

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP
(Report of the Working Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Affordable Housing Working Group met on 22nd July and 23rd September 2014. The Working Group comprises Councillors I Curtis, R Fuller, P Kadeware and S Van de Kerkhove. Councillor D Dew, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing attended the meeting in September.
- 1.2 Mrs C Bond, J Collen, Mrs J Emmerton and A Roberts were in attendance at the meetings.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 The Working Group has considered a range of options for investigation. It has been decided to work to the following Terms of Reference:

The Working Group will make recommendations for the next Housing Strategy 2016-19 by:

- Considering and making recommendations on ways to deliver affordable housing; and
- exploring ways to encourage more affordable housing in rural villages including through the rural and enabled exceptions policy of the Local Plan, through the Community Land Trust model and through analysis of best practice nationally and assessment of which of these are suitable for adoption in Huntingdonshire.

- 2.2 To inform this work, the Working Group will:

- receive briefing notes on the objectives,
- undertake a thorough assessment of national best practice,
- consult the Executive Councillor on the terms on the study, and
- consult other Councillors on the terms on the study.

3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND NEW LOCAL PLAN.

- 3.1 At the meeting on 23rd September, the Working Group has received detailed information on the identified affordable housing need, on affordable housing delivery in the past and in the future and on funding streams. Following discussion on this information, the Working Group has asked for:

- further analysis the Housing Register by area, band and dwelling size,
- the impact of policies and affordable housing provision in neighbouring authorities on demand for affordable housing in Huntingdonshire, and
- data on shared ownership.

The purpose of this is to look at ways of reducing the size of the Register.

- 3.2 At the September meeting, the Working Group has examined draft policies for inclusion in the new Local Plan to 2036, which are relevant to affordable housing. In particular, Members have been acquainted with the terms of draft policies on Neighbourhood and Community Planning, Affordable Housing Provision and Rural Exceptions Housing. They are satisfied that the policies will create a framework, which will enable innovative approaches to the provision of affordable housing to be adopted. The draft policies have, therefore, been endorsed, subject to further work being undertaken to investigate whether a policy can be created that enables exception sites to be located on the edge of towns and key service centres to enable the delivery of more affordable housing on these sites. A further suggestion has been made that the Council should actively promote the provision of affordable housing on Exceptions sites to town and parish councils as they may have land holdings that could be used for this purpose. The Working Group will review a list of exceptions sites at its next meeting.
- 3.3 The Working Group has received an update on housing development at Alconbury Weald. Having discussed the level of affordable housing to be provided on the site, the Working Group has requested further updates in future.

4 STUDY PLAN

- 4.1 The Working Group has devised a plan leading to the completion of the study. In addition to those identified in the previous section, the actions listed below will be undertaken.

Session 3

Review of:

- Rural housing programme – past and future
- Community Land Trust model
- Ways to increase awareness / take up
- Work of Foundation East

To be completed by the end of November 2014.

Session 4

Review of:

- detailed analysis the Housing Register by area, band and dwelling size,
- the impact of policies and affordable housing provision in neighbouring authorities on demand for affordable housing in Huntingdonshire, and
- data on shared ownership.

To be completed by the end of January 2015.

Session 5

Review of:

- Horizon scanning on national best practice for delivering affordable housing
- Other evidence submitted.

Agree recommendations on ways to deliver new affordable housing.



Report to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) in March 2015 with a view to making recommendations to the Cabinet in April 2015.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Panel is requested to endorse the Working Group's proposed study programme and its conclusions on relevant policies in the draft new Local Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Affordable Housing Working Group file held by Democratic Services Section.

Contact Officer: **A Roberts**, Scrutiny and Review Manager
 01480 388015
 Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk