



**REPORT of  
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

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to  
**PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE  
14 NOVEMBER 2013**

**PROGRESSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT AS PART OF  
THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR OLDER PERSONS' HOUSING,  
INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to the Planning and Licensing Committee a paper considered by the Community Services Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2013, regarding a revision to the Council's Older Persons Housing Strategy published in 2009.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the progression of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP), for Older Persons' Affordable Housing.

**2. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION**

- 2.1 The Older Persons' Housing Strategy (OPHS) was published in 2009. As part of the development of a comprehensive housing strategy, the Council is seeking to update the OPHS. **APPENDIX 1** provides a report presented to the Community Services Committee on 3 September 2013, which outlines how the OPHS is proposed to be updated.
- 2.2 To support the production of an update to the OPHS, the report in **APPENDIX 1** recommends the production of a new supplementary planning document on affordable housing to articulate specific housing requirements of older people.
- 2.3 As the production of a supplementary planning document is proposed as part of the update to the OPHS, Members of Planning and Licensing Committee are requested to consider the production of an affordable housing supplementary planning document as recommended in the report in **APPENDIX 1**.

**3. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS**

- 3.1 The production of an affordable housing supplementary planning document supports corporate goals which underpin the Council's vision for the District and in particular: protecting and shaping the District and balancing the future needs of the community and meeting the housing needs of the District.

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The production of an affordable housing supplementary planning document will have a positive impact on the Council's ability to plan to meet the needs of residents in the District.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Age and disability are protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010, the strategy will help ensure that the Council's future policies are compliant with this.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The production of a supplementary planning document will require additional resources to commission external assistance as required, and officer time to support the production of the document.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Officer time required to support the production of the document.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None identified.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 To support the production of an update to the OPHS, the report provided in **APPENDIX 1** has identified the need to produce an affordable housing supplementary planning document.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that the recommendations of the report detailed at **APPENDIX 1**, be noted;
- (ii) that the Committee confirms its agreement to production of a Housing Strategy Supplementary Planning Document which includes more detail for complying with the Council's policies for housing for older people having regard to the Affordable Housing Strategy being prepared by Strategic Housing Services.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Tim Parton, Senior Planning Policy Officer, (Tel: 01621 876203) and Paul Gayler, Strategic Housing Manager, (Tel: 01621 875872).

**REPORT of  
HEAD OF HOUSING, REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

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to  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
3 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**PROGRESS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVISED OLDER PERSONS'  
HOUSING STRATEGY**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to Members an update on the proposed strategic direction with regard to meeting the housing needs of an ageing population of the District.

**2. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION**

**2.1 Background**

- 2.1.1 The Council is seeking to develop a comprehensive Housing Strategy, bringing together and updating its current strategies, including the Older Persons' Housing Strategy (OPHS) first published in 2009 and strengthening the links with the Local Development Plan. Demographic trends for the District have indicated for some time now the growing proportion of older people and the revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) reflects this and emphasises the need to respond to respond to this area of housing.
- 2.1.2 This would make the Council compliant with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), demonstrating that it is planning for a range of housing including the needs of an ageing population. However to be credible these plans need to be supported, as outlined in the SHMA, by supporting policies and strategies that will but to be effective plans and policies achieve the intended outcomes.

**2.2 Key themes**

- 2.2.1 The key themes which are emerging from analysis of data and initial consultation with partners to be included in the revised OPHS are as follows:
- (a) A proportion of new affordable housing should be for older people in locations where this would be practical with the aim of meeting local need and improving the overall use of the existing housing stock.

The Council will need to use the new supply of homes in the future as a catalyst for improving the use and supply of the existing housing stock. Under-occupation of general needs social housing and owner-occupation is more prevalent amongst older people than any other group. Developing homes that meet the aspiration as well as the need of this group would be the most effective way to meet the overall need for homes as it can trigger a gross supply several times greater than the net supply. The new strategy needs to be

able to demonstrate the theoretical possibility outlined in the SHMA of developing new homes that create a supply several times greater than the original number, as homes become available locally through re-sale or re-let as well as new build.

