

## NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### 1. RECOMMENDATION:

- 1.1 That Cabinet approves the Housing Development Plan at Appendix 1.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In a single framework document the Housing Development Plan (HDP) encapsulates the many principles, policies and processes that inform and shape the Council's affordable housing development activities, including the corporate objective to deliver 600 additional Council homes by 2026.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Originally identified as an action in the Housing Strategy, the HDP fulfils a number of aims.
- A business plan to frame housing development aims and objectives
  - To establish focus, scope and parameters for housing development activities
  - To document the primary evaluation and decision-making processes
  - To document the physical standards and financial assumptions that underpin the development activities
  - To recognise and set out housing development processes and procedures, and the approach to risk and risk monitoring and mitigation
  - To establish consistency of approach and clarity of purpose – creating a benchmark to measure against and a mandate to work within.
- 3.2 Since then the content and proposed approach to the HDP has been reviewed to take account of the changing financial and delivery environment of the last two years, as well as responding to guidance and recommendations arising from internal audits.
- 3.3 Following a similar format to other Strategic Housing documents, the Plan “tells the story”, providing background policy and housing need information; the Council's development objectives and delivery to date; the standards and principles; the financial context since the target period commenced; and matters related to governance and procedures.

### 4. ISSUES

- 4.1 Many aspects of the HDP are already in place and have been a part of development activities for a number of years, not least in connection with processes and audit

requirements related to receiving Homes England grant,<sup>1</sup> however, some new procedural requirements will need to be implemented to accord with the HDP including the establishment of the Housing Development Panel (see section 13).

- 4.2 It will be noted that development standards within the HDP incorporate high aspirations with reasonable degrees of flexibility. This is necessary to enable the Council to advance different procurement routes which offer different scope for control; to ensure that the Council is able to be competitive, and to offer adaptability when arising opportunities require financial tailoring.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It will be noted that the HDP incorporates a financial section which sets out the original HRA assumptions and the expenditure to date for the first 254 affordable homes. Although the section confirms how the first phase of development has been within the originally envisaged cost parameters, it concludes on a cautionary note identifying the cost challenges which can be expected to impact on the remaining programme.

## **6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Where opportunities arise, and to meet the requirements of the Planning system and Building Regulations, commissioned schemes will be designed having regard for “Secured by Design” principles.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Housing Development Plan provides a framework to underpin the Council’s affordable housing development activities. The type and tenure of homes that are brought forward through the Plan and the households they serve, will reflect priorities that have been identified within the Council’s adopted Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy; through the Council’s Housing Register, and from other proven sources of data.
- 7.2 Opportunities will be sought to address specifically arising needs and the Council will aim to commission all newly built homes to adaptability standards, thereby assisting those who may have limited mobility in years to come. All homes will be allocated in accordance with Council Housing Policy and to meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and Homes England.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Housing Development Plan and the standards within it, reflect the Council’s wider aspirations to create balanced communities for residents as well as providing a range of housing options that are affordable and sustainable, and that create safe and desirable places to live. Unless exceptionally agreed all future new build schemes directly commissioned by the Council will meet the Future Homes Standard and higher environmental levels, thereby reducing carbon emissions and contributing to the net zero target by 2050.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council has been subject to two separate external Homes England Development audits in the last three years and have passed them with ‘green’ lights.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Housing Development Plan provides a policy context and a framework, for the affordable housing development aims of the Council and the overall Development Programme. Many aspects of the Plan are already in practise and have underpinned the delivery of the first 254 affordable homes.
- 9.2 In addition to the regular reporting that is given to HHOSP, the advancement of the Housing Development Panel will improve the wider accountability and transparency for decision-making, as well as progress being made towards the overall Housing Strategy target, and capital spending under the HRA.

## **10. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL COMMENTS**

- 10.1 The Panel endorsed the Housing Development Plan which they found extremely helpful and informative in understanding the principles, plans and processes surrounding the Council's delivery of its own affordable housing programme.

## **11. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendation contained within this report.

### **Background Papers:**

Housing Strategy December 2018

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