

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

TUESDAY, 22 JUNE 2021

Present:

Councillors Clarence, D Cox, H Cox, Hocking, Jenks, Nutley, Orme, Parker and Parker-Khan

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Connett, Dewhurst, MacGregor and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Foden, Rollason and Thorne

Officers in Attendance:

Martin Flitcroft, Chief Finance Officer & Head of Corporate Services
Amanda Pujol, Head of Community Services and Improvement
Graham Davey, Housing Enabling and Development Manager
Alison Dolley, Private Sector Housing Team Leader
Jack Williams, Performance Data Analyst
Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

33. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that councillor H Cox be elected Chair. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Councillor H Cox be elected Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

34. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Jenks be elected Vice Chair. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

Councillor Jenks be elected Vice Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

35. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee held on 20 April 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

38. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

None.

39. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan listing items to be considered by the Executive over the next few months was noted.

40. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme as circulated with the agenda was noted.

41. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR CONNETT, STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The leader of the Council updated the committee on progress of services within his portfolio of Strategic Direction.

During his update the Leader referred to the following:

- The priorities were climate change, jobs and homes.
- The full effect of Brexit and Covid on the economy was not known.
- In regard to climate change progress included: work on the leisure centres was being undertaken to make the buildings energy efficient; the Councils online services were expanding providing easier access for residents of rural areas; and the tree planting scheme was continuing.
- Progress on increasing job opportunities included the successful £9 million Future High Street Fund for improvements to Newton Abbot town centre.
- The Councils T100 programme to provide homes for the most needed was continuing, an increasing number of empty homes were being brought back into use, and the government required 751 new homes to be built in Teignbridge.

The Leader of the Council's full update as Executive Member for Strategic Direction can be viewed at the link below.

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 - Tuesday, 22nd June 2021 at 10:00am - Teignbridge District Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

42. EMPTY HOMES POLICY

The Committee considered the agenda report which updated on the work being carried out by the Authority on empty homes and set out the draft Empty Homes Policy at Appendix A.

The Executive Member for Communities, Housing and Information Technology referred to the number of empty homes in the District, which could be categorised as long term or short term empty, the latter being for example between occupancies or on the market for sale. The Executive Member paid tribute to staff across departments who were working to achieve empty homes returning to occupancy.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- There were difficulties bring flats above commercial premises into residential use;
- Some premises were temporarily empty due to being between occupancies;
- Empty homes were classified by Council Tax depending on why and how long they have been left empty. This included for example, owners in hospital or receiving care etc and may be exempt from paying council tax. Appendix 1, the empty homes policy demonstrates the categories of dwellings which were exempt from Council tax payment;
- Owners of unoccupied and substantially unfurnished empty properties receive a discount of 100% for 1 month, followed by 100% Council tax charge.
- Premiums are applied to annual Council Tax charges once properties, falling outside of exemption categories, have been empty for 2 years plus to encourage owners to bring properties back into use sooner, as follows:
 - 2 years or more – 100% premium (i.e. twice the annual charge)
 - 5 years or more – 200% premium (i.e. three times the annual charge)
 - 10 years or more 300% premium (i.e. four times the annual charge)
- The New Homes Bonus rewarded local authorities for net additional homes added to the Council Tax Base, thereby seeking to incentivise authorities to encourage housing growth. Introduced in 2011, It applied in respect of additional new builds and conversions delivered above a baseline of housing growth, using the national average band D council tax rate. It also applied in respect of long-term empty properties brought back into use, and there was a premium for affordable homes.

RECOMMENDED

The Executive is recommended to adopt the Empty Homes Policy as set out in Appendix A to the agenda report.

43. COUNCIL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q4

The Performance and Data Analyst referred to the agenda report covering the period 1 January to 31 March 2021, which updated performance of the Council's Strategy 2020-2030 T10 priorities. Details of the programmes, projects and performance indicators with a concern or caution status together with an explanation of the performance and improvement plan was detailed in the appendix of the agenda report.

In response to issues raised it was noted that a temporarily vacant recycling post was being absorbed through existing staff; there was currently no officer capacity to produce an annual carbon report; and the Council was part of a partnership to house rough sleepers.

In relation to the housing delivery target the Council was looking to do more to deliver homes independent of the market.

Currently about 80% of affordable homes were delivered via Section 106 planning gain, therefore a drop in overall delivery would have a knock on effect in respect of affordable homes delivered.

There has been a downturn in housing delivery that was exacerbated by the impacts of Covid 19, particularly during 2020. Until now, many of the district's new homes were being built on either larger sites that were permitted before the current Local Plan was adopted or on smaller Local Plan sites. The supply from those historic larger sites has been diminishing. Development on the larger allocated Local Plan sites were now moving forward, particularly at Dawlish and SW Exeter with an increase in delivery anticipated over the coming years.

A specific performance target was also identified for the delivery of custom and self-build housing and the position was similar. The supply of additional self-build homes was being secured by requiring developers on large sites to set aside 5% of their plots for people to build or commission their own homes. Self-build completions could be expected to accelerate in line with large site development.

The Council's current housing delivery target reflected the Government's housing need figure for Teignbridge. The agenda report stated a target of 753 dwellings per annum, whereas the current Local Plan was designed to meet a housing need of 620 homes per year. Adopting a new Local Plan would be essential in order to address the up to date requirements.

RESOLVED

The report and the actions being taken to rectify performance issues detailed in Appendix A of the agenda report be noted.

**44. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 -
EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

45. TEIGNBRIDGE COUNCIL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the agenda reported.

RECOMMENDED

The Executive is recommended to approve the following:

- (1) The “Teignbridge 100” housing development project is progressed to increase the delivery of social and affordable housing across Teignbridge to meet the evidenced housing need of the district, including within the Dartmoor National Park.
- (2) That the Governance arrangements outlined in the report are adopted to ensure an expedient and transparent delivery of the pipeline.

CLLAR H COX
Chairman