

Cabinet

11 August 2022

Report of the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Matters referred to Cabinet in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

Exempt Information

None.

Executive Summary

The following Committee has referred the following matter to Cabinet:

Scrutiny Committee	Title of Matter referred	Date of Scrutiny meeting
Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	Update on Housing Strategy	12 July 2022

Background

To update Cabinet and to make recommendations to it following consideration of matters by the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (the "H&W Committee").

At its meeting on 12 July 2022, the H&W Committee received an update from the Assistant Director, Partnerships on the Housing Strategy. This followed a request from the H&W Committee to receive this update following Cabinet's approval of the Strategy in October 2020.

The Assistant Director provided an overview of the 4 Priorities set out in the Housing Strategy. At the H&W Committee, the Assistant Director highlighted some of the future proposed actions which included:

- An update to the Empty Homes Strategy to increase housing provision
- The development of an Older Persons Housing Needs Strategy in conjunction with stakeholders
- Work to determine the criteria for the First Homes requirement, whereby 20% of the affordable homes on a development would be allocated as first homes for Tamworth residents.
- To develop relationships with the voluntary sector to maintain healthier communities and sustain independent living
- To develop an approach to the needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in line with Government policies

The Committee commented and sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. How the criteria for the First Homes requirement would address the issue of resale of those affordable first homes such that the benefits of the scheme would be retained in perpetuity and that the benefits of any market price discount was continued through resales of the First Home. The Assistant Director reported that the criteria was under discussion and that this was led by the planning team.
2. The need for the Committee to receive regular and measurable data in respect of the various action plans / metrics included in the strategy, so that there could be effective scrutiny of the implementation of the strategy and performance. It was further identified

that to support this scrutiny, the data should not be solely a snapshot in time but would need to be provided over a period of time (for example over three years) to enable trends to be identified.

3. It was raised that there was a need for urgency in addressing areas within housing related to climate change given the aspiration of the Council to be Carbon Net Zero by 2030 if financially able to do so. Given the housing stock owned by the Council, and given the expected Government initiatives to stop the installation of new gas heating in homes from potentially 2030, there would be significant challenges to the Council in delivering appropriate housing to Tamworth's vulnerable residents in line with the Council's Climate Change agenda unless action was taken now.
4. The process followed for residents to apply for and receive Disabled Facilities Grants, where it was highlighted that this process appeared lengthy and complex. It was requested that data on this be included in the regular reporting of performance which could enable further scrutiny of how this process worked by the Committee as an additional work plan item at a later date.

Following its consideration, the H&W Committee agreed to make recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

Recommendations

1. It recommend to Cabinet that a bi-annual report be prepared by Officers for presentation to the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, every 6 months, setting out performance metrics relating to each action plan for the 4 Priorities in the Housing Strategy including data over a three year period;
2. A presentation be prepared for consideration by the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee regarding the delivery of the Council's climate change agenda in terms of Council's Housing stock and the impact on vulnerable Tamworth residents;
3. It recommend to Cabinet that consideration be given in the development of the criteria for First Homes, for the 20% discount to market price on the initial purchase, being continued in subsequent resales, where possible.

(Moved by Councillor M Cook and seconded by Councillor R Kingstone)

Options Considered

None.

Report Author

Councillor Rosey Claymore
Chair of Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee