

Annex A - Housing Delivery Strategy & Action Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Delivery of Social and affordable housing is a key Council Priority. It is essential that this delivery is strategic and achieves specific aims to meet the needs of local people, makes the most of the Council assets and provides a sustainable financial position for the Council. The strategy provides a framework against which future housing delivery decisions can be made and the action plan sets out the steps which will be taken to deliver additional housing. It provides direction for delivery of both emergency housing for homeless people and long term accommodation.

1.2 This Strategy and Action plan will continue to develop as opportunities are explored and options for delivery are identified.

1.3 Strategy aims to:

- 1. tackle the housing affordability crisis in the Cotswolds by providing truly affordable housing over its whole tenant occupation costs to enable local people to remain in their communities and supporting them to gain access to longer term housing provision;**
- 2. increase provision of good quality emergency homelessness accommodation and support homeless persons to access emergency, short term and then longer term tenancies.**

This strategy does not include provision of housing through the local plan site allocation process, this will be considered as part of the Local plan update and any future neighbourhood plans, but does not preclude disposal of existing council land/property to support housing delivery through Registered Providers and community-led groups, or self-builders.

2. Housing requirements

3.1 The Council aims to meet changing local housing needs through the following provision, subject to legislative requirements:

Emergency/ Temporary

- Emergency Homeless accommodation

Short Term Supported Housing

- to relocate those housed under emergency homelessness legislation to allow necessary support to allow a move onto permanent accommodation for medium/ longer term

Medium/long term housing

- to relocate those housed under homelessness legislation

- for those on the Housing Register or Help to Buy register,
- to support housing provision in line with other Council priorities

3.2 The mix of housing tenure, including the need for private units to provide cross subsidy, will be determined on a site by site basis depending on the housing need for the area, the delivery option and the financial viability of the site.

3. Determining need

4.1 The Council will determine the need for any additional housing accommodation that it should be providing by:

Homelessness accommodation

- taking the average demand/ placement over the last 5 years, identifying any reasons for specific spikes and adjusting if relevant.
- understanding any forthcoming likely local/ national issues which can be foreseen and reflecting these in the forecast need.
- this will include assessment of type of unit and number of beds, for example, self contained 1 bed units

Medium term/ long term accommodation

- considering District and Parish Housing Needs Assessments and undertaking analysis of existing housing registers for rented and low-cost home ownership.
- assessing how needs may be met by existing planning permissions granted and construction already underway/complete.
- reviewing identified need and sites allocated through the Local Plan.
- Identifying capacity/appetite for delivery by Registered Providers and/or community-led groups

4. Principles and options for Council delivery of housing units

4.1 The Council will deliver this Strategy over a period of time and the following sections therefore set out the objectives, potential actions and timeframes for delivery.

4.2 Provision will differ for short term emergency housing and for supported and long term accommodation. The principles for delivery are that the Council will provide:

4.3 Homeless accommodation - additional provision

OBJECTIVE - meet current homeless need, reduce the reliance on B & B and Hotel accommodation, improving the quality of accommodation and reducing the net cost to the council.

- **Short term delivery options 0 - 18 months**

The following options can be considered to deliver this objective:

1. Lease of property from private landlords to meet the need for homeless accommodation
2. Conversion of existing Council owned property (potential option for some properties dependent on timescales)
3. Purchase of suitable existing housing stock
4. Purchase of existing property/ property nearing completion, which is immediately suitable/ with minimal work required, for letting to provide this accommodation
5. Purchase of existing property suitable for conversion to suitable residential units
6. Provision of B & B or Hotel based emergency accommodation as a last resort and to accommodate short term spikes in need

4.4 **Social and affordable rented housing - additional provision**

OBJECTIVE - Increase the provision of social and affordable housing by developing schemes that have a solid business case and meet the needs of local people.

