

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

17 May 2010

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 STRATEGY AND ENABLING UPDATE

Summary

This report updates Members on the progress being made by the Council's Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners in providing new affordable housing in the Borough, and summarises the programmes for 2009/10 to 2011/12. The report goes on to describe the progress on housing strategy matters.

- 1.1.1 The effective negotiation, planning and delivery of affordable housing forms one of the key priorities of the Council's housing service. Allied to this is the need to track and monitor the progress of RSLs in delivering new schemes. Failure to secure a steady supply of new homes has a direct knock-on effect on the levels of homeless households placed in temporary accommodation or bed and breakfast. Members will be aware that the Council is under a duty not to house homeless families with children in bed and breakfast except in an emergency, and then for a period not exceeding six weeks.
- 1.1.2 While we are dependent on our partners to ensure timely delivery of new housing, the Council also has a role to play in tracking performance. This is important to ensure that any difficulties arising on new schemes are highlighted early on and corrective action taken.
- 1.1.3 Set out at **[Annex 1]** is a monitoring spreadsheet showing the completed schemes in the year to date and the development programme to 2011/12. The table identifies:
- the scheme address;
 - RSL provider;
 - start on site (SoS);
 - total number of units to be provided (rent and/or shared ownership);
 - detailed split of rent and shared ownership units;

- expected date of completion; and
- information on progress.

1.1.4 Members should be aware that details on some schemes may alter where planning permission has yet to be secured. The number of units to be provided is therefore an indicative figure for strategic purposes, pending confirmation of final scheme details. As new schemes come forward these will be also be added to the schedule.

1.2 Homes & Communities Agency Update

1.2.1 Members will recall that In January the Homes & Communities Agency underwent a staffing and office restructure in the south east. Previously the HCA (and Housing Corporation before it) had been based in Croydon, but under the new structure the HCA staff relevant for Tonbridge & Malling will be based in Ashford.

1.2.2 The Council invited the new HCA staff to meet with our Housing and Planning teams by way of an introduction, and also to overview the Single Conversation which is the new process of allocating grant for affordable housing.

1.2.3 This initial meeting was very productive, and helped to inform the formal Single Conversation Inception Meeting with the HCA on the 30 April, which was also attended by the other west Kent authorities.

1.2.4 Members will be kept fully informed on the implementation of the Single Conversation process for the Council in future papers to this Board.

1.3 HCA Proposed Core Housing Design and Sustainability Standards Consultation

1.3.1 The HCA is currently consulting with its partners on potential future design and sustainability core standards. The HCA wish to be seen delivering their commitment to be at the forefront of good design quality and sustainability in housing.

1.3.2 The consultation seeks “the views of stakeholders on options for core standards, their level, and how, if adopted, they should be applied and phased in to operation”.

1.3.3 The consultation paper can be found on the HCA’s website here:

http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/public/documents/Consultation_All.pdf

1.3.4 The Housing and Planning teams are seeking to respond jointly to this important consultation document, and would welcome Members feedback on the issues raised.

- 1.3.5 The joint response to the HCA will be shared with Members at later meetings of this Board.

1.4 Kent & Medway Housing Strategy Update

- 1.4.1 Members will recall the emergence of the Kent Housing Strategy, which is now titled the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy. The development of the Strategy itself is a commitment in the Kent Regeneration Framework, and is being led by a Housing Task Group, chaired by the Chief Executive of Medway Council and which reports to the Kent Economic Board (KEB). The Director of Health and Housing also attends the KEB Housing Task Group.
- 1.4.2 The stated ambition for the project is to develop a “fit for purpose Housing Strategy for Kent and Medway that provides strategic direction, innovation and actions as a response to the huge diversity of housing need and opportunities across Kent and Medway”.
- 1.4.3 Since the last report to this Board a draft copy of the Kent & Medway Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been circulated to Stakeholders, as undertaken by the consultant DTZ. This document serves as the evidence base for the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy.
- 1.4.4 The first draft of the actual Kent & Medway Housing Strategy will be available in May.
- 1.4.5 I will keep Members informed of the progress of the Kent & Medway Housing Strategy through future reports to this Board.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Council needs to secure a sufficient supply of affordable housing to meet its statutory duties.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The National Affordable Housing Programme is the means by which public subsidy is secured for the delivery of affordable housing. RSLs must adhere to strict value for money and design considerations imposed by the HCA.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 Failure to secure sufficient investment in affordable housing could mean that the Council is unable to deliver its local strategic housing priorities and meet its statutory obligations to the homeless and others in housing need.

Background papers:

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Nil

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