

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY LOG OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Committee	Review Title	Rec. No	Summary of Recommendations	Status	Head of Service	Target Date	Notes	Updates (4 th July 2018)
Scrutiny	Housing Services	1	Cabinet should consider what more the Council can do to help housing associations to provide more affordable and social housing in Swale	Accepted	A.Christou	On-going	<p>Cabinet's response: Agreed. The council works in close partnership with these key organisations, meeting regularly, and supporting funding bids for their homes with the Homes and Communities Agency National Affordable Housing Programme. As the scrutiny committee review report confirms, the operating landscape of social housing providers is changing, and it has become more challenging for them to provide the level of affordable rented housing that is needed within the borough. Housing association Boards are now taking difficult decision to focus more greatly on shared ownership housing, than rented housing, due to viability of house building schemes and the requirement of the lenders. This does not accord with Swale local plan requirements, or the needs of local residents and this will be fully considered within the development of the upcoming housing and homelessness strategy for Swale.</p>	<p>In Swale affordable housing delivery is subsidised through Homes England grant funding, allocated to Housing Associations (HA's).</p> <p>There are several Housing Associations currently delivering or interested in developing in Swale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optivo ▪ Moat ▪ Hyde ▪ West Kent Housing Association ▪ English Rural Housing Association ▪ Golding Homes ▪ Grainger (New to the area (Jan 2018)) ▪ Sage Housing Association (New to the area June 2018) ▪ Sanctuary Housing <p>Update meetings are held with HA's to discuss upcoming sites, the percentage of affordable delivery required on each site, and the tenure split between affordable rent tenure homes and shared ownership housing.</p> <p>New HA's are encouraged to develop in Swale, and in the last six months Grainger HA have provided 22 affordable rented flats in Sittingbourne, and Sage HA have recently made enquiries about a further two sites in the Sittingbourne area.</p> <p>The 2017/18 affordable housing delivery target was 85. Delivery exceeded this with 132 new affordable homes provided, split as 72 affordable rent tenure and 60 shared ownership housing. Three HA's provided all of the units; the two largest providers were Optivo and Hyde, followed by Grainger.</p> <p>Areas in greatest demand for those in housing need or applying as homeless is in the areas of Sheerness and Sittingbourne. However, these areas either have</p>

								<p>with very low or zero affordable housing delivery requirement due to viability, and this should be reviewed during the next Local Plan review.</p> <p>The council is currently considering how to further support the increase of affordable housing in the borough in partnership with HA's. A current proposal to be considered by Cabinet on the 11 July 2018, is to agree whether to use the remaining £180,000 commuted sum with Optivo HA to enable the delivery of an additional eleven affordable homes across two Council owned sites in Iwade and Oare.</p>
Scrutiny	Housing Services	2	Cabinet should consider ways to provide housing associations a closer role in planning applications for housing developments, e.g. by routinely consulting them	Accepted	A.Christou	On-going	<p>Cabinet's response: Agreed. Housing associations partners are engaged in the development of the local plan, and consulted in all relevant planning policies as well as discussions on a site by site basis, as housing developments come forward. We will continue to seek additional ways to provide a closer role where possible and appropriate.</p>	<p>Planning routinely consults Housing on all sites due to deliver more than ten dwellings, this is normally at pre-application stage and then again when the application is submitted. This involves partnership working with HA's, private developers and Planning colleagues.</p> <p>The Strategic Housing Manager facilitates partnership working and meetings to ensure sites are brought forward with an appropriate amount of affordable housing that adheres to policy, unless viability permits otherwise.</p> <p>HA partners make use of this enabling resource regularly.</p>
Scrutiny	Housing Services	5	That the Housing Team, supported by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, bid for capital funding should any empty properties become available that owners agree to let the Council use	Accepted	A.Christou	On-going	<p>Cabinet's response: Agreed. The Council supports owners and landlords to secure cost-effective loans to renovate properties to bring back to use with some success. If and when such properties become available, the council will take a proactive approach, including where possible bidding for funds to make best use of the property to meet local needs.</p>	<p>The Private Sector Housing Team continues to work with KCC's 'No use Empty' scheme. This provides a consultant and interest free loans to people to assist in renovating properties that have been empty for more than 6 months. Funding levels are up to £25k per unit to a maximum of £175K for multiple units. The housing team is currently working to identify owners of properties that have been empty for longer than 2 years and continue to take a proactive approach to finding solutions.</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing Manager and the Council Tax Manager are undertaking a joint project to maximise the use of empty homes within the Borough for both short and long term empty properties.</p>
Scrutiny	Housing Services	6	Cabinet should consider whether	Accepted	A.Christou	On-going	<p>Cabinet's response: Agreed. With the soon to</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the Allocations Policy Review which is required in light of the New</p>

			the residency criteria (i.e. living in Swale for four years out of five) in Swale's housing allocations policy is a help or hindrance towards helping those in housing need, and if the latter, whether the policy should be reviewed				be implemented Homelessness Reduction Act, and recent case law affecting Reasonable Preference requirements the allocations policy does require a full review, and this will begin by May 2018.	Homeless Reduction Act enacted on the 3 April 2018. This review will commence in 2018.
Scrutiny	Housing Services	7	That Cabinet can be encouraged to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government drawing attention to the severe pressure Swale was facing in housing homeless families	Accepted	A.Christou	On-going	Cabinet's response: Agreed.	It appears this letter was not sent. However, in light of the introduction of the new Homelessness Reduction Act implemented in April 2018, the new Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities, has taken the opportunity to send a jointly signed letter from the Leader highlighting the current situation in Swale, noting the impact the introduction of the new Act has had on the Housing Team highlighting the additional workload, increasing administration burden, a continued increased in the demand for temporary accommodation and an advice service that has been unwelcomed by the public so far.