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8 December 2020

To: Chair – Councillor Grenville Chamberlain  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Judith Rippeth  
Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee – Councillors  
Anna Bradnam, Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Sarah Cheung Johnson,  
Graham Cone, Dr. Claire Daunton, Dr. Douglas de Lacey, Peter Fane,  
Jose Hales, Geoff Harvey, Steve Hunt and Dr. Richard Williams

Quorum: 4

Substitutes:	Councillors Heather Williams, Mark Howell, Sue Ellington, Bunty Waters, Gavin Clayton, Henry Batchelor, Dr. Ian Sollom, Eileen Wilson, Clare Delderfield, Deborah Roberts and Alex Malyon
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**There is a pre-meeting session at 4pm on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December for members of the Committee only, to plan their lines of enquiry.**

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Scrutiny and Overview Committee**, which will be held on **Thursday, 17 December 2020 at 5.20 p.m.** This meeting will be conducted remotely using the Microsoft Teams video conferencing system. There will be no access to the meeting at the Council offices, but a live stream will be available via Microsoft Teams. A web link to enable members of the Press and public to view or listen to the proceedings, will be published on the relevant page of the Council's website at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution **in advance of** the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully

**Liz Watts**

Chief Executive

**The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. If you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you.**

## Agenda

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Apologies</b> To receive apologies for absence from committee members.	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 as a correct record.	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>4. Public Questions</b> To answer any questions asked by the public. The Council's scheme for public speaking at remote meetings may be inspected here:  <a href="#">Public Questions at Remote Meetings guidance</a>	
<b>5. Update on Policing matters from Cambridgeshire Constabulary</b>	
<b>6. Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Delivery Update</b>	<b>3 - 22</b>
<b>7. Work Programme</b> For the committee to consider its work programme. The work programme is attached with the Council's Notice of Key and Non Key Decisions. When considering items to add to its work programme, the committee is requested to refer to the attached Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool.	<b>23 - 38</b>
<b>8. Scrutiny Covid-19 Response Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference</b>	<b>39 - 42</b>
<b>9. To Note the Dates of Future Meetings</b> The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 5.20pm.	

### **Guidance Notes for Members of the Public for Remote Meetings**

Members of the public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting, except during the consideration of exempt or confidential items, by following the link to be published on the Council's website.

Any person who participates in the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules, is deemed to have consented to being recorded and to the use of those images (where participating via video conference) and/or sound recordings for webcast purposes. When speaking, members of the public should not disclose any personal information of any individual as this might infringe on the rights of that individual and breach the Data Protection Act.

For more information about this meeting please contact [democratic.services@scams.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@scams.gov.uk)

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# Agenda Item 3

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Thursday, 12 November 2020 at 5.20 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Grenville Chamberlain – Chair  
Councillor Judith Rippeth – Vice-Chair

Councillors:	Anna Bradnam	Dr. Martin Cahn
	Nigel Cathcart	Sarah Cheung Johnson
	Graham Cone	Dr. Claire Daunton
	Peter Fane	Jose Hales
	Geoff Harvey	Steve Hunt

Councillors Bridget Smith and Brian Milnes were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Victoria Wallace	Scrutiny and Governance Adviser
	Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
	Peter Campbell	Head of Housing

### 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were noted from Cllr Douglas de Lacey.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### 4. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

### 5. Work Programme

The Chair presented the committee's work programme.

The Chair of the Scrutiny task and finish group looking at equality and diversity issues, informed the committee that the group was making progress and hoped work would be concluded by February 2021.

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee agreed to set up a task and finish group to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community facilities, with the aim of reporting back to the January 2021 Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting. The task and finish group would look at which community facilities had

been open, closed and partially closed during the Covid-19 pandemic and would consider how experience and good practice could be used to benefit other parishes in the district. Members appointed to the task and finish group were:

- Councillor Grenville Chamberlain (Chair of the task and finish group)
- Councillor Judith Rippeth
- Councillor Jose Hales
- Councillor Claire Daunton.

Councillor Chamberlain would liaise with officers from New Communities and Democratic Services to arrange a task and finish group meeting.

On conclusion of the Covid-19 task and finish group, the Chair suggested another task and finish group be set up to look at the provision of GP services in villages.

The Chair informed the committee that the December Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting would consider the following:

- An update from the Chief Constable who would be attending the meeting. The Chair asked committee members to send any questions for the Chief Constable, to Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.
- The Council's Empty Homes Strategy.
- An update on the shared Planning service.

## **6. To Note the Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 5.20pm.

## **7. Confidential minutes of the previous meeting**

The committee agreed to exclude the Press and public from the meeting during consideration of this agenda item. This was in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

The confidential minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

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**The Meeting ended at 5.46 p.m.**

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# Agenda Item 6



**Report To:** Scrutiny and Overview Committee 17 December 2020  
**Lead Cabinet Member:** Cllr. Tumi Hawkins -Lead Member for Planning Policy and Delivery  
**Lead Officer:** Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

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## **Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Delivery update**

### **Executive Summary**

1. The Planning Shared Service Annual Report 2019/2020 which was considered by Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 16 July this year sets out the strategic context for the Greater Cambridge Planning Shared Service (GCSPS) programme up to the end of Quarter 4 2019/20 and looked ahead to key milestones in the service programme through 2020-21.
2. This report provides an update on the Delivery part of the Shared Planning Service, comprising: the three Development Management teams and Strategic Sites (responsible for processing of planning applications, preapplication requests, discharges of conditions, appeals and associated work streams), the Technical Support Team (responsible for validation of planning applications processing of land charges requests); Planning Enforcement and the S106 Team.
3. The service has continued to experience a significant level of change through 2020. The impacts of Covid19, lockdowns, the continued closure/restricted access to both Council offices and remote working challenges have created additional pressures. Given the above context, the Delivery service has made good progress on its journey of transformational change, notably on planning application performance against government targets, as well as the service improvement programme and positive outcomes across a range of strategic site developments.

4. It is recognised that there have been some systems and process errors that have been reported during this period. The service has sought to rectify these and to put in place appropriate mitigation measures to address them promptly. The pace and extent of change, as well as the challenges posed by Covid19 and the home working environment have all been factors in this situation. As the service transformation programme moves forward into 2021, lessons have been learned from the earlier part of the programme. There will be a more sequential approach to ongoing transformation, with larger more complex change processes being phased over longer periods.
5. The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review of Planning Committees that was jointly commissioned by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council earlier this year to cover all three Committees (including the Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) covered by the Shared Planning Service, is nearing completion. The PAS project team are likely to make a range of recommendations for further improvements to Committee and associated processes in due course. This report therefore requests that Scrutiny and Overview Committee support the establishment of a joint member/officer Planning Improvement Group to oversee this.

### **List of Abbreviations used in this Report**

6. The following abbreviations are used in this report:  
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS); South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC); Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC); Technical Support Officer (TSO); Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

### **Recommendations**

7. It is recommended that Scrutiny and Overview Committee:
  - a) note the content of this update report.
  - b) support the establishment of a joint member /officer Planning Improvement Group on a “task and finish” model to oversee the implementation of the Planning Advisory Service recommendations arising from its Planning Committee Review report.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

8. This is an update report and other than the supporting of the setting up of a member task and finish group, no other decisions are triggered by the report.



## Details

### Shared Service Business Plan 2020/21

9. The 2020/21 service plan approved by both Councils in Spring 2020 sought to progress two broad threads of work; first, the continued implementation of the significant structural and organisational changes required to implement the shared service, and second, the delivery of service specific outcomes across the service that supported delivery of the Corporate plan objectives of the two Councils.
10. The most significant transformation project, in terms of cost and impact upon service delivery and resource has been the roll out of the ICT solution, procured in 2019 and implemented in early 2020. Significant officer time within the delivery and technical support and operations teams was focused upon the transition from the SCDC Agile planning application software to a single platform called Idox.
11. Implemented in January and February 2020, this project required the transfer of more than one million data items and was concluded just before the Covid lockdown measures came into effect. Building on the capability of a single system, and reinforcing hardware and software integration has continued throughout 2020 (see below). Alongside this major and ongoing ICT project, the service has also been able to implement/roll out the following additional measures:
  - Implementation of three area planning teams in Development Management (see below)
  - Roll out of mobile telephone devices to all front-line staff
  - Procurement, training and implementation of a new time management solution (Clockify) to help manage staff time and enable the service to determine the costs of delivery.
  - Roll out of digital only consultations with all consultees using the Idox consultation module
  - Design and development of a new single customer complaints process
  - Development and agreement of a single service-wide budget with the Finance service.
  - Development of a new staff induction and “onboarding” process for all new recruitment
  - Creation and delivery of weekly parish and member ‘reports’ to improve information to members and parish councils.
  - Creation of a new performance reporting framework for area planning team managers in the Delivery Team (See below)  
Development and implementation a new online customer feedback questionnaire for the Delivery Team
  - Evolution of the Shared Planning Service web site and work with 3C ICT to review and increase content.

