

**REPORT TO:** Housing Portfolio Holder  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Director of Housing

1 April 2014

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## **Council Housing - New Build Strategy Update**

### **Purpose**

1. This report highlights the progress that has been made against the actions set in the Council Housing - New Build Strategy 2012-2015.
2. This is not a key decision because the report has been requested by members to update them on the progress against the actions set in the New Build Strategy which was adopted by the Cabinet on 8/11/12.

### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that Housing Portfolio Holder note the content of this report.

### **Background**

4. Following on from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing debt settlement at the end of March 2012, the Council has now embarked upon a new build development programme. The council has identified that an investment surplus of circa £30million will be available by 2022 and this should assist in the provision of circa 200 new homes being built for people in housing need.

### **Considerations**

5. The decision to build new council housing in South Cambridgeshire means that the Council will be able to contribute to the shortfall in newly built affordable homes.
6. The Council's 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.
7. The council has delivered its first four new properties, on time and within the agreed the budget. Four one bed houses were completed in Linton in time for the residents to move in before Christmas 2013.
8. A full update on the current status of the new build programme is attached at Appendix A, along with an updated Action Plan at Appendix B.

### **Options**

9. This report is for information only.

## **Implications**

10. 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***

11. As set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy adopted by the Council in February 2014, a surplus is being made available each year in the HRA to enable a programme of around 20 new homes per year in the first ten years to be built. The HRA Business Plan is updated each year to reflect changes in the operational conditions under which the surplus is generated. Further detailed modelling will be undertaken during 2014 to ensure that the capital cashflows are monitored closely as increased levels of construction get underway.

### ***Legal***

12. To date we have been using our own internal legal team to assist in the transfer and purchase of land. However with this work now steadily increasing the Head of Housing Strategy and Development has consulted with the Head of Legal Services and it has been agreed that in future we will be able to use the Councils external legal advisors Walker Morris to oversee this work on the Councils behalf.

### ***Staffing***

13. In October 2012 a new member of staff was brought into the Housing Strategic Services Team to assist in the delivery of this programme. The new build programme is predominately being managed by the Head of Housing Strategy and Development. The new development officer is now leading on the day to day enabling role which oversees the partnerships with the Registered Providers. The workload is steadily increasing and we have identified that a further resource may be required during 2015/16 to assist further in the increasing workload.

### ***Risk Management***

14. Separate risk logs are kept for the housing service and the HRA Business Plan. These identify that the biggest single risk to the future of the Housing Revenue Account self-financing regime would be changes from central Government that may result in a reduced level of investment surplus. The Council has yet to develop a precautionary exit strategy should this occur and this is an action that now features on the amended and updated action plan as outlined on the attached appendices.

## **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

15. No consultation was required for the purposes of this report.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

#### **Aim 4: ENGAGEMENT**

16. Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages

#### **Aim 5: PARTNERSHIPS**

17. Build new council homes to provide affordable accommodation to meet the needs of local communities

## **Background Papers**

New Build Strategy, Cabinet meeting, 8/11/12  
Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

**Report Author:** Schuyler Newstead – Head of Housing Strategy and Development  
Telephone: (01954) 713332