

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/2015 REPORT NO. 84

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:
Cabinet
22nd October 2014

REPORT OF:
Director of Health, Housing & Adult
Social Care & Director of
Regeneration and Environment

Agenda – Part 1:	Item: 11
Subject: Housing Development Framework Wards: All Key Decision No: KD3369	
Cabinet Member consulted: Councillor Oykener	

Contact officer and telephone number:
Peter George
0208 379 3318
E mail: peter.george@enfield.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The case for new housing in Enfield is compelling. How the Council will play its part to increase supply in the borough has up until this point been undefined.
- 1.2 Definition is needed to explain to communities, stakeholders and the Council's partners, how Enfield will coordinate the delivery of housing led developments.
- 1.3 Increasing the supply of housing is not an achievement on its own unless the legacy is one of successful places, greater prosperity and stronger communities. The Enfield Housing Development Framework explains how Council led housing developments can achieve these objectives.
- 1.4 The report also recommends approval of a standard for new council housing to ensure new council homes enables tenants to prosper.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1** Notes the progress that has been made by the Council to increase the supply of new housing in the borough.
- 2.2** Approves the Enfield Housing Development Framework included at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3** Approves the standard for new council housing included at **Appendix 2 and 3**.
- 2.4** Notes that when procuring housing partners to deliver residential new build developments that the Housing Development Framework must be included as part of the tender documents.
- 2.5** Notes that when procuring housing partners to deliver new council housing that the Performance Specification must be used to frame the standard for new council housing.
- 2.6** Notes that it is proposed to undertake a review in 12 months and any revisions made to reflect feedback received through consultation (paragraph 5.3 of the report refers). To agree that delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Estate Regeneration to agree any revisions required on behalf of Cabinet.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has made real progress in the delivery of housing developments and so far in 2014, a number of schemes have started on site with construction now underway on Ladderswood in New Southgate, and soon to be underway on Dujardin Mews in Ponders End and on the Small Housing Sites (Phase 1) project. Construction on the Highmead site in Angel Edmonton commenced in 2013 and is due for completion in spring 2015.
- 3.2 The Small Housing Sites KD3920 was approved at Cabinet in September 2014. The report describes how the Council intends to bring forward further Council owned sites to continue with the rolling programme of developing small sites for new homes.
- 3.3 On Alma, New Avenue, the Small Housing Sites project (Phase 1) and Dujardin Mews the Council is committed to developing new council owned homes, following the increased borrowing powers as a result of government reform of the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.4 The Council has established a new Special Purpose Vehicle, Enfield Innovations LTD, to own and develop new council homes. The development of new council owned homes rather than disposal of public land to developers and registered providers can provide better value for money over the medium to long-term.

- 3.5 In Ponders End the Council has appointed Countryside Properties and Newlon Housing Trust to deliver the regeneration of the Alma Estate and planning applications are due for submission by December 2014. In central Ponders End the Electric Quarter development is moving forward following the selection of Lovell and a revised planning application will follow.
- 3.6 The biggest opportunity of all, Meridian Water, where over 5,000 new homes can be built, continues to gather pace following important funding for rail infrastructure and an application to become one of the GLA's Housing Zones. New homes on the A406, the preparation of a masterplan for Edmonton Green and opportunities in Enfield Town can all contribute to Enfield Council becoming one of the leading London boroughs for the supply of new homes.
- 3.7 The progress is tangible but the challenge of increasing the supply of new homes to meet the needs of local people is one that is becoming more serious.
- 3.8 The market is not and has not delivered the number of homes that is required. This failure comes at a real cost to the Council as the cost of providing temporary accommodation to homeless families has increased significantly in recent years. The cost to the Council will increase further unless the Council is able to replace approximately 200 homes lost annually to council tenants exercising their Right to Buy their council home since discounts were increased in 2012 and again in 2014.
- 3.9 There is not only a sound economic case for greater Council intervention but an equally compelling social case. A shortage of affordable housing means families struggle to afford living in the communities where they grew up; a shortage of family housing means children suffer in overcrowded conditions; a shortage of council housing means local people are unable to settle in an area with the security of tenure council homes provide.
- 3.10 These dynamics are not unique to Enfield as a housing supply and affordability crisis permeates across London. A number of Local Authorities are taking a proactive approach to these challenges and Enfield must continue to be at the forefront of these.
- 3.11 Enfield can and does use its planning powers to facilitate growth and the preparation of Area Action Plans has an important role to play in facilitating new housing in the borough.
- 3.12 To deliver the number of new homes required the Council must continue to take a proactive role in leading the delivery of new developments, not in competition with the private sector or the housing association sector but working in partnership with these agents and complementing the work they are already doing to increase the supply of housing.