12. A range of service transformation and improvement projects have been implemented within the delivery team through Quarters 1, 2 and 3 2020/2021. These are summarised below:

- Introduction of updated pre-application charges; bringing together the separate Cambridge City and SCDC charging regimes into a single consolidated charging scheme across the GCSPS area.
- Introduction of an improved pre-application service, with a new service user website interface, a flexible menu of service offers, streamlined standard traffic light response template and 30minute video meeting for more straightforward pre-application requests (householder and small businesses)
- Roll out of a 24 hour call back service for progress updates and chasers aimed at reducing the number of formal complaints.
- Migration of the DM and TSO Teams onto a Remote Desktop System (RDS) to improve Uniform/IDOX performance (the existing system was not designed for a permanent home working environment)
- Migration of the planning software systems onto a new server to improve the stability and performance of the systems.
- Introduction of a standard Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) template, development of a PPA Charter and new PPA webpage -shortly to “go live.”
- Introduction of a member development programme on DM matters for all three planning committees covered by the GCSPS, with all sessions open to Planning Committee members from both Councils.
- Development of a single GCSPS suite of planning conditions for planning decisions - shortly to go live.
- Review of Planning Committees by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS)

13. In addition, a new Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) for SCDC and Cambridge City, with an updated remit to reflect the current Local Plans, was set up in August following Cambridgeshire County Council’s decision to withdraw from the previous (“three way”) JDCC.

### **Overall DM Performance**

14. Since Quarter 1 2020/2021, overall performance has significantly improved as the new software system has bedded in and staff have adjusted to the home working environment. The last few months have seen consistently high performance in DM in terms of determination of all categories of planning applications within agreed timelines as defined by government. Further detailed information is provided in Appendix A for 2019/20. In addition, Appendix A provides a snapshot of November performance between 2017-2020 to illustrate the level of improvement over the four year period. This is partly the result of having a more stable workforce; partly improved performance monitoring through one to ones and team review meetings and availability of improved performance data. This enables managers to understand individual and team performance more fully and to be able to respond to issues more quickly and put in place mitigation measures where required.

Whilst the improved performance does reflect use of extensions of time, this has been necessary because of the impacts of Covid19 and the ICT upgrade with resultant backlog of applications in both the TSO team and DM. However, extensions of time are used widely by local planning authorities nationally and provide flexibility for both applicants and planning authorities to accommodate amendments and to address consultee and community objections where appropriate. As the backlog reduces and the new “front-loaded” pre-application process takes effect the service will be aiming to reduce the number of extensions of time significantly.

15. Following the significant resource impact upon the TSO Team around the ICT implementation , by August 2020 the team had successfully cleared the validation “backlog” built up in the early part of 2020 and they now continue to focus on reducing validation processing times, with the objective of consistently meeting the 5 working days service target. Currently average validation times for householder applications for example are around 4/7 days.
16. Notwithstanding more recent strong performance in the second half of the year, in the early half of the year performance was less consistent. Significant work on exploring system and process changes to improve productivity, transparency and service resilience continues. In recent months, application numbers, which declined substantially in May and June have recovered to pre-Covid levels for certain categories (such as Householders) whilst stimulus from government has seen a substantial increase in personal searches in recent months, which has introduced new challenges for the TSO team arising from the differing formats of search information held by the Councils.
17. Following the work of the TSO validation team, dedicated resource has also been applied to the Delivery team to respond to the backlog of applications that are over 6 months old. In the last 4 months, some 766 planning applications have been processed and 319 applications have been closed down using this resource. Appendix C provides an overview of backlog applications and other work streams cleared over the past four months.

### **DM Geographical Area Teams -update and proposed changes**

18. The three new DM area teams were implemented from March just as lockdown began so have been operating in a home working environment. COVID has meant that the local economy has been and is likely to remain unpredictable, in terms of numbers of planning applications and preapplication requests submitted and coming forward in the short-medium term. Recent analysis of workloads across the teams had led to some boundary alterations to create a more even workload in each team and the revised team areas are intended to be implemented from the start of January 2021. Communications will be provided to members and parishes about the changes shortly. Given the difficulties of predicting the profile and disposition of future workloads, the area teams will be reviewed every 12 months going forwards.

19. The DM area teams are now starting to play an important role in building and improving relationships between the planning service and the parish councils/local communities. A series of three “meet and greet” the area planning teams events were held in July and August. A range of themes were identified from these sessions to focus on going forwards and a strong preference was expressed by parish council representatives present at the meetings to continue with engagement with the DM teams on a “patch” basis. A programme of “patch” focused quarterly meetings for the DM teams and parish councils is being planned for 2021.
20. In addition to the above, since the introductory meetings in the summer, the three area team managers and their staff have attended a range of parish council meetings and events. A programme of “walkabouts” of individual parish areas has taken place. These have involved DM officers and parish members and have focused on discussions of specific challenges and issues within the local areas - including Cottenham, Swavesey, and Histon and Impington. This process is ongoing and will continue into 2021.
21. The DM Teams have also been engaging with the community liaison forums that have recently been set up by the Council’s Communities Team, focusing on some specific major development sites across the Council area.

### **Legal Challenges**

22. The Development Management service has been subject to a significant level of scrutiny throughout 2020. In SCDC’s area, three legal challenges of planning decisions made by the service were under consideration by the Courts. The applications were made by a local community group. Two of these challenges have been dismissed by the Court with orders for costs being made for recovery of the Council’s legal costs, whilst in the other case, the Council agreed to the court quashing the decision.
23. In addition, due to a mistake in the way we processed a householder application, the Deputy Leader of the Council applied successfully to have the subsequent decision quashed by the court. More recently, two further decisions, one relating to the aforementioned error and a second involving a decision where conditions were inadvertently omitted from the decision notice following a committee resolution are to be subject to a legal challenge by the Lead Cabinet member.
24. These mistakes are extremely regrettable and while judicial review of minor /householder planning decisions is rare, in each case, the service has sought to review and adjust its systems and processes in response.
25. Threats of further legal action against planning applications under consideration have been received from a community action group in respect of 8 further cases. 4 of these applications remain undetermined and advice from officers and legal officers is being sought in relation to each case.

## User Feedback

26. Across the Shared Planning Service, the planning application process accounts for the vast majority of complaints received annually – with a total of 94 formal complaints having been received in 2019-20 and 46 so far (up to the end of Quarter 3) in 2020-21. An overview comparison of categories of complaints for 2019/20 and 2020/21 is contained in Appendix B. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of a planning decision can lead to complaints from both applicants (who may have experienced a poor service) and from neighbours or objectors. Complaints against the planning service, have historically been addressed in different ways by each of the Councils. In the City, a 2 stage complaint process was supplemented by an independent investigator stage ahead of referral to the local Government Ombudsman. The City Council also dealt with its complaints through a corporate complaints system which managed the process of inputs and responses. In addition to securing feedback and learning from complaints, the respective planning services also sent out different post decision questionnaires to agents to seek feedback. Quarterly Agents' Forums and bi-annual planning specific Parish Forums were also held by SCDC.
27. Through 2020, the Business Operations Team have sought to revise these historical systems with a single new online user survey to agents, and a single customer complaints process, managed centrally, which aims to provide more consistent reporting and management of responses received, as well as ensuring that the service captures lessons learnt as part of its corporate planning and improvement processes. Feedback on the service has reflected, in part, the delays and consequential frustration with the backlog of applications. Complainants have also been unhappy about the responsiveness of the service to correspondence and difficulties in contacting the right officers.
28. Given the major changes to working patterns, and the impact of the backlogs, the service is now working hard to respond to these complaints. The total number of formal complaints received in 2020-21 to date is significantly reduced compared to 2019-20. Over the Winter/Spring, the service is seeking to develop its "self-service" capabilities to enable users to access more information online, when they need it, and is seeking to publish more information and guidance traditionally provided by officers online through its shared planning website. With the increase in the number of communication channels, the service is also reviewing its contact arrangements – to reduce the risk that communications are misdirected and to help officers to manage the wide range of incoming communication challenges they are contacted through.
29. Officers across the service, but especially through the three area teams are also exploring how they can interact more effectively with their localities, including with Parish Councils and Residents Associations on individual applications and broader planning related matters whilst the roll out of mobile phones across front line staff is also improving accessibility to individual officers.

