

## **Housing Delivery Portfolio Holder Report**

### **1. Production of a Housing Delivery Strategy Framework**

The joint member workshop held on 17 January enabled Members from all parties to explore the issues relating to the Housing Strategy Framework and the connections to inform BMSDC direct delivery approach

Five topics were addressed with senior officers:

- Affordability of all housing tenure types
- Specialised housing - meeting all types of housing need
- Creativity and innovation in the supply of new housing delivery
- Understanding market housing delivery
- BMSDC Direct delivery of new homes

Feedback from delegates informed the production of a draft Strategy for examination by the PFH briefings of the 2 February, 13 March and 12<sup>th</sup> April, prior to the planned “sign off” at the Administration Meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> April when members of all parties will be invited to attend.

### **2. Consultation Response to Housing White Paper “Fixing our Broken Housing Market” published on 7 February for submission to DCLG by 27 April.**

Draft responses have been programmed for the Housing delivery PFH briefings of 13 March and 12 April prior to “sign off” at the respective Administration Meeting of the 24 April.

### **3. Delivering Affordable Homes**

#### **New Build Programme**

The first tranche of affordable homes to be supplied directly from Babergh and Mid Suffolk commenced in 2015. Completion of 12 of the 27 in Babergh is due by the end of April with the remaining 15 to be completed by the end of the year. In Mid Suffolk 14 of the 38 are completed with the expectation that a further 18 will be completed by the end of the year.

#### **Housing Acquisitions**

A range of properties have been purchased; 15 in Babergh and 23 in mid Suffolk with 3 more in the pipeline.

Babergh      10 Two Bed, 2 Three Bed, and 3 One Bed

Mid Suffolk    17 Two Bed, 4 Three Bed and 2 One bed

#### **4. Future Legislative Priority**

The **Homeless Reduction Bill** going through Parliament is designed to give more help to the homeless. In particular it promises to provide somewhere to live within 56 days. Our duty of care will continue to be to trying keep families at risk in the homes they are being evicted from; by talking to the landlord, or if they are completely homeless to provide places for them.

#### **5. Housing Revenue Account**

I am pleased to report that a thorough review of the Council's Housing Revenue Account business plan is being undertaken which includes pre-Scrutiny. This review will be concluded in late March and the revised business plan will be presented to Full Council in April.

This detailed review has been prompted by a series of Government measures that will have a substantial impact on the sustainability of the HRA over the 30 year period of the business plan.

These measures include:

- the imposition of a 1% reduction in rents for the for the four years until 2019/20
- the increase in the Right to Buy discount resulting in increased sales
- welfare reform and specifically, Universal Credit which is expected to impact on recipients ability to pay the rent and lead to an increase in bad debts

A number of the assumptions used to forecast the financial position of the plan over the 30 year life have been updated as a result.

The changes taken together present a considerable challenge to the financial position of the HRA and it is likely that operational efficiencies will be needed to ensure that the HRA continues to operate within the debt cap set by Government. Our response will be set out in the business plan and a full report will be presented to the next Executive Committee.

John Levantis