

Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024 – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report to Cabinet on 23 February 2023

Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 9 February 2023 to consider the final draft Housing Strategy and Project Plan. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Darling, introduced the revised Draft Housing Strategy, which had been updated following consultation, and the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024. Members asked the following questions which were answered by the officers in attendance and the Leader of the Council:
 - What action was being taken to address shops which had been empty for a long period of time.
 - How much social housing does Torbay need compared to the rest of the country.
 - Preston Down Road had gone out to tender for a registered social provider, why had this information not been shared with Councillors. Members requested information on the tender for Preston Down Road to be circulated to all Councillors after the meeting.
 - If a separate entrance was not available to premises above shops would that make it more difficult to lease those spaces for housing.
 - What action was being taken to ensure that landlords maintain their properties to an acceptable standard to prevent tenants having to move out of their existing properties.
 - A number of complaints had been received from members of the public relating to poor housing conditions e.g. damp and repairs how were these reported and what action could the Council take to support tenants.
 - How do we identify homeless residents and how were they registered as homeless.
 - It can be difficult for homeless people to access housing due to waiting to receive benefits what support was available to help them.
 - Who was responsible for dealing with antisocial behaviour outside flats and what could be done to support residents facing issues with antisocial behaviour.
 - The report refers to challenges of lack of local builders in the Bay, what was meant by this. Officers were requested to clarify this after the meeting.
 - What was affordable rent compared to social rent.

- Was the Council taking enough enforcement action to improve the quality of homes.
 - Had the population figures for Torbay been updated following publication of the latest census.
 - Were the figures for the number of affordable homes to be delivered realistic.
2. The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both in writing and orally and formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.
3. That the Cabinet be recommended:

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 1 that the Torbay Housing Strategy 2023-2030, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved, subject to the latest population figures being checked against the latest census data; and**
- 2 subject to 1 above, the Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023-2024, subject to:**
 - a realistic and attainable target for delivery of the number of affordable homes to be delivered each year; and**
 - to include targets to deliver a private rented sector improvement plan to tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions, proactively target non-compliant landlords by and take appropriate action where standards are not being met (target 2.1) and include actions and targets for improving housing conditions in social rented housing.**

Recommendation to Overview and Scrutiny Board (Cabinet to note):

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board monitors the delivery of the Housing Strategy Project Plan 2023/2024 as part of their Work Programme for 2023/2024.