## **Progress on Strategic Sites**

30. One of the core objectives behind the establishment of the shared planning service was to enable it to respond to the substantial amount of growth planned across Greater Cambridge. The strategic sites team has made a considerable level of progress across a variety of strategic sites projects during Quarters 1, 2 and 3. This is summarised below:
- The Land North Cherry Hinton outline applications for 1200 dwellings were approved by the JDCC subject to completion of a S106 agreement. This is about to be completed and the outline permissions are on track to be issued before the end of December.
  - Huawei outline application approved.
  - Reserved matters applications approved for Cambourne West, Marleigh (Cambridge East), Waterbeach Barracks (Phase 1 infrastructure), Northstowe Phase 2.
  - Submission and progress on outline application for Northstowe Phase 3
  - Good progress on outline applications for both Waterbeach East (RLW) and Bourn Airfield, with both likely to be reported to Planning Committee in the next few months.
  - Wellcome /Genome Campus outline application S106 agreement - now close to completion
31. The Strategic Sites Team has also provided input to various Greater Cambridge Partnership schemes as well as Cambridge South Station, East-West Rail, the Cam Metro project and emerging developments in North East Cambridge. Following the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018, officers within the strategic sites team are now actively engaged with all/every one of the Council's 11 Strategic Growth sites, with approximately 26,900 new homes approved or in pending planning applications.

## **Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review of Planning Committees**

32. SCDC and Cambridge City jointly commissioned PAS to carry out a review of all three GCSPS Planning Committees including the JDCC. For SCDC, the brief included reviewing the Chair's delegation process, as well as the operation of the Planning Committee and associated processes and procedures. Following approaches to PAS in 2019, this review was originally scheduled to take place during the early part of 2020. However, the onset of COVID 19 and lockdown caused the Local Government Association to stop all reviews temporarily. The review therefore started in July and is now nearing completion. The process has involved the PAS team including two member peers from other councils viewing all three GCSPS Planning Committees in operation, conducting a range of member and senior officer interviews and four parish focus group sessions. The final reports will be published in January 2021. It is anticipated that there will be a number of recommendations arising from the report. Scrutiny and Overview Committee are therefore requested to support the establishment of a joint member/officer Planning Improvement Group, on a "task and finish" model to oversee implementation of the recommendations, subject to agreement by members, in due course.

## **TerraQuest update**

33. GCSPS appointed TerraQuest to provide additional temporary capacity for both processing and validation of householder planning applications during this period of ongoing service transformation. Although the deployment of Terraquest Staff was explored through autumn 2019, the contract was not completed until January 2020, and the introduction of TerraQuest staff into the planning service was delayed by the data migration and testing being carried out in preparation for the implementation of the new planning software system. This situation was aggravated by Covid19 and lockdown and the move to a home working environment for the whole planning service. There were logistical issues too associated with providing council laptops to the TerraQuest staff (the validation staff are based in Ireland) and network connectivity and systems issues.
34. A total of three TerraQuest DM staff have been involved in supporting the service processing householder planning applications since March, with three validation staff having started with the service a few months later. The number of DM staff has subsequently been reduced to one who works for GCSPs on a full-time basis. At the time of the drafting of this report, the total number of applications validated by Terra Quest stands at 423 and processed by DM at 144 (this figure to be updated at Committee). The DM teams are now using the one remaining TerraQuest planning officer to support Area Teams 2 and 3 (the two mixed SCDC and City teams) which both receive considerably more householder applications than Area 1 (SCDC only). The TerraQuest staff in the TSO team have been critical to the TSO team having cleared the validation “backlog”. The TSO team is now phasing out the TerraQuest support for the present time and has reduced the support from three to two staff.
35. In conclusion, it is considered that once the initial teething problems associated with integration of TerraQuest staff into the service had been addressed, the validation support has been positive in providing additional resilience through a difficult transition period. Given high workloads in DM at the present time (as a result of the TSO team “backlog” having moved into DM), the remaining TerraQuest resource is providing a valuable service.

## **Staffing**

36. The planning service and its staff have been subject to considerable pressure over 2020. The disruption caused by the new ICT system and workflows, consequential ICT outages a rapid transition from office-based work to locked down, home based working has been unprecedented. A number of staff in the Delivery team have very high caseloads. During October/November, many DM staff in Area Teams 2 and 3 have been juggling up to 100-120 individual work streams (applications, preapplication requests and discharges of conditions), with volumes of applications increased by the TSO team “backlog” moving into DM. Managers are working across the teams to explore ways of improving the efficiency of the systems and reducing pressure on officers but also face considerable pressure on their time created by the operational arrangements caused by Covid.

The SCDC welfare support programme and adoption of flexible working arrangements has nevertheless enabled staff to continue fully contribute to the service outcomes through 2020 and ensured that the service has continued to operate through the pandemic. The impacts on managers of managing a remote workforce has, at times, impacted upon the ability of the service of progress with planned changes as fast as it would wish and has in turn placed further pressure on managers.

37. During Quarters 1 and 2 staff turnover within the Delivery service was low. However, five members of staff left the Council in Quarter 3 and another is about to leave. Only one of these staff was permanent (a land charges officer in the TSO team). There are still some vacant permanent posts but the majority of these are backfilled by temporary agency staff. Some targeted permanent recruitment is being carried out – notably for one principal planner and one senior planner in DM, with enforcement recruitment planned for January 2021. The Council has also recently undertaken a staff survey, including the Shared Planning Service and the organisation and service expect to respond to its findings shortly. Investment in staff development and ensuring that opportunities for advancement across the service remain core objectives for the shared service.

### **Budget**

38. The number of planning applications and planning fee income levels are strongly affected by the performance of the national and local economy which remain uncertain at the present time. Predicting the likely impacts of Covid (and Brexit) on the levels of investment in the development sector is difficult but planning application fee income is nevertheless likely to fall some way below the budgeted level for 2020/21 (although a proportion of this will be compensated through the government's loss of income scheme). Following initial reductions in application numbers in May and June, planning application numbers have been increasing over the last few months in SCDC. The cost of agency/contract planners does not appear to have been dramatically impacted by these events – partly reflecting the fact that there remains a scarcity of experienced planning professionals. As both Councils look towards corporate level adjustments to budgets over the medium term, the Shared Planning Service is also exploring how its funding, which is heavily dependent upon application and related fee income, will need to respond. The management team is already therefore exploring opportunities to improve its income/cost recovery position as well as to explore new, flexible ways of delivery to help it to improve productivity and adjust to the potentially uncertain budget position in the years ahead.

### **Implications**

39. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, there are no significant implications arising.



