

COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

- 3.2 The Panel discussed the Housing Strategy Action Plan Update at its meeting on 1st December 2021.
- 3.3 Following a comment from Councillor Roberts on positive messaging around the development of rural exception sites, the Panel heard that all parishes are communicated with on this matter. It was stressed that these types of developments are positive for local communities in providing much needed housing options for those who have a connection with the parish. The Panel was also advised that HDC aims to involve local communities and parishes from the outset to allow for their engagement and to work together towards a positive outcome.
- 3.4 Following a further question from Councillor Roberts, it was clarified that some sites identified under the Longhurst contract were not financially viable for this type of development but that alternative development options were being investigated.
- 3.5 In response to a question from Councillor Wakeford, the Panel heard that the figures in point 1.1 of the Action Plan were not comparable with the figures in 1.2 . Although an affordable housing target is set for each development, every development is unique and has many different factors to be considered, therefore a target of 40% is not always achievable. However, the Panel also heard that some developments are able to overdeliver on this target thereby the overall target is being met. The Panel were informed that the purpose of the Housing Strategy Action Plan is to boost the affordable housing already being committed to by developers.
- 3.6 Following further questions from Councillor Wakeford regarding the green status of point 1.1, the Panel were informed that the target was an average in order to ensure that the lifetime target of the Local Plan be met. It was clarified that factors outside of the control of the Council must be taken into account, and that the overall target is on track. The point of how this was monitored and recorded was noted and will be discussed separately.
- 3.7 The report was welcomed by Councillor Dew, who stated that with only being one year into the plan the progress was as expected. He reminded the Panel that planning lag and the delays to housing caused by the pandemic must also be taken into account, furthermore, those developments being approved now will help to ensure targets are met in the future.
- 3.8 The Panel welcomed the report and encourage the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.