

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 17 MARCH 2015

COUNCIL HOUSING ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT UPDATE 2012/13 – 2014/15

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report looks at our approach to the delivery of new council housing and the options available to us to increase our own housing stock.
- 1.2 This report shows the progress of our Council Housing Acquisition & Development programme over the last 3 years.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The introduction of the New Council Housing finance regime introduced as part of the Localism Act enabled the Council to re-look at its Housing Strategy and how it can best meet the aims of the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 One of the key aims relating to housing within the Corporate Plan is helping provide affordable housing for local people.
- 2.3 In response to the above, the Cabinet agreed from 2012/13 to invest additional funds for the acquisition and development of new affordable housing.
- 2.4 This has all been achieved through newly set up Project Teams, Project Boards, EMT, Heads of Service, Tenant & Member consultation, support and involvement which has set the direction with the following teams working together to meet this goal;
 - Housing – Development, Needs, Asset Management & Rent Accounting
 - Property Services – Estates & Valuation, Building Works & Surveying & Technical
 - Planning – Development Control, Environmental Design
 - Legal – Conveyancing, Property/Land.

This has been a good example of cross service working and shows the skills and determination across the Council to meet this new objective.

3. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO COUNCIL TO INCREASE OUR OWN HOUSING STOCK

3.1 HOUSING BUY-BACK

This is the purchase of former council homes previously sold under Right to Buy. Due to the lead in time needed to implement new build programmes this has been our primary means of quickly securing new properties over the past 3 years.

3.2 NEW BUILD ON HOUSING PORTFOLIO LAND

This involves the assessment of potential development sites within our District. This is a new area of work for this Council and is very resource intensive. The advantage with this option is that it provides additional units of housing stock, that wouldn't otherwise be built.

3.3 PURCHASING S106 UNITS

This is where the Council directly purchases units from private sector developers through partnership arrangements. This is an attractive option in many ways for both the Council and developers. For the Council it removes the complex work involved in working up and delivering schemes from the start. For the developer, this approach provides a simple way of providing their affordable housing obligations and provides a good level of security.

4. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

4.1 HOUSING BUY-BACK

We have reached our target of acquiring 100 properties over the 3 years. These properties are across our District and offer a range of property types, mainly family homes.

4.2 NEW BUILD ON HOUSING PORTFOLIO LAND

Four 1 bed units have been built on a site in Testwood Crescent, Totton.

4.3 PURCHASING S106 UNITS

Four 2 bed units were purchased in Keyhaven Road, Milford on Sea.

See Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of the progress to date.

5. **CURRENT & FUTURE PROJECTS**

5.1 HOUSING BUY-BACK

Buy-backs will continue to form an important element within the overall strategy but it is hoped that numbers will decrease here as other options to secure new properties come forward.

5.2 NEW BUILD ON HOUSING PORTFOLIO LAND

Planning permission has been approved for 21 family units on the North Milton Estate. This is due to start in April 2015.

A feasibility study is currently being carried out on a site in Totton which could provide up to 35 units. Further details will be provided after appropriate consultations have been completed.

5.3 PURCHASING S106 UNITS

There are a number of possible developments under consideration and/or negotiation.

These include the following;

Sopley – looking at 24 units

Ringwood – Looking at 40 units

Pennington – Possible 18 units

Lymington – Possible 40 units.

6. **EXAMPLES OF OTHER PROJECTS CURRENTLY BEING WORKED ON THAT WILL INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOMES AND IMPROVE OUR EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.**

- 6.1 A working group has been set up to assess for potential development sites within the Housing Portfolio. This would bring forward additional housing units
- 6.2 Directly working with housing associations to obtain sites and properties to create additional affordable homes.
- 6.3 Working with partners such as Hampshire County Council and the National Park to enable us to develop on their sites.
- 6.4 Converting and extending our existing stock to meet current and future need. This includes re-configuring former sheltered schemes & making use of unused communal areas, converting bedsits to 1 bed flats and 3 bed Houses to 4 or 5 bed houses.
- 6.5 Continuing with our enabling role and maintaining close working relationships with our housing association partners to assist in the development of new affordable homes.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 There has been good progress in the acquisition of new council housing following the changes to the Housing Revenue Account financing. This has been accomplished with a lot of hard work and resolve across many teams within the Council.
- 7.2 This has primarily been achieved through the buy-back of ex-council houses but we have completed smaller schemes through developments on our own land and purchasing of S106 units from private developers through their affordable housing obligation.

7.3 This range of options will continue to be required to achieve our desire to increase our own council housing stock but it is hoped that with the current work in progress, more new homes will be provided through new developments.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Panel notes the contents of the report.

For further information please contact:

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Background Papers:

None.

Appendix 1

Housing Development & Acquisition Actuals 2012/13 - 2014/15	Buy-Back	Housing Land New Build	S106 New Build	Total
Total	100	4	4	108
<i>PROPERTY TYPE</i>				
House	88		4	92
Bungalow	2			2
Flat	9	4		13
Maisonette	1			1
<i>BEDROOM SIZE</i>				
1 bed	5	4		9
2 bed	16		4	20
3 bed	71			71
4 bed	5			5
5 bed	1			1
6 bed	2			2
<i>AREA</i>				
Waterside	44			44
Totton/Calmore	16	4		20
Ashley/New Milton	10			10
Lymington/Pennington	16			16
Ringwood/Fordingbridge	13			13
Milford-on-Sea			4	4
Bransgore	1			1
<i>Total Cost £'m</i>	18.5	0.65	0.7	19.85