## **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Development Management Performance Overview

Appendix B: Complaints Overview

Appendix C Development Management Backlog Overview

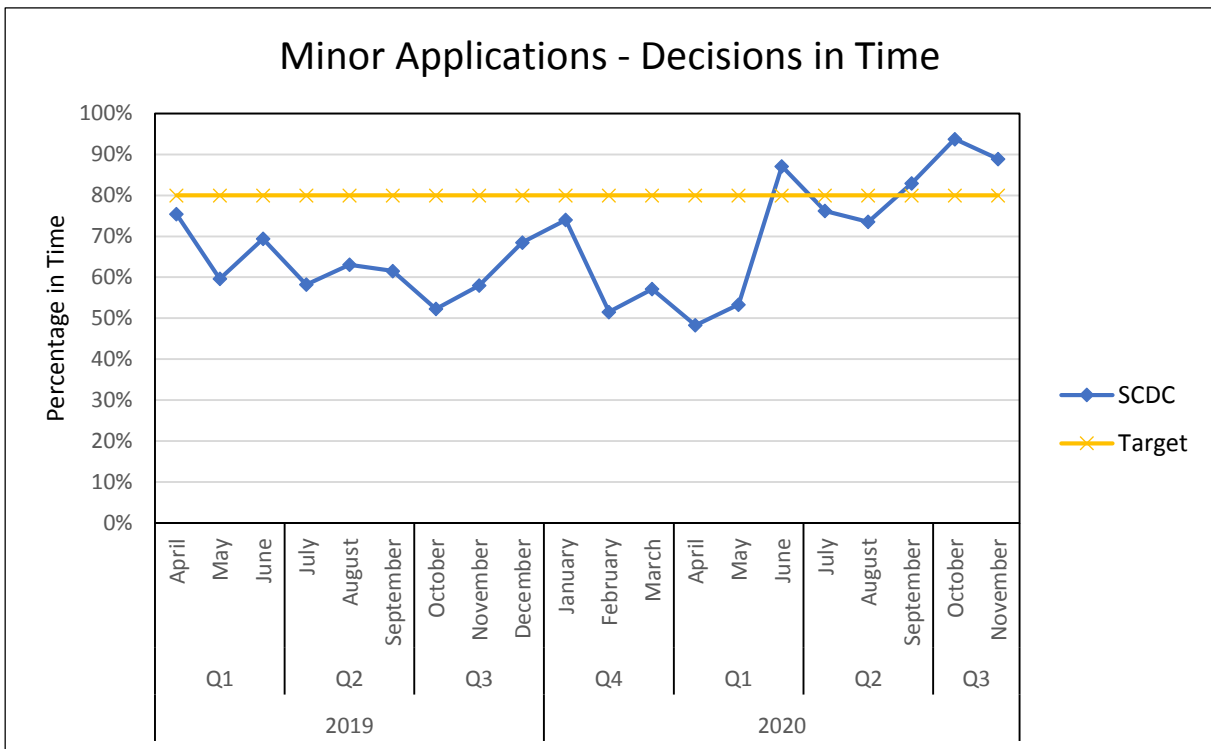
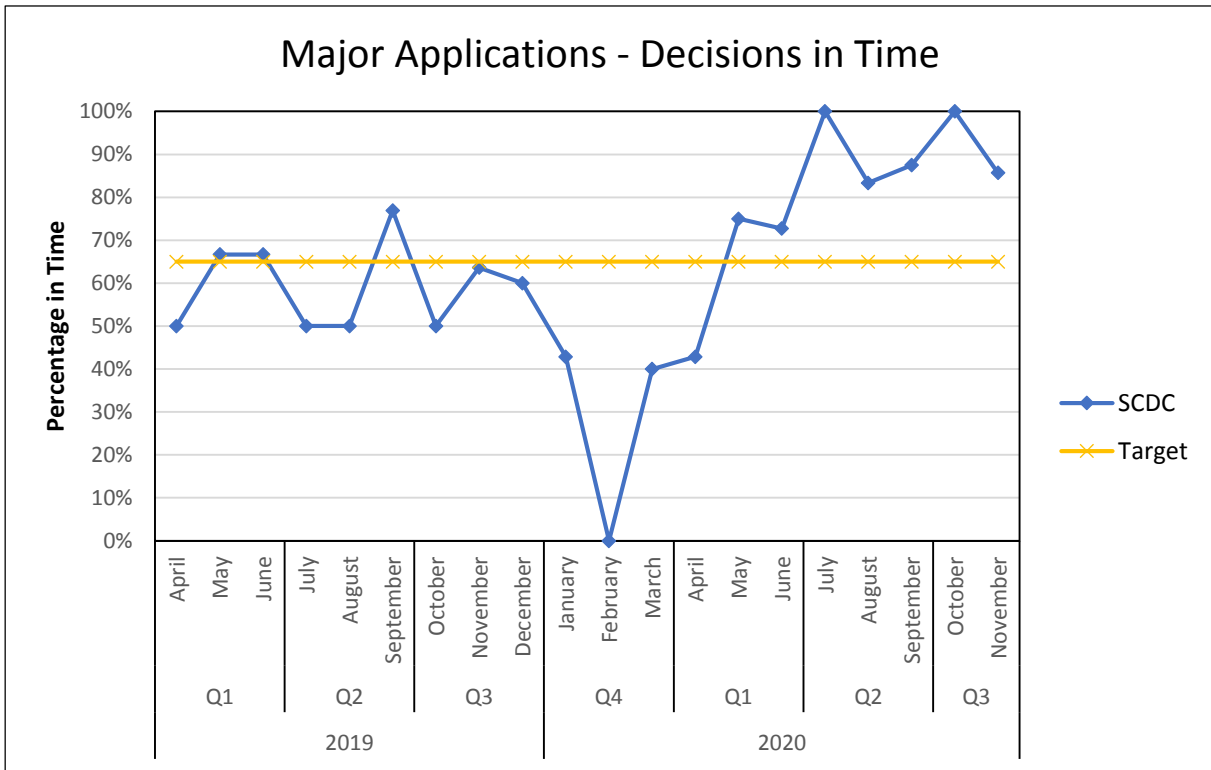
Appendix D: Schedule of Delivery Posts, Vacancies and Temporary Staff information

## **Report Author:**

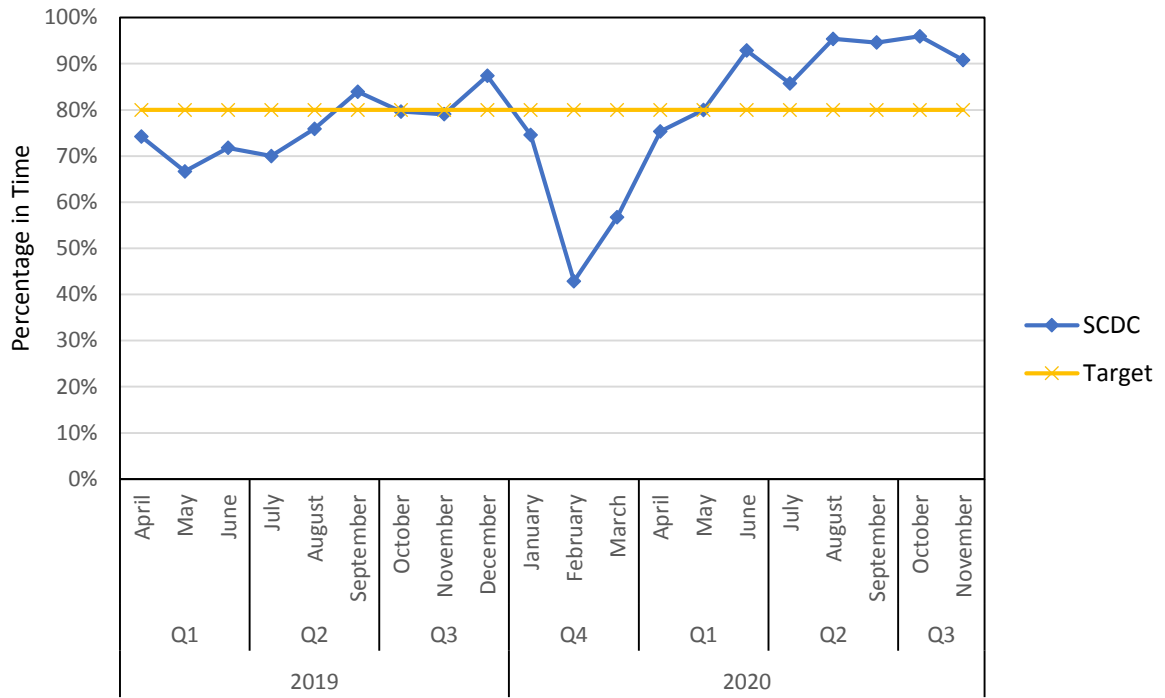
Sharon Brown Assistant Director Delivery

Telephone: 077725 751708

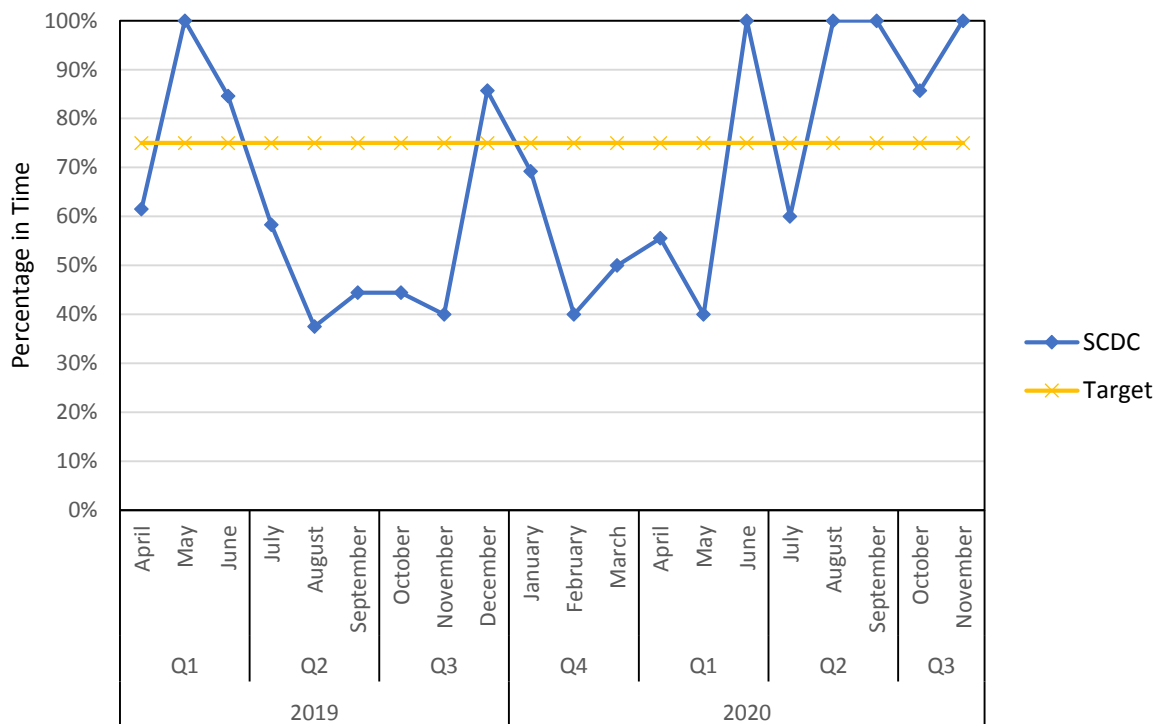
## Appendix A -Development Management Performance Overview

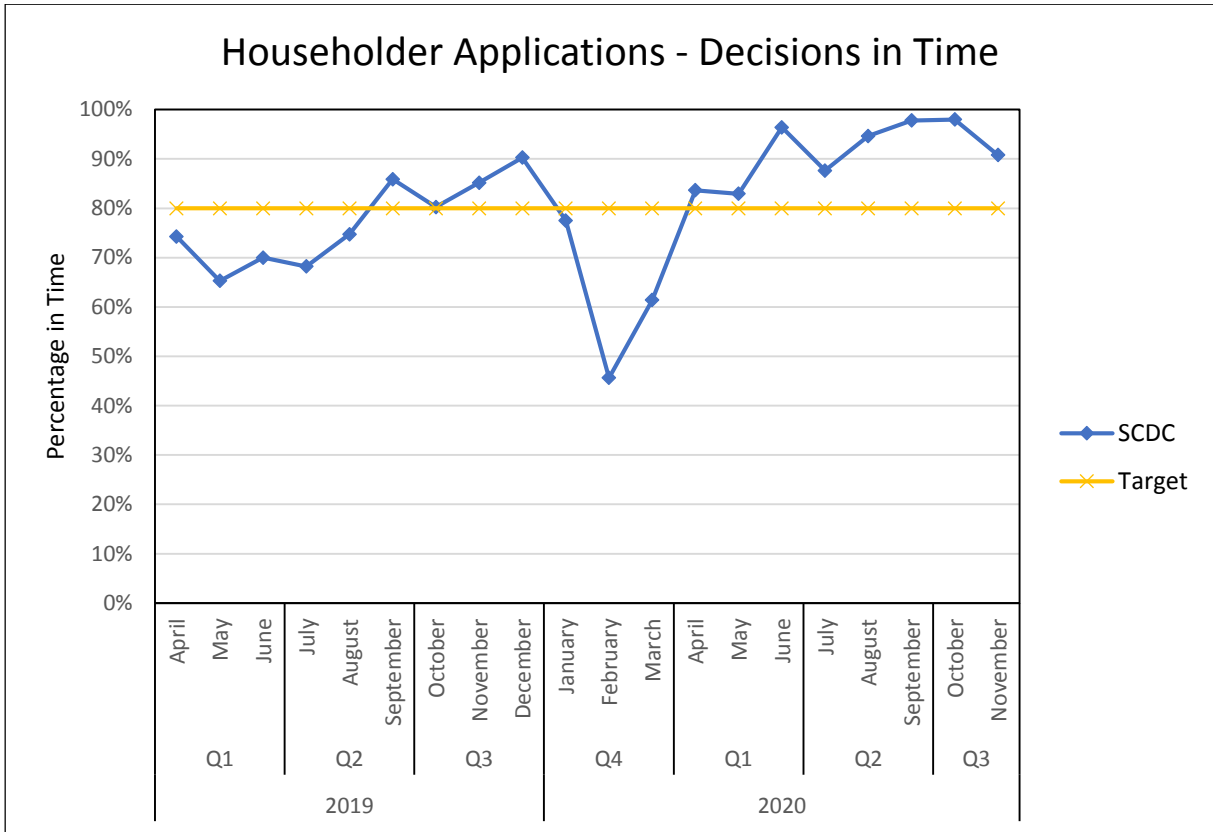


### Other Applications - Decisions in Time

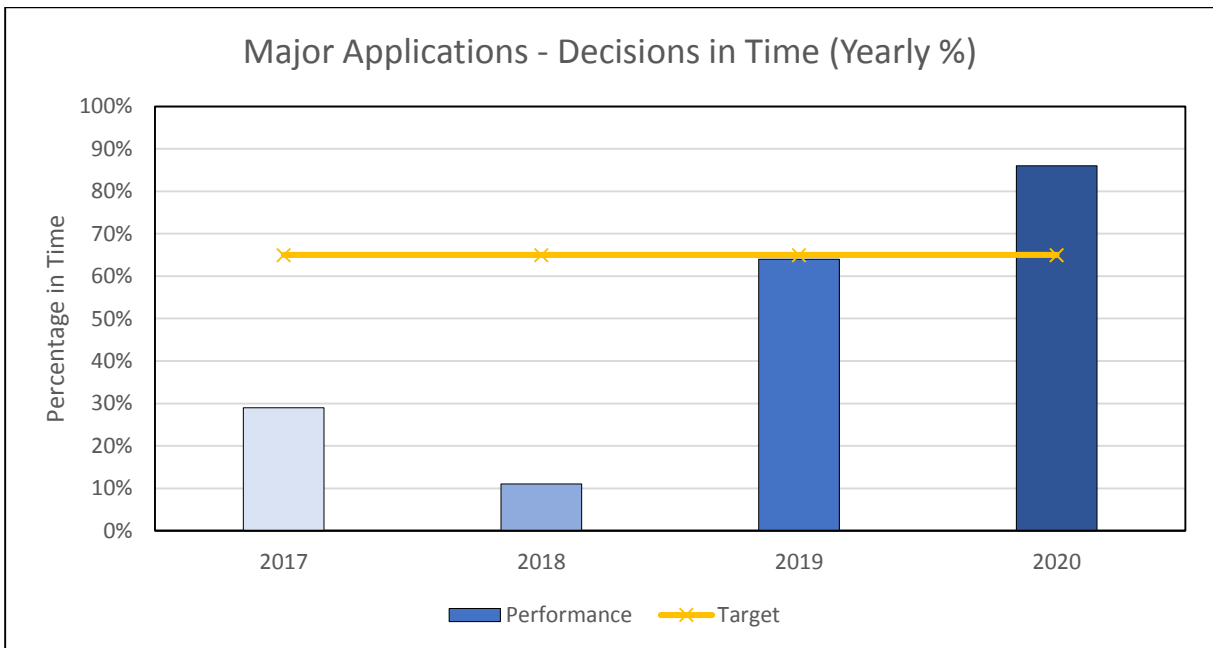


### Business Applications - Decisions in Time

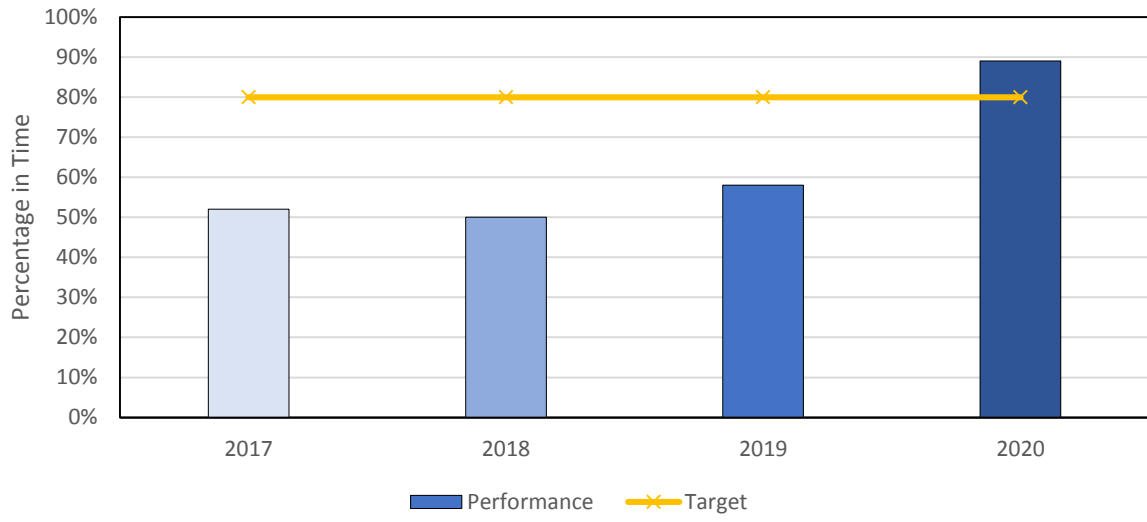




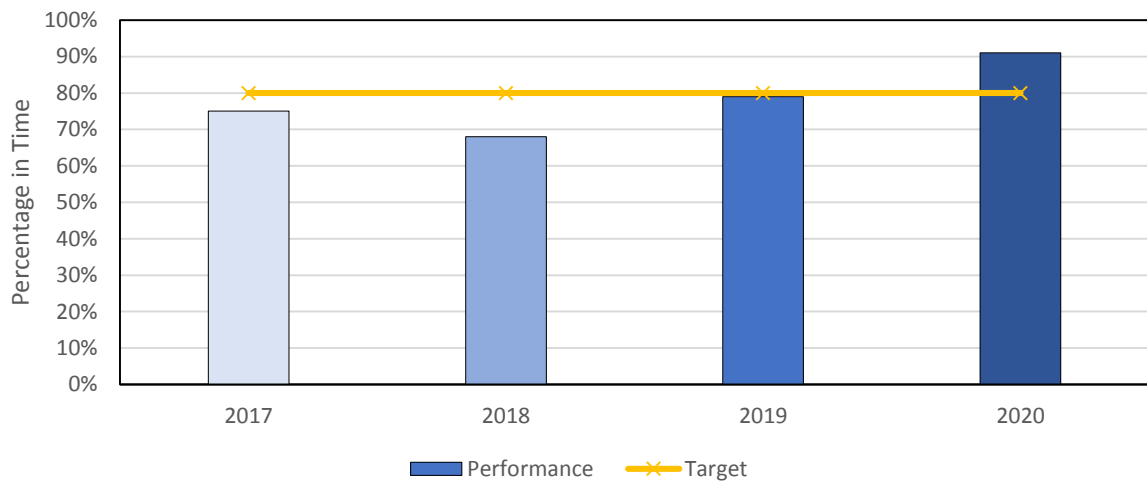
**Table 6 -Development Management Performance Comparisons 2017-2020**

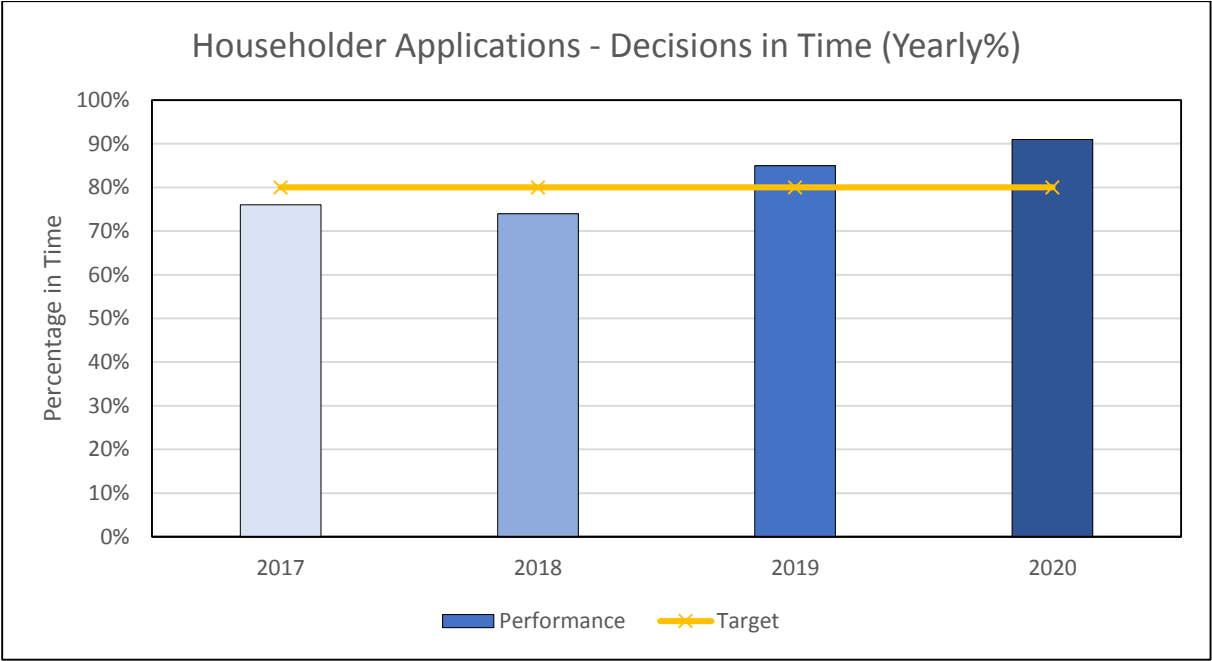


Minor Applications - Decisions in Time (Yearly %)

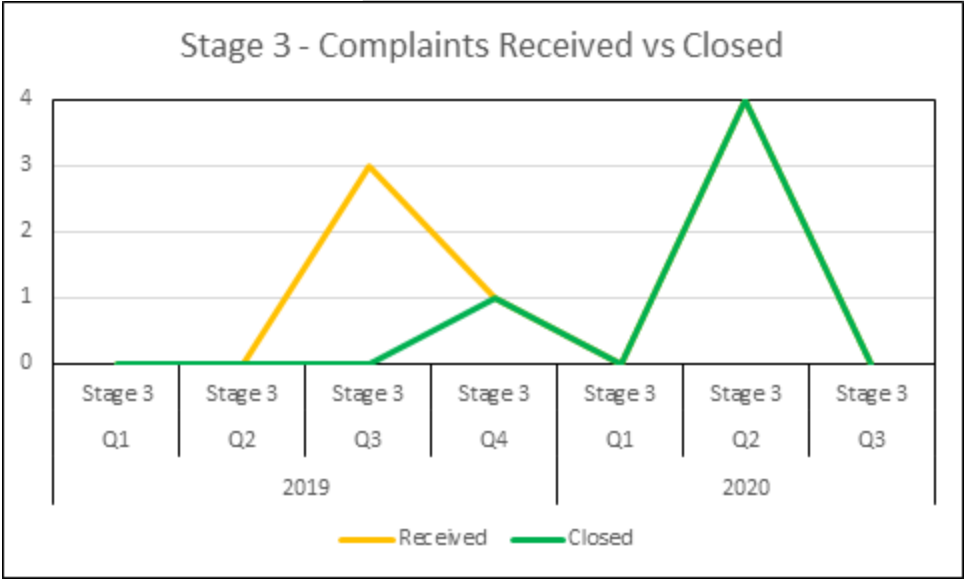
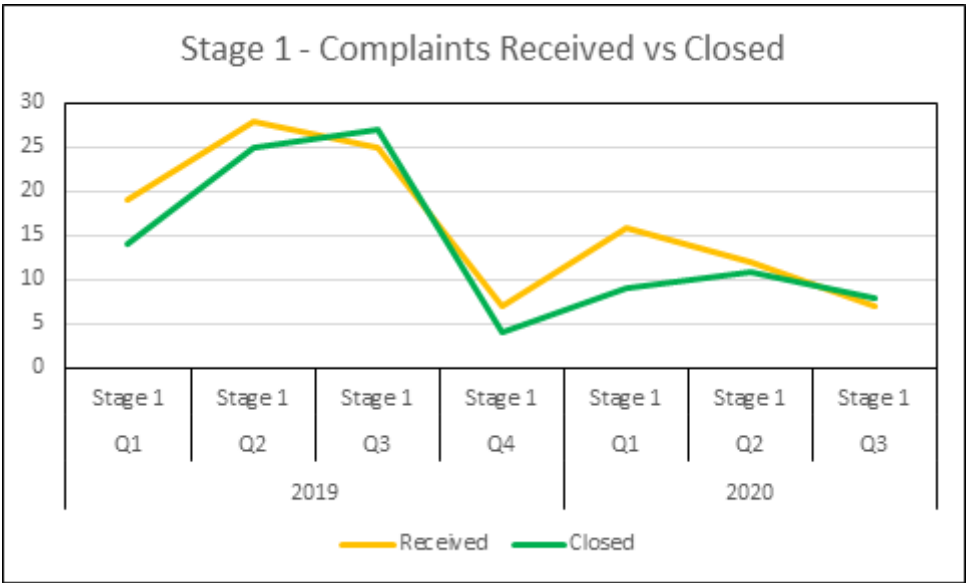


Other Applications - Decisions in Time (Yearly %)





**Appendix B Greater Cambridge Planning Service -complaints overview**



## Appendix C Development Management Backlog Overview

### Applications and pre-application requests cleared over the last four months between July and November 2020

Table A:

Since July:

- An overall reduction in cases over 8 weeks in the system of **34%**
- Applications over 26 weeks old with no agreed Extension reduced by over **40%**

Table A

Over 8 weeks old (1st July)	Over 26 weeks old (1st July)	Decided	Closed	Over 8 weeks old (30 November)	Over 26 weeks with no agreed extension
1610	811	766	319	1034	466

Table B showing the performance of the key application/case types

- A reduction of over 33% in the amount of major applications that are over the 26 week period with no agreed extension.
- Householder application backlog reduced by more than 50%
- A reduction in delayed pre-app responses of over 20% with further work taking place as a result of introduction of improved pre-application service.
- Number of Discharge of Conditions beyond 8 weeks has been reduced by 37%.