- 3.13 Whilst there is a recognised need for new housing there is not always universal support for housing in neighbourhoods not persuaded by the case for change. The reasons for this are multitudinous but it is clear that part of the reason is a sense of a loss of space with no clear gain and concerns over the appearance of new build developments.
- 3.14 The purpose of the Housing Development Framework is a commitment to local communities that the Council will sensitively increase the supply of housing. There are a number of themes which emerge through the Framework with the common thread being the enhancement of neighbourhoods and increasing prosperity within Enfield. By ensuring that local communities are the principal beneficiaries of housing led growth, housing developments can be viewed more in terms of the opportunities they create.
- 3.15 The Housing Development Framework has been written deliberately to the people of Enfield and the intention is that the Framework will be refined during further conversations with local people and consultation with communities.
- 3.16 The second principal audience are the Council's stakeholders and partners. The Framework is designed to describe to this audience the considerable experience and competence the Council has gained as well as explaining the common approach to delivery that the Council will adopt going forward.
- 3.17 The Framework will govern all Council led housing developments whether these are sites owned by the Council, to be acquired by the Council, or where the Council utilises statutory powers to coordinate delivery.

4. SETTING THE STANDARD FOR NEW COUNCIL HOUSING

- 4.1 The 2012 Housing Revenue Account self-financing reforms has ushered in a new era of council housing building in England. Enfield Council is amongst a number of Local Authorities to have taken advantage of these new powers to commit to a large council house building programme. New council homes have been committed on a number of projects.
- 4.2 New council homes require a new standard to be developed. The council housing of the future must set the benchmark for all council homes; new and the existing stock. New council homes must not repeat the mistakes of the past; they must blend into neighbourhoods not distinguish themselves as subsidised housing; they must provide space for children to achieve; and they must be designed both durably and attractively.
- 4.3 The Council has commissioned architects Levitt Bernstein and surveyors Sweett Group to prepare a specification for new council homes. The documents build upon the standards set out in the London Housing Design Guide and have been developed following a series of workshops attended by operational staff at Enfield Homes and appropriate colleagues from within the Council.

- 4.4 New council homes will not just be traditional social rent; the Council is already committed to building shared equity, shared ownership and private rent on Dujardin Mews and the Small Housing Sites. The council housing specification documents have been prepared for all these tenures. The specification documents will be updated and reviewed in a year; at this point it may also be necessary to include a standard for other tenures such as private sale.
- 4.5 The specification documents have been prepared on the basis of social rented homes with variances for shared equity/ownership and private rent included as appendices. The critical point to note here is that the differences between social rent and shared equity/ownership and private rent are very limited. This is because the new standard for council housing has been raised to a level closer to these more expensive tenures.
- 4.6 A new standard for council housing is needed to achieve consistency, economies of scale and a more efficient management and maintenance regime. The Principles and Objectives and Council Housing Performance Specification documents are included at **Appendix 2** and **3** respectively. These documents explain in detail the recommended approach to new council housing and will ensure the new era of council housing in the borough meets the needs of tenants.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Housing Development Framework and the standard for new council housing have been prepared in discussion with colleagues from across the Council, Enfield Homes, resident forums and developers. This dialogue must continue, and a wider audience engaged, in order to ensure that these documents remain relevant and appropriate.
- 5.2 Further consultation with resident groups is recommended as well as discussing the ideas and proposals with developers and partners.
- 5.3 It is proposed that a review is undertaken 12 months hence and any revisions made to reflect feedback received.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The principal alternative option is not to approve a Framework for coordinating housing led developments in the borough.
- 6.2 The absence of a Framework would result in an inconsistent offer to Enfield residents, a delay in delivering new homes as a starting position for new developments has to be created for every project; and a less transparent approach to delivering new housing.
- 6.3 The principal alternative option to not approving a new standard of council housing is an inconsistent and ad hoc approach to new council homes

