

Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet

**O&S Recommendations to Cabinet - Housing Framework Annual Report**

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**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet:-**

- I. The report be noted and formally published on the ABC website.
  - II. That the Committee's request for officer research into the following areas be noted and (resource permitting) taken forward:
    - a. The viability of schemes to encourage capital investment into social housing provision by landlords.
    - b. The viability of modular homes as a means to accelerate the delivery of less costly social housing
    - c. The viability of self-build as an additional means housing delivery option.
    - d. The role and promotion of credit unions operating in the Borough.
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**Date of O&S meeting:** 24 October 2017

**Chair of O&S Committee:** Cllr Brendan Chilton

**Date of Cabinet Meeting:** 7 December 2017

**Key Decision:** NO

**Significantly Affected Wards:** All – none specifically

**Relevant Portfolios:** Housing  
Finance and IT

**Management Team Comment:** See paragraph 6

**Background Papers:** **Housing Framework Annual Report** – report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (and minutes), 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017

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## **Report Title: O&S Recommendations to Cabinet – Housing Framework Annual Report**

### **Introduction and Background**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives an annual update on the Housing Framework as a standing agenda item. This year's annual report provided a summary of actions undertaken through the Framework since its adoption in July 2013, as well as briefing Members on the future structure of the Housing Strategy.

### **Consideration of Housing Framework Annual Report**

2. Members were pleased to note the achievements made to date under the Framework and recognised the challenges facing the Council's Housing service going forward. Concerns were expressed by Members over the full roll out of Universal Credit in March 2018 and the potential for an increase in homelessness in the Borough (and consequential pressures on the General Fund) as a result of landlords refusing to let properties to tenants in receipt of Universal Credit. Parallels were drawn with the introduction of the Under-Occupancy Charge, introduced in 2013.
3. The Head of Housing noted the range of support options the Council provided to vulnerable claimants, including mutual exchanges, discretionary housing payments and a Deposit Guarantee Scheme, wherein the Council paid the deposit total to the Landlord and the tenant would then make monthly contributions to pay the amount back. Members felt the role of Credit Unions as a support mechanism to enable access to affordable housing needed exploration and research.
4. Questions were also raised around the provision of additional social housing stock in the Borough. Members noted with interest that the Council were looking at a range of alternative housing options to meet the demand for housing stock within the Borough, and felt that research into alternatives such as self-build and modular homes warranted attention.
5. A Member felt that there were three main constraints to the delivery of new housing stock, being land, management and capital. The Council could offer land and management, and could encourage capital investment to boost the supply of housing through a scheme of social impact bonds, municipal bonds or similar. Members agreed that this was a good idea, and deserving of further research.

### **Management Team Comment**

6. Management Team have considered the report, and wish to make its own comments on recommendation II -

- (a) Officers are seeking advice from Arlingclose in this area, however it should be noted that potential benefits would need to be balanced against the level of regulation associated with any such schemes and the required resource commitment.
- (b) An officer working group has been assembled to look into housing delivery options in the Borough, and will take this request into consideration.
- (c) An officer working group has been assembled to look into housing delivery options in the Borough, and will take this request into consideration.

## **Conclusion**

- 7. The O&S Committee recommends the following to Cabinet:
  - I. The report be noted and formally published on the ABC website.**
  - II. That the Committee's request for officer research into the following areas be noted and (resource permitting) taken forward:**
    - a. The viability of schemes to encourage capital investment into social housing provision by landlords.**
    - b. The viability of modular homes as a means to accelerate the delivery of less costly social housing.**
    - c. The viability of self-build as an additional housing delivery option.**
    - d. The role and promotion of credit unions operating in the Borough.**

## **Contact and Email**

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