Table B

Category of application etc	Over 8 weeks 1 July	Over 26 weeks 1 July	Closed during 5 month period	Determined during 5 month period	Over 8 weeks 30 November	Over 26 weeks without EOT 30 November
Major	106	76	2	45	101	24
Minor	327	144	56	259	268	83
Householder	201	32	13	168	89	17
Discharges of conditions	443	137	36	279	271	122
Pre-apps	609	501	204	65	507	352
Trees	65	34	25	37	20	8



**Appendix D Delivery -posts, vacancies and temporary staff by section  
Development Management**

**Area Team 1**

9 posts

1 vacant principal planner post - no backfill

1 vacant senior planner post - with agency staff backfill

**Area Team 2**

11 posts including Access Officer

1 vacant principal planner post – with agency staff backfill until recently

1 vacant senior planner post - with agency staff backfill

**Area Team 3**

10 posts

1 vacant principal planner post -with agency staff backfill (backlog officer)

2 vacant senior planner posts - one with agency staff backfill and the other with agency staff backfill until recently.

**Strategic Sites**

17 posts

1 vacant principal planner - with agency staff backfill

1 vacant maternity cover principal planner post - no backfill

3 vacant senior planner posts - one with agency staff backfill, one with agency staff backfill until recently and one without agency staff backfill

1 vacant graduate planner post - no backfill

**Planning Enforcement**

7 posts

1 vacant Enforcement and S106 Manager - no backfill

1 vacant principal Enforcement officer post (covered by acting up)

1 vacant senior Enforcement officer post (with 2x agency staff backfill)

**S106 Team**

4 posts

None vacant

**Technical Support Team**

19 posts

5 vacant TSO posts (two permanent/three fixed term) - all with agency staff backfill

6 agency staff in total including two data cleansing officers

**Other Vacancies**

Special Projects Delivery Manager post - PPA funded (Cambridge East and North East Cambridge)

**Other temporary staff**

Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) principal planner - PPA funded

2x Interim DM Team Leaders - PPA funded

1 Public Practice officer (programme manager)

1 consultant on secondment from Greater Cambridge Partnership funded through PPA (Anglia Water DCO project)

**Total number of vacant posts =20**

**Total number of agency staff = 17**

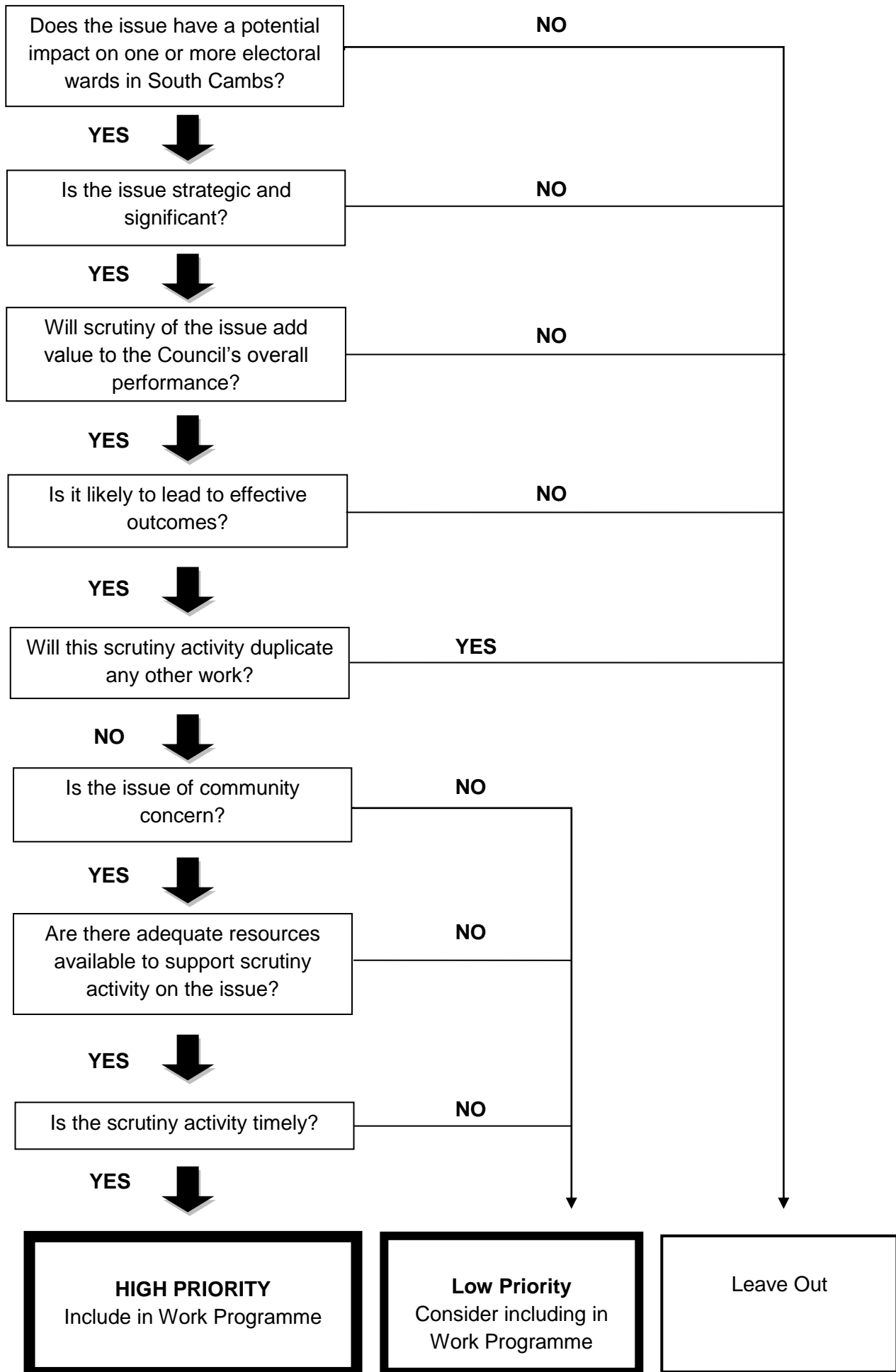
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## Scrutiny and Overview Committee Work Programme 2019/20

Meeting date	Potential Agenda item (subject to prioritisation by Chair and Vice Chair)	Task and Finish/Working Groups
<b>Every meeting</b>	Selected Key Decision items prior to Cabinet Selected Non-Key Decision items prior to Cabinet Work programme Feedback from task and finish groups	
<b>January 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential Property Investment Decision</li> <li>• Update on ICT</li> <li>• Treasury Management Strategy</li> <li>• Capital Strategy</li> <li>• General Fund Budget 2021/202</li> <li>• Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/2022</li> </ul>	Anti-Racist Task and Finish Group Covid-19 Task and Finish Group
<b>February 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential Property Investment Decision</li> <li>• 2020/2021 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring</li> </ul>	

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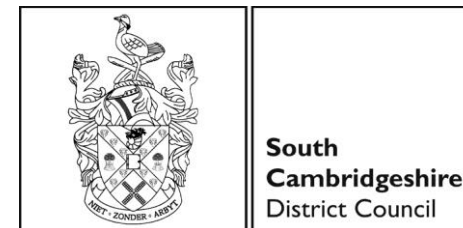
## Scrutiny Work Programme Prioritisation Tool



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## Notice of Key and Non Key Decisions

### To be taken under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 from 8 December 2020



Notice is hereby given of:

- Key and Non Key decisions that will be taken by Cabinet, individual Lead Cabinet Members or Officers
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part)

A Key Decision is a decision by the Cabinet, or an individual Cabinet Member or officer, which is likely to either incur significant\* expenditure or make significant savings, or to have a significant impact on those living or working in 2 or more wards.

\*A decision to:

- Page 27
- 1. Incur expenditure or savings in excess of £200,000; or
  - 2. Acquire or dispose of land or property with a value in excess of £1,000,000 shall be treated as significant for these purposes. However, a decision to invite a tender or award a contract shall not be treated as a key decision where the purpose of the contract is to fulfil the intention of any policy or scheme included in the policy framework or budget or involves a continuation of an existing policy or service standard.

