

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder
LEAD OFFICER: Stephen Hills – Director of Housing

16 October 2013

Design Guide for New Build Council Properties

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide guidance on the essential principles to follow in the design of the Councils own affordable housing projects.
2. This is not a key decision because the Design Guide provides guidance only for the expected standards we want to achieve in our own Council properties, and it was first published in the March 2013 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Housing Portfolio Holder approves the content of the Design Guide to enable officers to introduce a consistent approach to the standards in our new build properties

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The guidance is necessary to ensure that the Council is able to adopt a consistent approach to the design standards we expect in our new homes.

Background

5. The Councils new build strategy which was approved by Cabinet on the 8th November 2012, stated as part of its overall action plan that it would require a “Design and Standards Charter “ to include the principles of the Housing Quality Indicator, as provided by the Homes and Communities Agency system and provide for sustainable development that will ensure quality homes.
6. The Council has now appointed an external set of consultants who are employed as the Councils Design Team. This was another action arising from the New Build Strategy and was necessary to ensure that this design guide was produced.

Considerations

7. The decision to build new council housing in South Cambridgeshire means that SCDC will be able to contribute to the shortfall in newly built affordable homes.
8. SCDCs aim is to achieve safe, secure, easily maintained, warm, energy efficient, environmentally sustainable, affordable housing within the constraints of available finance. The Council will actively promote a programme to develop new council owned homes to help meet housing need across the district.

9. The design brief attached at Appendix A exceeds the minimum standards required by the Council's generic design guidance for new developments. The guidance will be reviewed annually to ensure that it never falls below the Council's generic standards.

Options

10. The Housing Portfolio Holder has the option to approve the Design Guide in its current form.
11. The Housing Portfolio Holder alternatively, may wish to seek amendments to the current draft and request that the Director of Housing ensures that these amendments are made.

Implications

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Financial

13. This report itself has no financial implications but the parameters in which it operates in relation to its links and impact to the Councils New Build Strategy will require funding to be made available to deliver the targets set out in the action plan contained within the new build strategy

Legal

This report itself has no legal implications but the projects arising out of it will require our in house legal team to draft appropriate agreements for land acquisitions and planning agreements.

Staffing

15. There are no specific staffing requirements arising from this project at this stage

Risk Management

16. Risk logs will be developed against each new build project that SCDC undertakes.

Equality and Diversity

17. An equality impact assessment has been carried out for the purposes of the attached design guide.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

18. Consultation has been carried out with the Housing Management and Technical Services Team. There has been no response to the document from the Youth Council

Effect on Strategic Aims

19. The Affordable Homes Service plan is important to help deliver all three of the Councils main strategic aims.

Background Papers

New Build Strategy 2012-2015

<http://moderngov/documents/s67997/New%20build%20strategy%20-%20rep.pdf>

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