



**Report To:** Housing Portfolio Holder  
**Lead Officer:** Director of Housing

16 March 2015

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## Affordable Homes Draft Service Plan 2016/17

### Purpose

1. To provide the Housing Portfolio Holder with an update on the progress of the 2015/16 Service Plan and approval of the 2016/17 Affordable Homes Service Plan.
2. This is not a key decision but has been brought before the Housing Portfolio Holder because it sets out the proposed key actions for the Affordable Homes Service for the forthcoming year.

### Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Housing Portfolio Holder approves the Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2016/17 and notes the progress to date on existing projects within the 2015/16 Service Plan.

### Reasons for Recommendations

4. The draft Service Plan actions for 2016/17 set out in **Appendix 1** have been developed taking into account the key aims and objectives of the Council, central government direction and the forthcoming priorities for the Affordable Homes Service.

### Background

5. Draft actions to be included in the service plan for 2016/17 were agreed at the Housing Portfolio Holder meeting on 18 November 2015. These have now been incorporated into the Affordable Homes service plan template for monitoring throughout the year.

### Considerations

6. As part of this process, the current service plan for 2015/16 has been reviewed on its progress as outlined below:

#### **P1 – Property Company**

Council owned housing company to buy, sell and rent properties on the open market to provide a rate of return for the council. This is a pilot project reporting to cabinet in Nov 2015

#### Successful pilot project completed

- Branding agreed - Ermine Street Housing
- Generated an additional income stream in excess of £100,000 for the Council
- Provided the opportunity for learning in a new area of business.
- Business Plan approved by Cabinet in November 2015 for the expansion of the housing company. This includes the establishment of a Governance Board and investment of up to £100M over a five year business period, with the aim of owning and managing 500 properties by the end of that period.

#### **P2 – New Build Pipeline**

<p>To source a pipeline of schemes to deliver a council house new build programme. To explore options for a Housing Development Vehicle with potential of working with City and City Deal partners. To contribute council new build homes to the City Deal target of 1000 additional new homes on rural exception sites by 2031</p>
<p>Update report to Housing Portfolio Holder March 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh of New Build Strategy approved by Portfolio Holder June 2015</li> <li>• Onsite with schemes at Swavesey and Foxton (35 affordable council homes)</li> <li>• Purchase of 4 properties at Linton as part of a private development</li> <li>• Establishment of H DA in progress (carried forward to service plan 2016/17)</li> </ul>
<p><b>P3 – Wilford Furlong/Brickhills, Willingham</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work closely with residents to create a sustainable and viable scheme of regeneration of the estate.</li> <li>• Focus on property condition, hard and soft landscaping, roads and parking.</li> <li>• Added value in terms of extra homes as infill development</li> </ul>
<p>Update report to Housing Portfolio Holder March 2016. Project carried forward into service plan 2016/17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident surveys complete and stock condition surveys undertaken</li> <li>• Established resident panel</li> <li>• Open day held October 2015</li> <li>• Phase 2 (energy efficiency) carried forward to service plan 2016/17</li> </ul>
<p><b>P4 – Housing Strategy 2016-2020</b></p> <p>To update the existing Housing Strategy for 2016 –2020</p>
<p>Strategy postponed due to proposed changes within the Housing &amp; Planning Bill and Welfare Reform Bill. Carried forward to service plan 2016/17.</p>
<p><b>P5 – Specialist Support Services (part of Commercialisation programme)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an arms length entity/business</li> <li>• An activity to bring in funding from a variety of other sources</li> <li>• Deliver a service which plugs the gap between housing, health and social care</li> <li>• Potential to make financial return for the council</li> </ul>
<p>Report considered by EMT on 13 January 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed not to take the project any further as it could not be demonstrated that these services were viable to run as a commercial entity.</li> <li>• The management arrangements for the Visiting Support service which is fully funded by a County Council contract and the Lifeline alarm service which is self funding through external charges would be reviewed.</li> <li>• The Lifeline Plus pilot project was coming to end and an exit strategy would be put in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>P6 – New Home Link Contract</b></p> <p>Procurement of a new contract with an IT supplier to ensure the continuation of the current sub-regional choice based lettings scheme.</p>
<p>Project complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract tendered – May 2015</li> <li>• Contract awarded to new supplier – August 2015</li> <li>• Implementation phase – looking to ‘go live’ Spring 2016</li> </ul>
<p><b>P7 – Commuted Sum Project</b></p> <p>To implement a transparent and fair system for the allocation of commuted sums within a set timescale and establish a process for a preferred partner list with registered providers</p>
<p>Project complete – report considered by Housing Portfolio Holder October 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed that the default position for future funding should be to contribute to the Council’s own new build programme, other than those schemes previously earmarked.</li> <li>• Agreed that where monies cannot be spent within the set timescale, the funding shall be offered to housing associations where a need of additional resources is required to make an affordable housing scheme viable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>P8 – Leaseholder Services Review</b></p> <p>Review of existing Leasehold Services</p>
<p>Project complete – outcome of Review reported to be reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder in 2016.</p>
<p><b>P9 Energy Generation Project (part of the Commercialisation programme)</b></p> <p>To generate an income stream for the Council through opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations for the installation of solar panels (PVS) as well as other initiatives in relation to energy efficiency.</p>
<p>Project withdrawn due to cut in Government funding. Looking at alternative options.</p>

### **Options**

7. The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the key actions identified for the 2016/17 Service Plan and to suggest changes or additions where required.

### **Implications**

8. 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: -

There are no significant implications arising since the draft actions for the service plan 2016/17 were agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder on 18 November 2015.

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

9. The Tenant Participation Group has been kept informed of the key challenges and priorities facing the housing service in the coming year.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

10. The Affordable Homes Service Plan is important for all four of the Council's main strategic aims.

### **Background Papers**

None.

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