuals and communities

Providing Housing Advice:

Background

The Council continues to provide housing advice to all households regarding accessing social/affordable housing, renting privately and home ownership options.

There are a number of challenges when providing housing advice to individuals:

- Shortage of social/affordable housing in the district.
- Accessing accommodation for people under 35 due to the lack of shared accommodation in the District.
- Assisting those affected by the under occupation Housing Benefit Charge due to the shortage of smaller properties particularly outside the main towns.
- Introduction of Universal Credit causes concern over people's ability to budget and ensure that their rent is paid.
- Shortage of private rented accommodation in the district and issues of accessibility for those without a guarantor and affordability.
- Limited availability of shared ownership stock.
- Withdrawal of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- Changes in homelessness case law meaning assessing applications made under the homelessness legislation, particularly for single applicants, has become complex, time-consuming and has high potential costs to the Council.
- The Homelessness Act 2017 places further duties on us as a local authority.
- Welfare reform changes which mean access to housing benefit will be restricted for younger people, Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance rates are frozen for the next five years – widening the gap between actual rents and benefit, the benefit cap was reduced to £20,000 from £26,000 in November 2016, and a two child cap for benefits will come into force from April 2017 for new claimants or where a third child is born after this date.

Providing Support for individuals and communities:

Background

Housing Related Support

Housing-related support is primarily funded by Supporting People from money given to County or Unitary authorities from central government to help people live independently (e.g. manage money, claim benefits, develop domestic or social skills, and keep safe) in the district. The support is targeted at anyone at risk of losing their home for reason of domestic violence, relationship breakdown, health issues, those that are already homeless or living in B&B or those living in poor quality or unsuitable accommodation. Additionally since 2012 a Housing Solutions worker has been

employed jointly by Wealden and East Sussex County Council to help households needing adaptations to explore their housing options.

Support for Communities

The Council continue to employ a range of officers who work closely together to support our local communities they include Tenant Involvement Team, Housing Officers, Private Housing Officers, Benefit Officers, Housing Estate Wardens, Public Health and Community Officers, Council Tax Officers and the Bailiffs. These officers spend much of their time providing advice and assistance to help benefit both individuals and communities.

There are many challenges affecting our future ability to support individuals and communities.

- Continued cuts to Council budgets following the 3 year Comprehensive Spending Review cuts of 28%. With the withdrawal of Government grant all together come 2017/18.
- Reduction in income to the HRA by the 1% cut for 4 years in council rents and loss of properties through the Right to Buy as well as the proposals to sale of high value council stock.
- Removal of the ring-fence on the Supporting People funding creates uncertainty.

Achievements since the Housing Strategy 2014-16

- Launched Letsure to provide a small scale Private Sector Leasing Scheme in the District. Also incorporating our deposit and rent in advance schemes to help households access the private rented sector.
- Worked with Brighton Housing Trust to promote outreach housing advice services.
- Commissioned a rough sleepers outreach service in partnership with East and West Sussex authorities under the Single Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement (SHORE) initiative.
- Successfully bid for £10,000 grant funding from SHORE to enable access to the private rented sector for clients who would otherwise be excluded.
- There were 1670 homelessness preventions between 2014-16.
- Worked with East Sussex County to provide financial assistance through Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme to help people access private rented accommodation and buy essential household items.
- Continued to fund the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide advice to all households in Wealden.
- Worked with JobCentre Plus (JCP) to provide an outreach service from the Council's offices.
- Worked with Credit Union to provide an outreach service from the Council's offices.
- In partnership with Eastbourne Homes, Acres and South Downs College provided access to free training courses to all Eastbourne and Wealden residents across the district and borough.