which may not meet the needs of tenants and neighbourhoods. An absence of a standard would also cost more money due to not achieving economies of scale savings.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Housing Development Framework places a firm emphasis on more affordable housing, creating successful places, training and jobs for local people, and a collaboration with communities. These measures amount to a local Framework for growth and prosperity for the people of Enfield.
- 7.2 The Development and Estate Renewal Team, Neighbourhood and Regeneration and Property Services are all delivering housing led developments on behalf of the Council. This overarching Framework therefore ensures that these different teams can deliver housing led projects working to the same set of principles so that the people of Enfield, our stakeholders and partners receive a consistent approach.

8. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

8.1 Financial Implications

- 7.1.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from this Framework. A number of teams deliver housing led developments on behalf of the Council. These developments are funded in different ways and the Framework for funding each scheme depends on the type of scheme and the viability of that scheme. This Framework ensures that these different teams can deliver housing led projects working to the same set of principles.

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to publish a housing Framework which sets out the Council's vision and priorities for housing in Enfield. Specifically, it should:

- assess and plan for the current and future housing needs of the population of Enfield across all tenures
- make the best use of existing housing stock to meet need
- plan and enable new housing supply
- plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services
- ensure effective housing and neighbourhood management through partnership

- 8.2.2 Enfield's Housing Strategy provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues. The legislation allows the Council to add to the Framework over time so it may produce supporting documents to the Framework over time to reflect

changing events. It is recommended that this Framework should sit as a subsidiary Framework to the Housing Strategy.

8.3 Property Implications

- 8.3.1 The Framework is a timely addition to the Council reports on the housing challenges facing the Borough, highlighting the positive and practical action to date, together with objectives and intentions for future provision to help meet ever increasing demand.
- 8.3.2 The achievements in regeneration and new development should be emphasised, and the Development Framework is a good platform to communicate this to tenants, residents seeking Council housing, partners and other stakeholders. However, it should also be recognised that some of the commitments made on the Council's programme of action, and the resources required to achieve the result, may well be outside the Council's control as a result of the continuing squeeze on public finances.
- 8.3.3 The performance specification to provide a new standard for Council homes is also an important and valued initiative. It will create a transparent and robust basis for all new development schemes, large and small. It provides a consistent approach for all housing led development projects across the Council, establishing a new benchmark in terms of quality and build expectation, and wider sustainable, environmental and other benefits. It should reduce the potential for ambiguity and inconsistency in the project tendering process, and in the longer term these standards should reduce the maintenance and running costs for new homes.

9. KEY RISKS

- 9.1 The key risk associated with approving this report is that the principles and approach described within the Framework do not get embedded within the Council's housing delivery functions. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring the Framework and specification documentation is used in all subsequent relevant procurement processes.

10. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 10.1 The Framework, and the principles outlined within that document, has been deliberately prepared to explain how they contribute to the aims of Fairness for All, Strong Communities and Growth and Sustainability.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Framework and specification documents have been prepared to ensure that communities benefit from the proceeds of new housing developments and not disadvantaged. Particular care has been taken to avoid any form of discrimination.

12. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no performance management implications.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The specification documents have been drafted to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation.

14. HR IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no HR Implications.

15. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The Framework and specification documents promote housing and transport modes which can achieve positive public health outcomes.

Background Papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Enfield Housing Development Framework

Appendix 2 – The Principles and Objectives

Appendix 3 – Council Housing Performance Specification