- (b) A new Supplementary Planning document to be produced for Affordable Housing that articulates the specific housing requirements of older people, and supports the OPHS.

The location and scale of housing growth for the District is being finalised through the Local Development plan (LDP) and the need to provide accommodation to specifically meet the increasing demand for older peoples housing is being reflected in the main strategies. Tenure and design need to be agreed, and allocation of the homes is a vital issue if this supply is to meet local need. Financial viability is also being tested and a crucial aspect for some developments in the future will be how care and support will be funded and provided. The new OPHS will therefore need to be based and developed with a good understanding of the business plans and models of partners such as housing associations, commissioners and providers of care and support and officers are working more closely with both commissioners of support (Essex County Council) and developing housing associations. Combining the housing needs of older people within the proposed Supplementary Planning Document for affordable housing will help explain and reiterate some of these issues and should act as a bridge between the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the OPHS.

- (c) Good communication with partners, ensuring that they understand how they can support the OPHS, and agree common goals.

The current operating environment for Housing, Health and Social Care is in a state of flux making it harder to ascertain common priorities and outcomes between key partner organisations. The Council has made good progress over the lifetime of the previous strategy in understanding local needs, and equally important aspirations of older people in the District. This needs to be shared and understood by other partners, together with the pragmatic information on what type of new development is feasible. Good communication is needed to ensure that each discipline understands the needs of the others, areas where there are common goals and can agree shared outcomes. The endorsement of the OPHS will be sought specifically from the commissioners of support (Essex County Council) and care (Clinical Commissioning Group) to ensure joint understanding of need and demand. The new strategy needs to be seen as something that is understood and supported by others such as Essex County Council, through its development as well as delivery and good progress is being made in sharing information and analysis of needs.

- (d) Identification and review of local housing related services for older people, engaging with existing providers, identifying service gaps, and opportunities to meet those gaps, whilst increasing awareness of existing services.

There is still a considerable lack of awareness between partners of the range and type of services available for older people locally that is housing related,

especially within the voluntary sector. Needless to say, this is even more the case for older people who may be in considerable need for help or advice but do not have any contact with someone who has even a basic knowledge of local services. The strategy has to be developed with a broad range of local services who understand their customers within the context of the District, helping to improve their own knowledge and become more effective in helping the Council and other partners deliver the aims of the strategy. Gaps in services may need to be responded to through partners and the Council itself seeking additional resources or working in a more flexible way.

- (e) Creation of a Housing Options approach to older peoples housing needs, and the engagement with partners to support and monitor the effectiveness of the strategy through the creation of a formal forum.

Housing strategies for older people have become more common since the launch of the Council's first version in 2009 but many are still focused on those authorities who own and manage stock, with few examples that relate to issues such as rural housing, new developments and links with other agencies. Consultation has shown that a number of partners look to the Council to show leadership and direction in this field, even though we have no housing stock of our own and do not commission a significant range of services. With limited resources the Council will need to consider carefully how to achieve more than just value for money, developing a housing options approach to influence other agencies and support older people in making difficult choices. Partners from local and national organisations have been very supportive of the Council's work to date with the strategy and creating a more formal forum to support the strategy will also help to keep partners involved and up to date with the aims of the Council and the needs of local people.

There are parallels with this area of work and the Council's approach to tackling homelessness and the general need for affordable housing which has been very successful in recent years. Both rely on a combination of improved supply of homes suited to local need and equally important, an understanding and close working at an individual level with households to explain options and support them with their decision making.

- 2.2.2 The new strategy will need to be more integrated with the work of a wide range of partners, from those who commission services to more local voluntary organisations who have regular contact with many older people especially those for example in more rural areas who may be at greater risk of isolation. Providing the right type of housing is only half the solution, ensuring that they are allocated in the most strategic way possible is equally challenging and the new strategy needs to address this as well as just the issue of supply if local need is to be addressed.

### **2.3 Next Steps**

- 2.3.1 The data analysis and the feedback from partner organisations and stakeholder will be used to develop and inform a new OPHS, and a new Affordable Housing Guide.
- 2.3.2 The full draft OPHS will be brought back to the Committee in November for approval, prior to full consultation. The Affordable Housing Guide will be considered

by the Planning and Licensing Committee later this year. It is the intention that if possible the consultation on the OPHS and the Affordable Housing Guide will be done alongside the pre-submission consultation of the LDP.

### 3. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 3.1 **Meeting the housing needs of the District** – the strategy will directly address the housing needs of older people and contribute to improving the overall use of existing stock to meet the wider need for housing.

### 4. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – There are significant benefits to older people that can be achieved through improving their housing options. The Council will continue to support those who wish to remain in their current homes but will improve choice for those who may currently have limited options.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Older age is a protected characteristic and through improving options and services for older people the Council will help to ensure that age is less of a barrier to housing and other related services.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – With most of the predicted growth of the District’s population being in the age group of 65+, the Council needs to ensure that its services are focused on the needs of the local community to reduce the risk of service failure. Meeting its strategic and legal obligations will depend on how well it can enable a better use of the existing stock as well as the supply of new homes.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Influencing the supply and use of new homes will help reduce the growing demand for other services such as adaptations and renovations, as well as savings to other areas of public expenditure such as health and social care. It may also be possible to help customers capitalise on the value of their current homes to provide them with a better property and financial independence as well.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None - existing staff time.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – New homes should be more energy efficient especially when intended for older people, helping to reduce the impact on the environment as well as the financial cost to the residents. Using strategic planning to create a supply of homes from within the existing stock also helps reduce the overall number of homes needed to meet local housing need.

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The revised strategy will differ from the previous version in that it needs to move on from raising awareness to influencing the type of homes that are built in the future. As mentioned above, the supply is only one aspect of responding to need, far more complex is the methods by which the Council can work to ensure that new homes

actually become available to those they are intended for. This is where voluntary organisations have an important role in engaging and working with local residents to explain housing options in the future and work closely with the Council in supporting older people to make best use of these choices. This work needs to become an integral part of the role of the Council's strategic approach to housing

- 5.2 The aims of the strategy outlined in (a) and (b) above will require continued close working with the Council's Planning Service and statutory partner agencies. At a time when there is considerable pressure on public spending, the strategy will also need to demonstrate how such development is financially viable whilst also providing opportunities to reduce costs for these partners so that the needs of an ageing population can be addressed effectively. Increasing the sharing and analysis of information, for example on the feasibility of development and commissioning of care, as well as need, as explained in (c) through the strategy will ensure best use is made of public finances helping sustain vital services for the District.
- 5.3 Supporting the voluntary sector, including existing providers of housing for older people, to understand the aims of the strategy will be essential in ensuring their clients are best placed to benefit from the outcomes, as outlined in (d) and (e) above. Linking these services with plans for new development is innovative but essential if the aims of the strategy are to be realised for those it is intended to help.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) that the progress made to date be noted;
- (ii) that the main aims of the strategy be approved as follows:
  - (a) A proportion of new affordable housing should be for older people in locations where this would be practical with the aim of meeting local need and improving the overall use of the existing housing stock;
  - (b) A new Supplementary Planning document to be produced for Affordable Housing that articulates the specific housing requirements of older people, and supports the OPHS;
  - (c) Good communication with partners, ensuring that they understand how they can support the OPHS, and agree common goals, and specifically seeking the endorsement of commissioners of support (Essex County Council) and care (Clinical Commissioning Group) to ensure joint understanding of need and demand;
  - (d) Identification and review of local housing related services for older people, engaging with existing providers, identifying service gaps, and opportunities to meet those gaps, whilst increasing awareness of existing services.
  - (e) Creation of a Housing Options approach to older peoples housing needs, and the engagement with partners to support and monitor the effectiveness of the strategy through the creation of a formal forum.
- (iii) that a Draft Older Persons' Housing Strategy be developed using the key aims as set out at (ii) above and brought back to the Community Services Committee in November 2013, prior to consultation.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Paul Gayler, Strategic Housing Manager, (Tel. 01621 875872).