A notice / agenda, together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restriction on their disclosure, copies may be requested from Democratic Services, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA. Agenda and documents may be accessed electronically at [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Formal notice is hereby given under the above Regulations that, where indicated (in column 4), part of the meetings listed in this notice may be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See overleaf for the relevant paragraphs.

*If you have any queries relating to this Notice, please contact  
Victoria Wallace on 01954 713026 or by e-mailing [Victoria.Wallace@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Victoria.Wallace@scambs.gov.uk)*

**Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)  
(Reason for a report to be considered in private)**

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**The Decision Makers referred to in this document are as follows:**

**Cabinet**

Councillor Bridget Smith  
Councillor Aidan Van der Weyer  
Councillor Neil Gough  
Councillor Bill Handley  
Councillor Tumi Hawkins  
Councillor Peter McDonald  
Councillor Brian Milnes  
Councillor Hazel Smith  
Councillor John Williams

Leader of the Council  
Deputy Leader (statutory), Strategic Planning and Transport  
Deputy Leader (non-statutory), Transformation and Projects  
Community Resilience  
Planning Policy and Delivery  
Business Recovery  
Environmental Services and Licensing  
Housing  
Finance



**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Potential property acquisition decision  Key  Page 29	Potential decision items relating to decisions to acquire property where in line with the Council's Constitution, the level of investment requires Cabinet agreement (acquisitions in excess of £2m). If no such decisions are needed, this item will be withdrawn.	Cabinet  Cabinet	18 January 2021  03 February 2021	Part or all of the report may be exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972	Lead Cabinet member for Housing  Peter Campbell, Head of Housing	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)
Potential Property Investment Decision  Key	Potential decision on potential Investment Strategy acquisition where in line with the Council's Constitution the level of	Cabinet  Cabinet	18 January 2021  03 February 2021	Part or all of the report may be exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act	Lead Cabinet member for Finance	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Page 30	investment requires Cabinet agreement. If no such decisions are needed, this item will be withdrawn.			1972	Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	
Update on Health and Wellbeing Strategy	To provide an update on the Council's Health and Wellbeing	Cabinet	18 January 2021		Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience and	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Non-Key	Strategy.				Health & Wellbeing  Lesley McFarlane, Development Officer - Health Specialist	
Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report Non-Key	To agree that the Greater Cambridge Authority Monitoring Report is published.	Cabinet	18 January 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Planning  Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)
Green Energy Investment Decision Key	Potential decision on potential Investment Strategy Stream 2 green energy investment. If no such decision is needed, this item will be withdrawn.	Cabinet	18 January 2021	Part or all of the report may be exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972	Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)
Empty Homes Strategy		Cabinet	18 January 2021		Lead Cabinet member for	Report (publication

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Non-Key					Housing Peter Campbell, Head of Housing	expected 13 January 2021)
Update on Cambridge Ice Rink  Non-Key Page 32		Cabinet	18 January 2021	Part or all of the report may be exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972	Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 13 January 2021)
Doubling Nature Strategy  Non-Key		Cabinet	03 February 2021		Siobhan Mellon, Development Officer - Climate and Environment	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)
Review of Reserves and Provisions  Non-Key	To review the level of Council's Reserves and Provisions as part of the 2021/2022 budget setting process.	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2020)

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Treasury Management Strategy  Key	To undertake the annual review of the Treasury Management Strategy.	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)
Proposed Fees & Charges 2021/2022  Key	To undertake the annual review and to determine non-regulatory fees and charges to be set by the Council for the provision of services from April 2020 (unless otherwise stated).	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)
Council Tax Arrangements 2021/2022: Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme  Key	To consider revisions to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)
Capital Strategy	To undertake the annual review of	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for	Report (publication

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Key	the Council's Capital Strategy.	Council	23 February 2021		Finance Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	expected 26 January 2020)  Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
Capital Investment Programme Key	To determine, for recommendation to Council, the Council's Capital Programme for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 together with the Council's proposed Prudential Indicators.	Cabinet  Council	03 February 2021  23 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
General Fund Budget 2021/2022 Key	To consider the summary General Fund Budget for 2021/2022 and to recommend the Budget to Council.	Cabinet  Council	03 February 2021  23 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
						February 2021)
Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/2022  Key	To consider the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2021/2022 and to recommend the Budget to Council.	Cabinet  Council	03 February 2021  23 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
NDR Discretionary Rates Relief Policy Update  Key	Adoption of updated policy following changes to reliefs by central Government. Government frequently introduces new/changes to rates and expects this to be delivered via the Council's discretionary powers, negating the need for	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
	legislative changes.					
Localised Council Tax Support Scheme  Key  Page 36		Cabinet  Council	03 February 2021  23 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)  Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
Review of the Business Plan  Key		Cabinet	03 February 2021		Leader of Council  Anne Ainsworth, Chief Operating Officer	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021) Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy Annexes  Key	Approval of draft policies for public consultation for Build to Rent, Affordable Housing Clustering and	Cabinet	03 February 2021		Lead Cabinet Member for Business Recovery  Julie Fletcher, Head of Housing	Report (publication expected 26 January 2021)



**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
	Affordable Rent setting as annexes to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy.				Strategy	
Financial Procedure Rules  Non-Key  Page 37	To review existing financial regulations to ensure that they remain sound for the purpose of ensuring proper administration of the Council's financial matters.	Council	23 February 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 15 February 2021)
2020/2021 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring  Non-Key	To consider the latest monitoring data in respect of the 2020/2021 revenue and capital budgets (Q3) and emerging budget issues.	Cabinet	22 March 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 12 March 2021)
Quarter 3 Performance	To review performance against KPIs and	Cabinet	22 March 2021		Cllr Neil Gough  Kevin Ledger,	Report (publication expected 12

**Key and non-key decisions expected to be made from 8 December 2020**

Decision to be made	Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date of Meeting	Reason for Report to be considered in Private	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer	Documents submitted to the decision maker
Non-Key	progress against Business Plan objectives as at end of Q3.				Senior Policy and Performance Officer	March 2020)
Pay Policy Statement  Non-Key  Page 38		Cabinet  Council	22 March 2021  15 April 2021		Lead Cabinet member for Finance  Peter Maddock, Head of Finance	Report (publication expected 12 March 2021)  Report (publication expected 7 April 2021)

# Agenda Item 8



**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny and Overview  
Committee

17 December 2020

**LEAD MEMBER:** Cllr Grenville Chamberlain, Scrutiny and Overview  
Committee Chair

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## **Scrutiny and Overview Committee Covid-19 Response Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference**

### **Executive Summary**

1. At its 12 November 2020 meeting, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee agreed to set up a task and finish group to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community facilities and how good practice could be used to benefit other parishes in the district.
2. The following Members were appointed to the group:
  - Councillor Grenville Chamberlain (Chair)
  - Councillor Claire Daunton
  - Councillor Jose Hales
  - Councillor Judith Rippeth
3. The group has drafted its terms of reference which are attached at Appendix A.

### **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee agrees with or without amendments, the terms of reference of the task and finish group.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. To agree the Terms of Reference for the task and finish group.

### **Implications**

6. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

There are no significant implications related to the Terms of Reference of the task and finish group. However, there may be implications of recommendations the task and finish group may propose. These will need to be assessed and considered in the course of the work of the task and finish group.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring Council**

7. The establishment of the task and finish group supports the above priority area in the Council's Business Plan.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Task and finish group Terms of Reference

### **Report Author:**

Victoria Wallace, Scrutiny and Governance Adviser

## **Covid-19 Response Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

### **Draft Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the group is to investigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community facilities in South Cambridgeshire, how these have been used in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, how SCDC has supported communities and how good practice could be shared to help other parishes in South Cambridgeshire.

#### **Scope**

The task and finish group will:

1. Review the community response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To review how good practice could be shared with other parishes in South Cambridgeshire.
3. To investigate how residents in South Cambridgeshire could be supported during the Covid-19 pandemic over the winter months, to prevent isolation and loneliness, while adhering to Government social distancing guidelines.

#### **Group membership**

Members appointed to the group are:

- Cllr Grenville Chamberlain (Chair)
- Cllr Claire Daunton
- Cllr Jose Hales
- Cllr Judith Rippeth

Other Scrutiny and Overview Committee members and non-executive members may input as needed. Executive members may be invited to contribute in an advisory capacity.

## Appendix A

### **Frequency of meetings**

The group will meet as frequently as is needed to complete the review.

### **Reporting**

The task and finish group will report its findings to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.