

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date **29 September 2022**

Report of: **Head of Housing Delivery**

Subject: **Affordable Housing Strategy Review**

SUMMARY

This report concerns the adopted Affordable Housing Strategy, and the recommendation that a review of this document is undertaken.

The report provides the Panel with an initial overview of those areas of the adopted Strategy that are recommended for change/update to ensure it is reflective of progress to date, that the information and data is correct, and that the objectives/actions are appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Housing Scrutiny Panel consider the contents of this report and make any comments, suggestions, or raise any points for clarification on the proposed approach to the review prior to officers formulating the draft Affordable Housing Strategy (Review) document.

INTRODUCTION

1. The existing Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted by the Council in October 2019. Members of the Panel have previously been provided with a hardcopy of the document, which is also available on the Council's website [here](#).
2. In the three years since the Strategy was adopted several of the Fareham Housing development sites have been completed and new sites have been identified. Evidence around affordable housing need in the Borough has also changed (e.g. the Housing Register figures), the emerging Local Plan is now in the latter stages of the examination process, and other more minor changes have occurred. Collectively this has dated various aspects of the Strategy, thereby indicating a review is appropriate.
3. The proposed review will also provide an opportunity to expand on the information and objectives relating to the Council's own affordable housing stock.

PROPOSED CHANGES/UPDATES

4. It is not proposed to alter the broad structure of the document. Key changes/updates currently anticipated include: -

What is Affordable Housing? (page 8 of the Strategy)

Updates to the example figures to bring them more in line with current data and replacement of references to 'Starter Homes' with 'First Homes'.

Affordable Housing Need (page 11 of the Strategy)

Factual updates to reflect the evidence on affordable housing need that was used as part of the examination process on the Council's emerging Local Plan. This includes evidence suggesting a need for 2,783 new affordable homes between 2021 and 2037. It will also clarify that this is made up of a range of affordable tenures (e.g. not just affordable homes for those on the Council's Waiting List).

Waiting List (page 12 of the Strategy)

Updates to reflect the 2022 review of the Housing Register (approximately 550 households rather than the previous 1,000)

Shared Ownership (page 13 of the Strategy)

It is suggested that the title of this page/section be changed to Affordable Home Ownership (recognising that other products, such as First Homes, can/do exist). This section to be updated with an approximate number of households currently interested in affordable home ownership, and information around their current housing arrangement.

This will utilise the data officers are building on our in-house affordable home ownership register, which compliments the externally held/managed Help to Buy South database.

Local Plan (pages 14 & 15 of the Strategy)

Various updates to reflect the emerging Local Plan; what it says on housing need, affordable housing delivery, and an overview of affordable housing policy requirements for planning proposals.

The Last and the Next Five Years (pages 16 & 17 of the Strategy)

Various updates to reflect Fareham Housing projects delivered, and anticipated

projects in the coming years. Also updating information around anticipated delivered via Registered Providers.

Other

5. Several further updates will be incorporated where statistics or data can/should be updated; where terminology around affordable home ownership should be expanded (for instance references to 'Shared Ownership' changed to affordable home ownership); and where other relevant policies/strategies have been adopted.

PROPOSED ADDITIONS

6. The review of the Strategy could also contain more information around the Council's existing housing stock.
7. The Council remains the largest affordable housing provider in the Borough and these homes are predominately over 50 years old. This can present some challenges and is likely to be a matter of some increased focus moving forward.
8. Some facts and figures on the number and age profile of the stock could be included in the review along with the need to maintain and improve this stock within budgetary constraints. The review could indicate that in some cases it may be appropriate to rationalise some stock following the 'right homes, right place' principle. An example might be where some homes are in low demand due to their type and/or location, and/or where energy efficiency issues will remain without substantial investment. On some of these occasions there *could* be justification to sell that home with the funds then facilitating more investment elsewhere on existing or new affordable homes that meet our 'right home right place' principle.

OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

9. The Objectives and Actions from the Strategy remain broadly fit for purpose. Beyond minor updates, the objectives will be altered to include an emphasis on the improvement of existing affordable housing (relevant for the Council as well as some Registered Providers operating in the Borough).

TIMELINE

10. The progress of the review will be timed alongside, or soon after, the Council's emerging Local Plan. At this stage it is intended that a draft Affordable Housing Strategy Review document will be developed to then be discussed at a future Housing Scrutiny Panel. The document would then be taken to the Council's Executive seeking approval for consultation on the review document before it is then adjusted and adopted.
11. The progress of the review will be dependent on the Local Plan examination process outcome. It will not progress to consultation ahead of any decision on the Local Plan 2037.

RISK ASSESSMENT

12. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report. Of note is that the progress and timing of the review would be interlinked and dependent on the outcome

of the Local Plan examination process. Should the Local Plan not be found sound, or not be adopted, then the Affordable Housing Strategy Review would need to be reconsidered.

CONCLUSION

13. Many achievements have been made against the objectives and actions of the existing Affordable Housing Strategy (2019). In parts the existing Strategy contains statistics and information which is no longer up-to-date or relevant. In addition, the emerging Local Plan will need to be reflected in the document if it is found 'sound' and adopted.
14. The Strategy will therefore be updated, with the intention to adopt a revised Strategy in 2023/24. This will follow a public consultation period on the changes and an Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: Affordable Housing Strategy (2019)

Enquiries:

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