- Continued to provide a Community and Environmental Budget through the Housing Revenue Account HRA which individuals/groups can bid for to support projects for the local area/residents.
- Continued to run a Wealden Communities grant programme providing support for both revenue and capital projects.
- Continue to support businesses including through newsletters and Business Breakfasts allowing local businesses to access advice and training.
- Providing an Active Wealden programme which includes Active for Life for older people including dance and yoga sessions. As well as free activity days and active play for children.
- Holding numerous events including Wealden Food and Wine festival to support local businesses, Free electric blanket testing, Older Persons Day and much more.
- Held four successful Coffee, Cake and Computers events in 2015 and 2016 to help older people get online.
- Produced a digital Skills booklet highlighting where people can get computer training and advice and access Wi-Fi. As well as providing information to help people access low cost computers/tablets and broadband.
- Provided lots of advice and assistance around energy efficiency for all tenures to help communities and individuals particularly with regards to fuel poverty.
- Continued to work with owners of empty properties to underpin the barriers and facilitate bringing them back into use.
- Worked with Supporting People to promote the East Sussex Welfare Reform advice service which offers both telephone and email advice.
- Implemented "Rental Exchange" to help tenants build up a credit rating based upon their rent payment history.
- Delivery of the Street Learning project to provide a wide range of free training courses to residents aged 19+.
- Creation of a dementia action alliance to raise awareness locally of dementia and explore ways to assist people suffering dementia such as dementia friendly screenings at the local cinemas.

What are we doing/going to do to continue with regards to housing advice and support for individuals and communities?

- Working in partnership with others including other authorities in East Sussex through groups such as the East Sussex Housing Officers Group (ESHOG) and the Health and Housing sub group, East Sussex Financial Inclusion Steering Group.
- Continuing partnership work including with CAB, Credit Union and JCP to provide advice to residents on a range of topics including debt, financial advice and employment. As well as work with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Adult Social Care and Children's Integrated Therapy Services.
- Set up an internal Digital Inclusion Group to explore how we can help people get online in Wealden.
- Hold three Coffee, Cake and Computers events around the District a year, to help get older residents online

- Take the lead on Street Learning and expand the range of free courses and locations at which they are offered.
- Explore alternative ways to deliver tenancy workshops to provide targeted support for current and prospective tenants to promote tenancy sustainment.
- Continuing work around energy efficiency to provide advice and assistance.
- Work with Sompriti (who provide a range of services including, translation and interpreting for the BME population in East Sussex) to ensure BME community can access services and receive assistance.
- Continue to work with the Wealden Disability Group to ensure that people with disabilities are able to access services and receive assistance.
- Continue to provide education/advice to landlords with enforcement of legislation being a last resort.
- Continue to provide a signposting service to other agencies/services.
- Despite budget cuts the Council continue to provide a range of assistance outside its core services including both staffing and funding to partners to deliver services such as CAB as well as facilitating events such as Fun Days and fire safety.
- Continue with our Dementia Action Alliance project and dementia friendly screenings at the local cinemas.

Chapter 6: Performance

The Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated again in 2019/20 to ensure that it is in line with the Corporate Plan priorities.

The Housing Strategy will be monitored through the council's Housing Service Plan to ensure the four key priorities continue to be delivered. Individual staff will be responsible for these in their annual appraisals. We will continue to report back on performance to the council's tenants via Threshold magazine and our annual report. We will report back to other stakeholders via meetings such as the East Sussex Housing Officers Group and other sub-groups and to councillors through quarterly performance reports.

Appendix

List of Acronyms

BME – Black and Ethnic Minority
CAB – Citizens Advice Bureau
DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant
ESCS – English Stock Condition Survey
ESEP - East Sussex Energy Partnership
ESHOG – East Sussex Housing Officers Group
GDHIF – Green Deal Home Improvement Grant
HRA – Housing Revenue Account
HRP – Household Reference Person
JCP – Job Centre Plus
JSA – Job Seekers Allowance
LSOA – Lower Super Output Area
SGN – Southern Gas Networks
SHMA – Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SHORE - Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement
YES - Your Energy Sussex

Meeting of the Full Council

Monday 31st July 2017

Agenda Item 11.0

TO NOTE THE MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

1.0 Summary

1.1 The report sets out the Town Mayor engagements.

21st June UTC Road Safety Day

26th June ESCC Chairman summer reception (with Youth Representative D. Manvell)

22nd July Uckfield Singers Summer Concert

TO NOTE THE DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

5TH July The Licensing Service for Revd John Wall

Cllr. Louise Eastwood
Town Mayor

