

Draft Housing Strategy – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Draft V1

Report to Cabinet as part of the consultation process

Background

1. The Torbay's Housing Crisis Review Panel met on 25 October 2022 to consider the consultation draft Housing Strategy, which was launched for consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 18 October 2022. The key focus of the Strategy was to increase housing supply and improve the quality and support for housing, looking at what the Council can do to make a difference to influence the housing market. An action plan would be developed alongside the Strategy. Members were also encouraged to personally respond to the consultation which was available at <https://yoursay.torbay.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-our-new-housing-strategy> until 5 December 2022.
2. The Review Panel comprised of Councillors Barrand, Brown, Dart, Dudley, Douglas-Dunbar, Chris Lewis and O'Dwyer and was Chaired by Councillor Barrand.
3. The Panel, acknowledged the need to address the housing crisis and work with providers and developers to bring forward more housing for local residents. However, Members noted that there were several competing documents currently out to consultation which referred to different targets for housing delivery and the amount of affordable homes required over the next eight years (e.g. Local Plan update which set out the land available for development, Torbay Economic Growth Strategy, Housing Strategy). Each provided different numbers and reasons for it and unless the Council was able to agree on the numbers required Members cannot be assured that the Council would be able to deliver against all these strategies.
4. Whilst Members supported the need for accommodation for key workers, they felt that there was a need for suitable and affordable accommodation for all workers within Torbay.
5. The Panel formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet:

That the Cabinet be recommended:

To ensure that the Housing Strategy is joined up and the content does not conflict with other key policies such as the Economic Growth Strategy, Local Plan, Climate Strategy etc and that a decision can be reached within these strategies as to the numbers required for housing and affordable housing to ensure that they meet the requirements of the people of Torbay and the ambitions of the strategies.