

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2021



Title of Report	ESTABLISHMENT OF HOUSING STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP	
Presented by	Councillor Sean Sheahan and Andy Barton Strategic Director of Housing & Customer Services	
Background Papers	Housing White Paper 2020 New Supply Strategy NWL 2020 Local Plan Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	None identified at this stage	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	None identified at this stage	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	The Task and Finish Group will require additional resources to help support it but this can currently be managed within existing resources.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee	To ask the Committee to establish a Task & Finish Group comprised of Community and Corporate Scrutiny Members to formulate a report to Cabinet to help inform the review of the affordable housing element of the Housing Strategy, due for renewal in 2021/22.	
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) THAT A TASK AND FINISH GROUP BE ESTABLISHED TO CONSIDER THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY; (2) THAT THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN THE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK & FINISH GROUP, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX A, BE AGREED. (3) THAT THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK & FINISH GROUP BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE MEMBERS FROM BOTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEES; (4) THAT AUTHORITY BE DELEGATED TO THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CHAIRMEN OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES, TO SEEK NOMINATIONS FROM THE GROUP WHIPS TO FILL THE SEATS ON THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP. 	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A suggestion for inclusion on the Committee's work programme has been made which asks the Committee to review if and how North West Leicestershire District Council could influence an increase in the supply of affordable housing within the district.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed that, in order to ensure an appropriate level of support and focus is given to this topic, a Task and Finish Group be established with a view to assisting and establishing the evidence base and direction of the review of the Housing Strategy; and to present this to Cabinet to help inform its decision.
- 2.2 It is considered that as the Housing Strategy has implications for the whole district and is an overarching topic which touches on issues covered within the remit of both Scrutiny Committees, the membership of the Task and Finish Group should be widened to include members from both the Corporate and the Community Scrutiny Committees whilst still being based on the principles of proportionality.
- 2.3 The draft Terms of Reference of the Task and Finish Group are appended to this report and will be updated once the membership has been agreed.
- 2.4 Meetings will be held, as required, culminating in a draft report for consideration by the Community Scrutiny at its meeting scheduled for 19 May 2021 where the final recommendations will be conveyed to Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 8 June 2021 where a final decision will be made.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Local people live in high quality, affordable homes
Policy Considerations:	Housing Strategy
Safeguarding:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Equalities/Diversity:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Customer Impact:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Economic and Social Impact:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Environment and Climate Change:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None identified as part of this report but will be considered as part of the work of the T&F Group
Risks:	Affording detailed scrutiny of this topic will help Cabinet when agreeing its final decision and will minimise any potential risk of challenge or call in.
Officer Contact	Andy Barton Strategic Director of Housing & Customer Services Andy.barton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group

Terms of Reference

What if the Role of Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group?

To review if and how NWLDC can influence an increase in the supply of affordable housing in the district and make recommendations to Cabinet.

What are the Principles of the Review?

To consider

- What is the level of affordable housing need in the district, and what should be the Council's target re meeting it? (Review of available housing needs data and existing targets, Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) data review, links to the new Local Plan and associated housing targets)
- What could be the Council's role in supply as a landlord?
- What is the role of Registered Provider Partners in supporting new provision of affordable homes?
 - Direct delivery – either using strategic Homes England partner grant funding, or Continuous Market Engagement (CME) scheme based bids.
 - Partnership schemes – risk sharing with RP's by subsidised land supply, or part acquisition of completed schemes.
 - Use of commuted sums from Section 106 to support schemes, or direct grant funding
- What is the approach recently established in New Supply Strategy (2020)
 - Council new build – more/less/the same? quality v quantity balance. – land supply approach to enable the above
 - Council acquisitions - section 106/existing satisfactory are they good VFM? Something to be pursued more actively? Or rolled back?
 - Section 106 – bidding strategies, currently the “purchaser of last resort” on small schemes – is this the right approach?
 - Funding – HRA borrowing appetite? Trade-off between investment in stock (Decent Homes 2), Zero carbon and new supply investment – set against new and known

What is expected of members of the Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group?

To ensure that NWLDC is playing its part in ensuring the delivery of the right amount and type of affordable homes to meet the needs of the communities of the District. This includes its role in terms of direct delivery as a landlord and the wider strategic enabling role, of helping and supporting others to deliver new affordable homes.

They will assist with establishing the evidence base and direction of the Housing Strategy refresh which will be completed in 2021/22; and make recommendations to Cabinet.

Who has voting rights on the recommendations?

Only elected Members (or their substitute) have voting rights.

Members of the Task and Finish Group

- Conservative – name tbc
- Conservative – name tbc
- Conservative – name tbc
- Labour– name tbc
- Labour– name tbc
- Lib Dem/Independent– name tbc

Where any of the above councillors are not able to attend a meeting, they may select a councillor of their choosing to take their place drawn from either of the Scrutiny Committees.

What is expected of officers of the Task and Finish Group?

- Provide professional advice, as required, throughout the task;
- Ensure effective administration of the working group including provision of agendas and minutes;
- Help formulate the views of members into a number of recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

Officers of the Cross-party Working Group

- Andy Barton, Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services
- Chris Lambert, Head of Housing
- David Scruton, Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager
- Melanie Long, Democratic Services Team Manager
- Rachel Wallace, Democratic Support Officer

How often will the Group meet?

- Meetings will be held, as required, culminating in a draft report for consideration by the Community Scrutiny at its meeting scheduled for 19 May 2021 ahead of a final report being considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 8 June 2021.