

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP - THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CABINET RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Review Recommendations		Cabinet Response		Implementation for consideration by Management Team	
		Agreed?	Comments	Responsibility	Timescale
1.	<p>Key Recommendation</p> <p>The following local definition of affordable housing is adopted by Sedgefield Borough Council:</p> <p>“Affordable housing is that which can be afforded to meet the needs of a household who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the open housing market, due to the relationship between local incomes and house or rental prices in the open housing market.</p> <p>“Affordable housing consists of either “social housing” whose rent levels are set in line with Government rent policy, and “intermediary housing” such as shared ownership/reduced rental products that enable households to own part of their property.</p>	Yes	The local definition provides a clear policy steer for the delivery of affordable housing in the Borough. The Local Planning Authority in both determining planning applications and within the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document should use the definition.	Charlie Walton	Ongoing

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	"Affordable housing should be provided on the development site ensuring that they are integrated with open market value housing and they remain affordable in perpetuity."				
2.	Key Recommendation The Housing Needs Study is updated during 2007/08 to reflect changes in the housing market and to provide a valid evidence-base to demonstrate affordable housing needs within Sedgefield Borough	Yes	An up-to-date evidence base on which sound decisions are made is essential. Provision has been made in the 2007/8 revenue budget to procure a new Housing Needs Survey. Any decision to proceed would have to be taken with in the strategic context of the emerging sub regional Housing Market Assessment.	Glyn Hall & Colin Steel	June 2008
3.	Information on house price data and local incomes is continuously monitored and updated and options to improve data available, including suitable software systems, be explored	Yes	An up-to-date evidence base on which decisions are made is essential. The Council together with the other district authorities are commissioning a Housing Market Assessment study to provide an analysis of the current market.	Chris Myers	Data already acquired Housing Market Assessment to report by 1 st Oct
4.	Housing land supply and house build data is continuously reviewed and updated	Yes	An up-to-date evidence base on which decisions are made is essential.	Chris Myers	Ongoing

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5.	Arrangements are made to secure access to independent specialist support for site-specific cases, in relation to individual development sites where unknown development costs are a key issue	Yes	There is no in-house expertise to deal with development costs. Independent advice is therefore essential to ensure that the provision of affordable housing is maximised on housing sites.	Charlie Walton	As required. Site-specific issue.
6.	The Council's housing allocations policy is kept under review to ensure it meets local circumstances and needs prior to the implementation of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme	Yes	The allocation policy will be subject to regular review a report on this issue will be presented to Cabinet at the end of April. Further reports on Choice based lettings will be presented as at future dates as required.	Colin Steel	April 2007
7.	The Borough Council formalises links with the registered social landlord sector in respect of nominations	Yes	Formal nomination agreements with all RSL have recently been agreed.	Colin Steel	Completed
8.	Sedgefield Borough Council works to ensure the effective use of private sector stock through regeneration and action to bring empty properties back into use	Yes	The implementation of the master plan, private sector licensing and the development of an empty homes strategy will help ensure the effective use of the private sector housing stock in the Borough	Glyn Hall	An implementation programme will be completed for phase 1 by May 2007

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9.	Key Recommendation A Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing is developed for Sedgefield Borough by September 2007	Yes	The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document will provide an up-to-date and clear policy steer for developers.	Chris Myers	September 2007
10.	Key Recommendation The Borough Council's Planning and Legal Sections work jointly to produce a model Section 106 agreement, based on good practice guidance	Yes	The development of a model Section 106 agreement will reduce the timescale for granting planning permission. This will help the Borough Council achieve the BVPI target for determining major planning applications within 13 weeks.	Charlie Walton & Dennis Hall	May 2007
11.	The effective use of Borough Council resources (financial and land) be reviewed, linked to the delivery of affordable housing in areas of high housing need, when necessary	Yes	The council have already earmarked Capital receipts from land sales to be used for regeneration and affordable housing.	Glyn Hall & Alan Smith	Ongoing
12.	The Borough Council assumes a role in enabling potential development sites to come forward for affordable housing to meet housing needs when appropriate	Yes	A joint approach between planning and strategic housing will be required to ensure when appropriate the development of sites is enabled through the planning system.	Chris Myers & Dianne Hedley	As required