

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**17 APRIL 2025**

**REPORT OF PLACE SELECT  
COMMITTEE**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Lead Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Housing – Cllr Richard Eglington**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**SUMMARY**

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Affordable Housing.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) / DECISION(S)**

This topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024-2025. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Place Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) The outcomes of the Affordable Housing Option Appraisal to date are supported, and officers be requested to carry out further investigation into a hybrid model to address the borough's affordable housing need, which should include:
  - Enabling (which may include for example the Council seeking an increased requirement for the provision of affordable housing on sites the Council owns i.e. above our minimum planning requirement)
  - Partnerships with Registered Providers and Developers – partnerships may be a single partner or several partners and can come from a variety of sectors
  - Direct delivery (model to be determined)
- 2) Correspondence is sent to Central Government to ask that the regulations for returning empty homes back into use are reviewed to ensure a more streamlined and strengthened process.
- 3) Given the current demand for social/affordable housing, the Council (via its website and other means as appropriate) provide regular updates to applicants regarding general property availability and demand (for example with information on the average number of properties advertised per month/the average number of bids made on each property per month), in an attempt to manage applicant expectations.
- 4) Following Cabinet approval, and six months after the implementation of the revised Common Allocation Policy, an update be provided back to the Committee on the impact of

banding changes (i.e. to provide a breakdown of applicants who have secured accommodation).

- 5) Council notes that Local Housing Allowance rates are not close to real costs, and local landlords are increasing rents to such a rate that people cannot afford, and this is putting pressure on local authorities to house people. Council therefore calls on central government to take this into consideration when reviewing Local Housing Rates and within the Renters Rights Bill.

## **DETAIL**

1. Affordable Housing are homes for those whose housing needs are not met by the private market. This includes affordable rent, social rent, rent to buy schemes, shared ownership schemes and discounts for market sale/first homes.
2. The demand for affordable and social rented housing in the borough is increasing across all needs groups e.g. families, singles and couples, those with health needs, and those seeking supported housing to enable independent living, as well as all housing bands. However, the number of properties being advertised per week has reduced. The number of people on the register therefore outstrips number of affordable homes currently available and being built and is projected to do so going forward. The aim of the review was to identify potential options for how the council can increase the supply of affordable rented housing in the borough and therefore address the housing need.
3. The Committee has taken evidence from several relevant SBC services and stakeholder organisations, including Planning Services, Lettings & Nominations Team, three Registered Providers: Beyond Housing, North Star and Thirteen, and three private developers: Keepmoat, Storey and Taylor Wimpey North Yorkshire. To ascertain how other LA's are meeting their housing needs best practice was sought from Northern Housing Consortium and LGA who shared a variety of projects being carried out across the country. A report by a local resident group, Housing Action Teesside, was also reflected upon.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

4. The provision of good quality affordable housing makes a direct positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the boroughs residents and helps to address inequality. The topic supports Stockton-on-Tees Plan's Priority 3: A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit: A great place to live and call home.
5. An Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment has been completed which determined that the reviews recommendations will potentially have a positive impact on the protective characteristics of Disability, experience of care, and poverty.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

6. There are no direct implications in the report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no direct implications in the report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. There are no direct implications in the report.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

9. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS**

10. This review is relevant to all Wards across the Borough.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11. None.

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