

## HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2015

### DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Wednesday, 17 June 2015. Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Cabinet or to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Victoria Wallace.

#### 1. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The Housing Portfolio Holder recommended further work was undertaken on the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure Statement to make it more concise, and that it be brought back to a future Portfolio Holder meeting for decision.

**Other Options Considered:** It is recommended the Portfolio Holder approves the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure Statement. The Portfolio Holder may prefer to recommend that further work is undertaken on the policy and procedure documents and brought back to a future Portfolio Holder meeting for decision.

**Reason For Decision:** There are statutory obligations that the Council must comply with when responding to reports of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. These have been refreshed with the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The proposed revised policy and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour ensures that these statutory obligations are addressed within the Council's overall approach.

#### 2. SOCIAL HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD POLICY

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the Social Tenancy Fraud Policy subject to the addition of some further detail to the policy.

**Other Options Considered:** The Portfolio Holder may wish to require extra work be completed on this policy and brought back in the near future for a decision when that work is completed.

**Reason For Decision:** The Council's housing stock is a valuable asset which provides security and stability to many adults and families. Those who commit fraud deprive people who are genuinely in need from accessing social housing. The Council is committed to tackling fraud as a priority and this policy provides a framework to achieve that aim.

#### 3. COMMUNAL FACILITIES USE AND CHARGING POLICY

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the adoption of the Communal Facilities Use and Charging Policy.

**Other Options Considered:** The Portfolio Holder may choose to require that the policy is further revised and brought back for consideration at a future Portfolio Holder meeting.

**Reason For Decision:** The Charging Policy has been introduced to be able to charge

groups, external businesses and residents who use the communal rooms at the Council's sheltered housing schemes to offset against service charges incurred by the residents on any of the Council's sheltered schemes.

#### 4. **NEW BUILD STRATEGY (COUNCIL HOMES) 2015-2018**

The Housing Portfolio Holder :

- a) **APPROVED** the refreshed New Build Strategy 2015-18.
- b) **APPROVED** affordable rent levels for new build properties that do not exceed the Local Housing Allowance cap, which is equivalent to approximately 65-70% (Option C).
- c) **APPROVED** the principle for the potential to build market sale homes to support the financial viability of schemes.
- d) **NOTED** the Affordable Housing Delivery Programme 2015/18 and the financial viability defaults.

#### **Other Options Considered:**

- Option A:** To approve the refreshed New Build Strategy 2015-18 at Appendix 1 and to suggest changes or additions where required. This will enable the Council to meet its key objectives for the delivery of Council new build homes, as well as the business planning for the housing development agency.
- Option B:** To approve affordable rent levels for new build properties up to the maximum level permitted of 80% market rents. This option is not recommended because 80% market rents are higher than the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payable in many areas of the District which may make homes unaffordable for many in housing need. Typically, a two bedroom house at 80% market rent is approximately £147, which is £6 per week above LHA; therefore tenants receiving full housing benefit will need to find an additional £24 per month or fall into rent arrears.
- Option C:** To approve affordable rent levels for new build properties that do not exceed the Local Housing Allowance cap, which is equivalent to approximately 65-70% of market rent dependent on location. This is the preferred option as it ensures rent levels are kept as low as possible whilst supporting the long term viability of the Council new build programme. This is aligned to the position taken by the majority of developing registered housing providers in the District and accords with the Council's Tenancy Strategy.
- Option D:** To approve the principle for the potential to build market sale homes to support the financial viability of schemes as set out at point 7.1 in the New Build Strategy.
- Option E:** To note the Affordable Housing Delivery Programme 2015/18 at Appendix 4. As the HDA progresses, further development options may be brought back to the Housing Portfolio Holder.
- Option F:** To note the financial viability defaults at Appendix 5. Each scheme will be subject to robust financial viability modelling and the viability defaults will be reviewed every six months and approved annually.

**Reason For Decision:** The New Build Strategy sets out the key development principles that will be adopted and developed by the Council as it continues its house building programme. It is a refresh of the original strategy dated 2012-2015 to take the development pipeline forward.