

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-017-2016/17**

**Date of meeting: 21 July 2016**



**Portfolio: Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee**

**Subject: Development Strategy – Council House-Building Programme**

**Responsible Officer: Paul Pledger (01992 564248)**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Development Strategy, at Appendix 1 of this report, be approved, with specific attention drawn to the Council continuing to charge Affordable Rents for all new Council homes built under the programme and that Affordable Rents also be charged for any purchased as new or purchased off the open market; and**
- (2) That the Development Strategy now be reviewed every three years, in line with the review period for other strategies, or earlier if circumstances make it necessary.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Since its formation in March 2013, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has considered a number of policies that has shaped the way the Council is delivering new affordable housing across the district as part of the Council Housebuilding Programme, all of which have been captured in the Development Strategy that was first agreed by the Cabinet in September 2013 and then updated in February 2014. This updated Development Strategy has been considered by the Council House-Building Cabinet Committee at its meeting in April 2016. However, the decision to adopt the Strategy rests with the Cabinet.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Responsibility for the approval of the Development Strategy rests with the Cabinet.

### **Other Options for Action:**

To not adopt the contents of the Strategy in the format presented and alter any of its statements, targets, standards, procedures or assumptions. However, this could have an effect on the feasibility studies already approved by the House-Building Cabinet Committee.

### **Report:**

1. Within the Terms of Reference for the House-Building Cabinet Committee, it states that “we will consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council’s House-building Programme on an annual basis”.
2. Since the Cabinet first adopted the Development Strategy in September 2013, we have continued to follow the Strategy to deliver our Housebuilding Programme. Further

policies were included to reflect the decisions reached by the Cabinet Committee in the February 2015 update.

3. The main change in this update is in respect of the Affordable Rent Policy, whereby all new homes built or are purchased as new, or purchased off the open market they shall be let at affordable rent. This also reflects the Council's decision to purchase new-build or open market properties in order to avoid returning unspent 1-4-1 receipts back to the Government.

4. The Development Strategy is set out at Appendix 1 of this report for consideration in detail and, subject to being satisfied with its contents, we recommend its approval to the Cabinet, together with the use of the supporting Design Standards and Employers' Requirements.

**Resource Implications:**

None.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Within its Terms of Reference, the House-Building Cabinet Committee is expected to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House-building Programme.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

The House-Building Cabinet Committee has considered the strategy and we support its contents.

**Background Papers:**

The various reports to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.

**Risk Management:**

Since the Development Strategy has a direct bearing on the financial viability and delivery of the Council's house-building programme, the greatest risks are that the assumptions prove to be incorrect resulting in each phase being un-viable.

Not gaining planning consent will present a risk of not only having to hand back to the Government one for one Right To Buy and HCA Grant, but also the risk to the Council's reputation with the respective Government Offices and the wider community for failing to deliver on its House-building targets.

Some risks are mitigated by the Council being able to learn from the experience of East Thames, who have been undertaking developments similar to that proposed in the strategy for some time.

Since the Cabinet Committee considers and signs off financial appraisals for every proposed development, the financial effects of the Strategy can be monitored. If, over time, a problem or theme is identified, the Cabinet Committee can review its policies.

In addition, a Programme-wide Risk Register has been developed and is reviewed regularly by the Cabinet Committee, where new risks and/or any actions to mitigate risks are agreed.

# Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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Within the Housing Service Strategy, it has been identified that the target groups that are affected by the Council's house building programme are people in need of:

- affordable housing,
- homelessness assistance,
- supported housing for special needs groups,
- owners and occupiers of poor condition housing
- council and housing association tenants.

From that, it was identified that generally, there is an under provision of suitable accommodation for nearly all target groups. This has been reaffirmed in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Decision making is affected by funding and other factors, such as the availability of building land suitable for particular groups e.g. the elderly or young families.