Provision of:

- Good quality housing for rent
- Housing that is affordable over its whole life cost, both rent and running costs
- Build housing that is carbon zero over its lifetime
- Low cost housing that is available in perpetuity, if possible, supporting the well-being of the residents and the local communities
- Housing stock that is flexible and can be adjusted for changing needs over time.
- Financial return where in the future there is a reduced demand for specific housing types
- Homes that support diversity and inclusive communities and provide housing, where there are specific needs for:
 - Young people
 - Military veterans
 - Families
- Ability to provide short term/ fixed tenancies to support tenants, when able to, to move on in terms of the housing market, thereby releasing capacity to enable more residents to remain in the district.
- Encourage innovative self build of quality carbon zero or low carbon housing which utilises local trades and therefore supports the local economy.

Short term delivery options - 0 - 18 months

Provide funding to support the delivery of social rented units from other tenures within sites with current planning permission and where delivery currently in progress - subject to necessary permissions - ensuring necessary legal documentation to provide in perpetuity, if possible - use of existing housing funds from s106 agreements

Work with landowners to seek to unblock issues on sites which have planning permission but where these are not being brought forward, to encourage earlier delivery.

Medium/ long term Delivery options 18 months +

The following options can be considered to deliver this objective, where they will provide the necessary housing of all types, where the location meets the identified need and there is a solid business case:

1. Develop land in Council ownership
2. Convert existing Council owned properties
3. Purchase existing housing properties; or
4. Purchase sites for housing development

Work in partnership with registered providers to deliver this objective and leverage funding to support the provision of social housing.

Each business case will be considered on a case by case basis and the appropriate agreement and tenure agreed between the parties, where the Council can control or influence delivery due to its land ownership or funding investment.

5. Delivering low carbon or carbon zero housing

5.1 The Council wants to support healthy communities, and the provision of healthy housing is therefore key to achieving this aim. An estimated 9.5% of residents live in fuel poverty within Cotswold district, struggling to pay their heating bills, and we therefore need to tackle this issue.

5.2 Good, well-designed and constructed housing is critical in mitigating the risks that climate change poses in the UK. Studies have shown that in the UK we tend to spend about 90% - 95% of our time indoors, and that about 66% of that indoor time is at home. UK climate change could amplify existing health risks related to building overheating, indoor air pollution, flood damage and biological contamination. New buildings should therefore be designed to address the potential health effects, but also to minimise the use of fossil fuels which contribute to both climate change and poor air quality. New buildings should also make more use of low carbon energy sources and can incorporate technologies, that help reduce energy use, and therefore the impact of the built environment on our climate.

5.3 Whilst low or zero carbon housing was once experimental and challenging, there are now many examples of developments of every scale where the zero carbon design and build

process has been mainstreamed, with very beneficial results to owners or tenants. The delivery of carbon zero or low carbon housing would not only contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets but would also reduce the running costs of the home which will benefit occupants and contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty.

The design and provision of zero carbon housing for social rented and affordable properties is something which needs to be developed further. Whilst local Housing Associations wish to embrace this provision it is new for them and comes with risk.

To fully embed zero carbon delivery of social rented and affordable properties all projects need to be considered from the outset to ensure carbon reduction is maximised at the pre-planning stage, so that factors such as orientation can be designed in. Specialist designers/ advisers will need to be engaged on all projects to provide this support.

The Council will work with registered providers to seek exemplar small schemes which can be used to trial zero carbon and alternative methods of constructions. In considering refurbishment of existing properties carbon emissions will be reduced as far possible taking into consideration constraints, options and costs.

6. Promoting health and wellbeing

6.1 The design of developments and mix of tenures and properties can help ensure an inclusive community and help tackle social isolation and loneliness, particularly amongst those that live alone.

6.2 The Council will consider how design and composition of any developments can be optimised to support the health and wellbeing of the residents and those that live around the development to encourage the feeling of safety, support and inclusion in the community. Green infrastructure which promotes a healthy lifestyle is also key so design should also consider access to outdoor green space and the health impacts that can have on occupiers of homes. Easy access to green space which can be used for a variety of purposes should be paramount when assessing the overall design and layout of any proposed development.

