

# **Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel**



**Date of meeting: 15 December 2009**

**SCRUTINY**

**Chairman of Sub-Group: Cllr Mrs R. Brookes**



**Epping Forest District Council**

**Subject: Report of the Affordable Housing Sub-Group on Ways to Increase the Amount of Affordable Housing within the District and the Possibility of the Council Re-Commencing a Social House-Building Programme**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Director of Housing (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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## **Recommendations:**

- 1) That the report and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Sub-Group, attached as Appendix 1, on ways to increase the amount of affordable housing within the District and the possibility of the Council re-commencing a social house-building programme be considered;**
- 2) That the Housing Scrutiny Panel submits the report to the Cabinet for consideration, together with its own recommendations based on the report;**
- 3) That the report be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 by the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel;**
- 4) That the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Finance and ICT (Accountancy), submits to the Cabinet for approval a draft letter to the Minister of State for Housing and the Chief Executive of the Local Government Association (LGA) asking them if, in view of the Government's previous commitment to remove any obstacles that stop councils from building new Council homes, they could assist the Council to overcome the identified problem relating to the Council's Capital Financing Requirement, that currently makes a programme of new Council house-building financially unviable, due to the detrimental effect it would have on the Council's General Fund; and**
- 5) That those members of the Scrutiny Panel in attendance at the meeting of the Sub-Group approve the minutes, attached as Appendix 2, as a correct record of the meeting.**

## **Report**

1. At its meeting in July 2009, and at the suggestion of Cllr Mrs R. Brookes, the Housing Scrutiny Panel agreed to set up an Affordable Housing Sub-Group to consider ways of increasing the amount of affordable housing provided in the District.
2. The Sub-Group met on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and considered two detailed reports from the Director of Housing on ways in which the Council could increase the amount of affordable housing within the District and on the possibility and implications of the Council re-commencing a social house-building programme.
3. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the detailed report and recommendations of the Sub-Group, attached as Appendix 1. It is suggested that the Scrutiny Panel submits the report to the Cabinet for consideration, at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010, together with its own recommendations based on the report.

4. The report identifies a problem relating to the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CPR), that currently makes a programme of new Council house-building financially unviable, due to the detrimental effect it would have on the Council's General Fund. One of the report's recommendations is that the Council writes to the Minister of State for Housing and the Chief Executive of the Local Government Association (LGA) asking them if, in view of the Government's previous commitment to remove any obstacles that stop councils from building new Council homes, they could assist the Council to overcome the identified problem. It is suggested that the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Finance and ICT (Accountancy), drafts a letter to the Minister and LGA for approval by the Cabinet at the same meeting.

5. Since the Sub-Group does not intend to meet again, members of the Sub-Group are asked to approve the minutes, attached as Appendix 2, as a correct record of the meeting.