

**NAME OF COMMITTEE**

Cabinet

**DATE OF COMMITTEE**

31/8/2011

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER; CORPORATE DIRECTOR; ASSISTANT DIRECTOR;**

Report of the Portfolio Holder Economic Development and Enterprise

**REPORT OF THE****TITLE OF REPORT**

Tamworth Core Strategy: Proposed Housing Policy Consultation Responses

**EXEMPT INFORMATION**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members endorse responses to the Core Strategy Housing Policy Consultation and approve the suggested Borough Council responses outlined in Appendix A of this report, along with the accompanying Sustainability Report as set out in Appendix B.

**PURPOSE**

For Members to consider the responses to the consultation on the Core Strategy Proposed Housing Policies carried out between February-April 2011 and the next stage in the process to deliver a sound Core Strategy.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

On the basis of responses received, it has been agreed to commission a more up to date evidence base of housing need to support establishing tenure type and mix and location in the context of government's housing, welfare and health reforms. This is being commissioned jointly with Lichfield DC & Cannock Chase DC. The cost of this work (estimated to be up to £50k) will be apportioned between the 3 authorities; on the basis of tenders received to date, it is unlikely that Tamworth's costs will exceed £20k. TBC's Housing Strategy Team is leading the commissioning of this work and the cost will be met by their budget. If it is found that there is insufficient budget to cover the cost of the work, there are sufficient funds within the LDF budget to cover any shortfall.

**LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND**

None identified

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Housing Policies have been subjected to a formal sustainability appraisal (attached as Appendix B). This ensures that sustainability issues are given full consideration in the preparation and adoption of refining policies. The sustainability

appraisal considers all the revised housing policies, which are H1, H3, H4 and H5. Policy H2 was unchanged and although H6 was amended its intent remained the same. The policies were assessed as they were drafted for the consultation and are set out as Option 1 in the appraisal framework. In addition, each policy has been assessed alongside one realistic alternative option (option 2). The total scores for each policy show that Option 1 has scored highest in every instance, which provides a sound endorsement that the preferred Housing Policy approach is the most appropriate, in terms of delivering sustainability objectives, for Tamworth.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The consultation exercise generated a number of useful representations from stakeholders which will be used to justify the approach taken by the Council to housing delivery at the Core Strategy's subsequent examination. Suggested objections and amendments to the proposed policies have been considered and, where considered appropriate, will be incorporated within the policies contained within the published version of the Core Strategy, or have resulted in further work being commissioned to provide further robust evidence to support policies which refer to addressing housing need and type. The Council's suggested responses to the representations, including justifications for discounting representations, are set out in Appendix A which following Cabinet approval will be published on the Council's website.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In February this year, the Council re-drafted its housing policies from the 2009 Proposed Spatial Strategy document and subjected them to a 6 week consultation period. The re-drafted policies reflected an important piece of evidence on affordable housing viability which enabled the setting of realistic targets for affordable housing. Advice obtained from Gypsy and Traveller representatives facilitated a more responsive policy to be drafted.

The housing policies included establishing targets where appropriate and supported by evidence and included:

- H1 - Revised policy on housing delivery
- H2 - Unchanged policy for Anker Valley
- H3 - Revised policy on affordable housing
- H4 - New policy on housing need setting out targets for sizes of dwellings, including an approach to delivering 'flexi care' accommodation
- H5 - New policy on housing density
- H6 - Revised policy on Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople accommodation

In total, 34 respondents, including statutory bodies, members of the community and adjoining local authorities submitted 134 individual representations on the policies. These have in turn been summarised, analysed and responses drafted. This report seeks approval to agree and publish the responses, along with an accompanying sustainability assessment of the policies.

The responses suggest broad support for the strategic approach to housing delivery, including proposed generalised locations for potential housing growth to meet Tamworth's needs in neighbouring authorities. However, further discussions are planned with Lichfield & North Warwickshire Councils to agree how this will be delivered through their respective Core Strategies. Support was received for the proposed targets in relation to affordable housing and housing density, accompanied by requests for a degree of flexibility to address site specific issues. The targets for dwelling sizes and numbers and flexi care accommodation received a number of objections on the basis of being overly prescriptive and failing to comply with government guidance. On this basis it has been agreed to commission a more up to date evidence base of housing need to support establishing tenure type and mix and location in the context of government's housing, welfare and health reforms. The brief

for this piece of work has been agreed and is currently being distributed. It is anticipated that the total cost of the work will be around £50k which will be apportioned between the 3 authorities. The Tamworth Borough Council proportion will be met from the Housing Strategy budget.

**REPORT AUTHOR**

Jon Lord

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Proposed Housing Policy Consultation Responses: Summary of issues raised and responses

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A contains a summary of the responses received and a suggested Borough Council response whilst The sustainability appraisal of the housing policies is set out in Appendix B.