

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND HOUSING TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2016

Planning and housing enforcement

I am pleased to report that in line with the new portfolio, the planning and housing enforcement teams are working closely together to move forward a joined up and strengthened approach to enforcement. Work continues in this regard with the resurrection of the former “eye sore” group now working on a number of key properties and sites across the Island to strengthen our enforcement approach.

Building control trading company

Various options are currently being investigated for the formation of a building control trading company. Building control functions are carried out within a competitive market and as such the council needs to adapt to function within the wider market.

Brighstone Neighbourhood Development Plan

The council's Executive is delighted that the Brighstone neighbourhood development plan was made on Monday 19 September 2016 following the referendum of Thursday 15 September 2016, with 293 yes votes to 31 no votes, from a turnout of 21.44 per cent of the parish electors.

Area action plans (AAPs)

The local planning authority is currently working through the various consultation responses and expanding the evidence base to include traffic modelling for Ryde, Newport and the Bay with a view to improving the network to boost economic regeneration in those key areas. This will also help to inform background work towards the combined authority requirements. The fast moving developments at a national and regional level require us to have both flexibility and patience in the development of the AAPs as it is crucial that the policy base is up to date and responsive to a rapidly shifting picture.

Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)

As part of PUSH a joint spatial position statement has been published, setting out the joint approach we will be taking with regard to growth in the housing market areas within the region under duty to cooperate. This is work that can be fed into further local spatial planning work that may arise from devolution opportunities.

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Government recently introduced new thresholds for contributions which we will now feed into the review of our SPD. We are now exploring the possibility of a change in our rural status with government in order to be able to build upon the positive joint work of the developer forum and housing partnership previously undertaken.

Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

An SPD for parking standards is currently under development and should be consulted upon by the new year.

Housing strategy

At the July meeting of the strategic housing partnership it was agreed by partners to produce a joint housing strategy. The importance of a deliverable strategy involving all key stake holders is vital for the future delivery of housing on the Island. Historically the housing need of the Island has not been met, and clusters of development coming forward while deliverable sites have stalled elsewhere has resulted in an inequity of housing provision. It is vital that the right balance of providing Island homes for Island people is struck, while conserving and enhancing our unique Island character. With a change in the national political focus now being on home ownership it is vital that we respond to that changing climate while securing the long term delivery of affordable rented homes for lower income Islanders. The next meeting will take place at the end of September and I hope to be able to provide you with further developments in October.

Housing and homelessness

September's monitoring report, coupled with the paper to Executive regarding the housing of refugees, has raised a number of questions among members and residents relating to current housing figures on the Isle of Wight.

I therefore considered it would be useful to provide you with a more in-depth breakdown of the latest available statistics and figures relating to housing, households in temporary accommodation and homelessness as well as information as to what actions are being taken to address these figures.

Below are the latest available figures. Please note that the reporting periods differ slightly from area to area and as such some are more recent than others.

Homelessness application decisions	2014/15	2015/16
Number of decisions made	466	410
Duty accepted	104	89
Intentionally homeless	20	24
Non priority	272	224

Homelessness application decisions	2014/15	2015/16
Not homeless	67	72
Not eligible	3	1

Households in temporary accommodation				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
As at end of March	157	161	184	178 (to 31.07.16))

The number of households in temporary accommodation is rising due to a slowdown in supply of affordable homes over the past two years. The supply has not continued to be provided at a rate which keeps pace with demand. It is worth noting that this is the case nationally. Housebuilding is well below required levels across the country. (Local Government Association, June 2016.)

There is an ongoing issue with affordability which is affecting households' abilities to access rented accommodation (whether private rented or registered provider) provision or affordability issues which are negatively impacting on the households' abilities to retain tenancy. We then have a duty to assess whether individuals are homeless and provide temporary accommodation where required.

Approaches for housing advice	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	1,566	1,485	316 (to date)

Homelessness prevented reflects those cases where effective and successful work was achieved to keep someone in their own home or where not possible, alternative accommodation was secured for/by them to prevent homelessness:	
2014/15	2015/16
337	307

Number on housing register by bedroom need (wef 07.09.16)	
1 bed	962
2 bed	535
3 bed	311
4 bed	60
5+ bed	9
Total	1,877

It is worth noting that the number of households on the housing register has reduced significantly since the new local connection policy was introduced last year and all

households were at that time required to re-register which has brought the previously estimated figure of 8,658 households on the register down to 1,877.

Empty properties

By virtue of the new homes bonus, and how it is calculated, the way we measure empty properties has changed from the previous government best value performance indicator 64 'brought back into use'.

It is now measured from October to October and for the last year we influenced 347 changes, in property status for the Prescribed Class C (PCLC) list, from being as recorded as empty on our council tax data base. The PCLC list is the council tax database of properties that have had an exemption which has expired and may be empty properties. This is calculated in October and if reduced we earn new homes bonus for each property removed from the list.

Action being taken

We are working on the following to help address these issues in the short-medium term:

- Strategic housing partnership framework- specifically looking at increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- Working with RSL partners to release appropriate council owned land for affordable housing provision.
- Direct liaison with the Homes and Communities Agency to access funding to help deliver sites.
- Working directly with partners to increase the supply of temporary accommodation at lesser cost to the council - helping reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.
- Discharge of our homeless duty into the private sector- making better use of private sector accommodation rather than needing to provide temporary accommodation.
- Continuing work to bring empty properties back into use.

Councillor Julia Baker-Smith
Executive Member for Planning and Housing