8. Mechanisms for housing delivery

8.1 The Council needs to decide the most appropriate way in which it can make accommodation available to tenants so needs to consider whether it will manage the accommodation directly, transfer the accommodation to a third party or establish its own housing company to provide this management function. This decision will be influenced by the following principles set out in section 2 above:

- Low cost housing that is available in perpetuity, if possible, supporting the well-being of the residents and the local communities
- Housing stock that is flexible and can be adjusted for changing needs over time.

8.2 This strategy does not include provision of housing through the local plan process. This will be considered as part of the Local Plan update and any future neighbourhood plans, but does not preclude disposal of existing council land/property to support housing delivery through Registered Providers and community-led groups, or self-builders.

OBJECTIVE - establish the most appropriate property management solution to ensure long term delivery principles are met.

9. Use of resources principles - Financial and Assets

The Council will use its existing assets, in line with the agreed delivery model, to support delivery of its social rented, carbon zero priorities where a solid business case exists and need can be established.

9.1 Homeless provision

The Council will seek to meet homeless needs as cost effectively as possible. The use of ad hoc commercial B & Bs and hotels is likely to be the most expensive option so the Council will therefore:

1. Forecast budget required taking into account external grant/ funding available and likely need for homeless accommodation in the following year.
2. Seek to develop additional accommodation for this purpose where business cases can be established and there is an identified homeless need based on historic and forecast need assessments.

The Council will then consider budget allocations to cover any resulting costs over and above grants and subsidies provided as part of its annual budget setting process.

9.2 Social rented and affordable housing provision

9.2.1 Use of Council land to enable the delivery of additional housing units to maximise social rent and zero carbon opportunities rather than subsidy through private housing.

9.2.2 Capital receipts or annual profits from Council managed housing to be retained and ring-fenced to support medium/ long term provision on other sites

9.2.3 Accommodation will be acquired/developed where:

1. The development will be financially sustainable not relying solely on subsidy from s106 funding/ contributions or any Council annual subsidy.
2. It is understood that cross subsidy in the form of private housing for sale or rent may be necessary and acceptable to ensure financial viability of the development as a whole.

3. The level of cross subsidy required from either private housing or low cost tenure types will be considered on a case by case basis due to variations in costs etc due to site constraints and risks.

9.2.4 Exceptions - Where sites are smaller, up to approx.10 units, and financial viability cannot be achieved/ or is not desirable to achieve by cross subsidy with private market housing disposals or differing rental and tenure types, e.g 100% affordable rural exception sites, then subsidy using s106 contributions for affordable housing will be considered together with cross subsidy across different sites.

9.2.5 Where, following review and site prioritisation, sites are considered to be unviable for social rented accommodation due to either location, size of development i.e. 1 or 2 units, other constraints, sites to be considered for open market sale and capital ring-fenced for delivery of social rented accommodation elsewhere.

STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The action plan will remain dynamic and be regularly updated.

Annex A sets out the Council's Corporate Plan actions for the delivery of Social rented units. This has been updated to provide information on progress to date and incorporate additional specific actions/ next steps as a result of this report.

Key actions are:

- 1 To complete the review and provide detailed prioritisation of Council owned sites to enable further reports to be brought forward for decision on:
 - i) Council owned sites suitable for development in line with the Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy
 - ii) Council owned sites suitable for disposal as open market sites/ plots or self build plots (as appropriate), with capital receipts earmarked for re-investment in affordable housing delivery

- 2 To progress with Kemble site in line with recommendations

Definition of Terms

Affordable Housing

(Most commonly accepted definition taken from the National Planning Policy Framework):

Affordable housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers)

revised NPPF 2019, Annex 2

Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

Social housing

Term given to accommodation which is provided at affordable rates, on a secure basis to people on low incomes or with particular needs. Social housing properties are usually owned by the state, in the form of councils, or by non-profit organisations such as housing associations.

Affordability

Affordability is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. Affordable home ownership is intermediate affordable housing designed to help people who wish to buy their own home, but cannot afford to buy outright (with a mortgage) without some form of subsidy. Shared ownership is one form of affordable home ownership.