Purpose
In 2018 the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) was introduced into the planning system as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework. This report sets out and seeks approval to Kingston’s HDT Action Plan (Annex 1) which analyses current housing delivery in the borough and identifies measures to address the shortfall in delivery over the last three years.

Recommendations of the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy & Culture and Heritage
That the Committee approves the basis of the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (Annex 1) for publication by August 2019, and that any minor amendments be delegated to the Assistant Director of Strategic Planning & Infrastructure in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Strategic Housing and Planning Committee and Opposition Spokesperson.

Benefits to the Community:
The Housing Delivery Test Action Plan has the primary objective of speeding up housing delivery in the borough. This will be a significant benefit to the community since there is a need to see a step change in building more homes in the borough to meet the needs of residents.

Key Points
A. The Government has introduced the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) to determine whether local areas are building enough homes to meet housing needs. There is a requirement for failing local authorities to publish their HDT Action Plans by 19 August 2019.

B. Kingston’s HDT compares the number of new homes delivered over the previous three years (2015/16 - 2017/18) with the authority's housing requirement and is being used to determine the buffer to apply in housing supply assessments and whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.

C. It is clear that Kingston is not delivering its annual housing target which has resulted in an overall shortfall of homes over this period. When measured against the Housing Delivery Test (and as identified in government statistics), Kingston’s delivery rate is 75% of what should be delivered.
D. Kingston’s HDT Action Plan specifies a range of measures that the Council is progressing to address low rates of housing delivery, including a process to monitor implementation.

E. The Planning Advisory Service is running a programme of support workshops for local authorities on the HDT throughout the summer. It is therefore proposed that any resulting minor amendments to Kingston’s Action Plan be delegated to the Assistant Director of Strategic Planning & Infrastructure in consultation with the Chair of the Strategic Housing and Planning Committee and Opposition Spokesperson.

Context

1. The Government and Greater London Authority (GLA) are committed to the improved delivery of more new homes with a number of measures and reforms to the planning system being implemented to deliver more housing, improve affordability and remove barriers to development. In particular these are highlighted in the revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and draft new London Plan 2017.

2. Local planning authorities are being required to be more proactive in increasing the speed and quantity of housing supply to meet the identified housing needs of their local area. In February 2019 the Government published the first Housing Delivery Test results.

3. Along with many other authorities, Kingston has failed to achieve its housing target. Kingston delivered a total of 1,042 homes during the assessment period (2015/16 - 2017/18) against a target of 1,381 units. The targets have been derived from the London Plan housing targets, however, it should be noted that the Housing Delivery Plan 2018 Measurement Technical Note states that the London Plan figures remain valid for 5 years from the date of adoption, even where the plan is undergoing a revision.

4. The Council is responding to this situation through its HDT Action Plan and also its emerging new strategic planning documents (in particular the new Local Plan). The Council adopts a positive and proactive approach to the consideration of planning applications to ensure applicants have been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably. Kingston’s proposed HDT Action Plan sets out why we have not delivered our housing requirements and identifies a strategy to increase and maintain housing delivery in Kingston.

5. Kingston’s HDT Action Plan identifies the following key areas for action:
   - Ensure housing delivery remains a Council priority
   - Kingston’s Housing Policy
   - Improving our planning application processes
6. Looking to the future, the draft new London Plan proposes doubling Kingston’s target to 1,364 homes per year. Kingston is challenging this target, but whatever the outcome, it is clear that we need to see a step change in home building to meet the needs of our residents. The target will change upon adoption of the London Plan and it is unlikely that there would be a 5 year grace period in the way there is for the current 2015/16 - 2017/18 measurement period.

Programme and Consultation

7. Government regulations require local authorities to publish their Action Plans in August 2019. This report therefore seeks Committee approval to the basis of Kingston’s Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (Annex 1).

8. The Plan collates a list of activities that can be pursued by the Council in order to boost the delivery of Housing. It brings together information on approaches and possible changes, but each of these projects referenced in the plan would still be required to go through the normal consultation, review and approval processes (where relevant) before they can be implemented.

9. If agreed, it is anticipated the Action Plan shall be subject to annual reviews. To inform these reviews we will welcome suggestions on any future actions to help increase housing delivery.

Resource Implications

10. There are no resource implications as the costs associated with the preparation of this HDT Action Plan have been met within existing budgets. It is currently anticipated that all of the actions set out in the plan will also be met within existing budgets across the Growth Directorate. The offer of a ‘fast track’ service is an agreed MTFP saving. The cost of publishing the HDT Action Plan itself is expected to be minimal, involving publishing on the Council’s website.

Legal Implications

11. The Housing Delivery Test determines whether local areas are building enough homes to meet housing needs. In November 2018 the Government published the first HDT results (Government Housing Delivery Test 2018 measurement).

12. Failing local authorities (including Kingston) are required to publish their HDT Action Plans by 19 August 2019. Kingston’s HDT compares the number of new homes delivered over the previous three years with the authority's housing requirement. The HDT will be used to determine the buffer to apply in housing supply assessments and whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.
13. The Government and Greater London Authority (GLA) are committed to the improved delivery of more new homes through their agendas and strategies. Reforms to the planning system have been implemented to deliver more housing, improve housing affordability and remove barriers to development, as highlighted in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and draft new London Plan 2017.

14. Local planning authorities are required to be more proactive in increasing the speed and quantity of housing supply to meet the identified housing needs. The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is responding to this requirement through this HDT and also its emerging new strategic planning documents to increase and accelerate the delivery of new housing in the borough.

Risk Assessment

15. There are risks associated with not publishing a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, in particular the Council would not fulfil its duties to produce an Action Plan. Up-to-date policy documents provide improved guidance, clarity and certainty for all interested parties. In particular it will assist with progression of new Local Plan housing policies.

Equalities Impact Assessment

16. An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and the Council will ensure, through this process, full compliance with the Equality Act. It will ensure the following: eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

17. The HDT Action Plan seeks to provide housing for all groups of people and is inclusive. It does not provide new policy, but draws together a set of actions that the Council can utilise. A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan work programme and incorporated into the Integrated Impact Assessment process to ensure that no groups or communities are disadvantaged.

Health Implications

18. The HDT Action Plan has the primary purpose of speeding up housing delivery in the borough to meet the future requirements of Kingston. This is essential to ensure the health and well being of Kingston’s residents and visitors since significant new home building has been identified as a specific requirement.

Road Network Implications
19. An evidence base has been produced to understand the impact of growth on the transport networks. This includes a Transport Forecasting Report which assesses the implications of new housing (and other development) on both the road and public transport networks and associated mitigation measures necessary to deal with the issues arising.

Environmental and Air Quality Implications

20. An evidence base has been produced to understand the impact of growth on the environment, in particular air quality implications. In line with Local Plan procedures, all new housing development will be required to be delivered to comply with relevant environmental standards.

Background papers

- Kingston’s Core Strategy (2012) Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
- Kingston Housing Strategy
- Kingston Early Engagement on the Local Plan 2019
- Kingston Transport Forecasting Report 2018
- The London Plan (2016) Mayor of London
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Planning Advisory Service, Housing Delivery Test: Preparing Effective Action Plans
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019
- Government Housing Delivery Test Results

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