

# **Report to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Report reference: CHB-013-2014/15**  
**Date of meeting: 18 December 2014**

**Portfolio: Housing**

**Subject: Development Strategy Update**

**Responsible Officer: P Pledger – Assistant Director (Housing Property &  
Development) (01992 564248)**

**Democratic Services: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Development Strategy update, formulated by the Council's Development Agent in conjunction with Council Officers, at Appendix 1 of this report be considered; and**
- (2) That the Housebuilding Cabinet Committee recommends to the Cabinet that the Development Strategy update be approved.**

## **Executive Summary:**

The Cabinet Committee was consulted on the format and content of the Development Strategy when it was first introduced in July 2013. The Strategy was drafted by East Thames in consultation Officers as part of their Service Agreement, and was finally approved by the Cabinet following a recommendation from the Cabinet Committee. Since then, the Cabinet Committee has considered a whole range of additional Policies including accelerating the programme, prioritising sites and what to do with sites that become undevelopable. This updated Development Strategy incorporates all of those Policies considered and agreed by the Cabinet Committee over the last 12-months.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Approval of the Development Strategy remains the responsibility of the Cabinet. However the Housebuilding Cabinet Committee is required to consider and then recommend its approval to the Cabinet.

## **Other Options for Action:**

Not to adopt the contents of the Strategy in the format presented and alter any of its statements, targets, standards, procedures or assumptions.

## **Report:**

1. Within the Terms of Reference for the Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, it states that this Committee will consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House-building Programme on an annual basis.

2. As part of their appointment, it was a requirement that East Thames prepare the Development Strategy on behalf of the Council and update it annually.

3. At its previous meeting in July 2013, the Cabinet Committee was consulted on the first iteration of the Development Strategy including the assumptions that will be made, the standards used, the consultation methods that will be adopted, the procurement methods used for construction works and the performance targets used to measure progress. All feasibility studies that have been presented to the Cabinet Committee since then have been based on that Development Strategy.

4. During the last 12-months, the Cabinet Committee has considered a whole range of additional Policies, such as accelerating the House-building Programme, prioritising the sites for development and the future use of sites found to be unsuitable for Council house-building. This annual update of the Development Strategy seeks to pull together all of these Policies into the Development Strategy for future reference.

5. The Development Strategy is set out at Appendix 1 of this report for consideration in detail and, subject to being satisfied with its contents, the Cabinet Committee is asked to recommend its approval to the Cabinet.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Adoption of the Development Strategy triggered a fee payment in the sum of £3,000 to East Thames in accordance with the terms of the Development Agreement. However, the annual update of the Strategy is included in the Service Agreement.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Within its Terms of Reference, the House-Building Cabinet Committee is expected to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House-building Programme.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Housebuilding Cabinet Committee have already been consulted at previous meetings on the first iteration of the Development Strategy and a whole range of Policies relating to Council House-building, which have been incorporated in the Strategy as presented.

#### **Background Papers:**

The reports and documents referred to in the list of appendices

#### **Risk Management:**

Since the Development Strategy has a direct bearing on the financial viability and delivery of the Council's house-building programme, the greatest risks are that the assumptions prove to be incorrect resulting in each phase being un-viable.

These risks are mitigated by the Council being able to learn from the experience of East Thames, who have been undertaking developments similar to that proposed in the strategy for some time.

Since the Cabinet Committee will consider and sign-off financial appraisals for every proposed development, the financial effects of the Strategy can be monitored. If, over time, a problem is identified, the Cabinet Committee can review its policy.

# Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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Within the Housing Service Strategy, it has been identified that the target groups that are affected by the Council's house building programme are people in need of:

- affordable housing,
- homelessness assistance,
- supported housing for special needs groups,
- owners and occupiers of poor condition housing
- council and housing association tenants.

From that, it was identified that generally, there is an under provision of suitable accommodation for nearly all target groups. This has been reaffirmed in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Decision making is affected by funding and other factors, such as the availability of building land suitable for particular groups e.g. the elderly or young families.

There is no evidence of unlawful discrimination in relation to the provision of affordable housing.