

**HOUSING BOARD held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY,
14 MARCH 2019 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor M Felton (Chairman)
Councillors A Dean and P Lees

Officers in attendance: A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), S Payne (Local Plan Project Manager), J Snares (Housing Strategy and Operations Manager) and M Watts (Environmental Health Manager - Protection)

HB18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Farthing, Gerard, Loughlin, Mills, Ranger and Redfern, and Carole Mandy of the Tenants Forum.

HB19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

HB20 CONSULTANT'S BRIEF FOR FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Local Plan Project Manager gave a summary of the report, which considered a draft Consultant's Brief for work on the future Uttlesford Housing Strategy and Allocations Policy. He said the report focused on how to plan for the three new garden communities, and it was important to do this correctly in order to plan for affordable housing. This was an opportunity to do something different, and it was fundamental to look at all strands of policy and understand how the Housing Policy could be used to achieve the Council's fundamental objectives.

Councillor Dean said he supported this piece of work, but the Council would need advice on how it was delivered. He suggested that the strategy include mention that it was key to ensure a supply of affordable housing throughout the district, rather than just the three new garden communities.

The Local Plan Project Manager said it was important not to have a two tier system of housing between the garden communities and other locations, and that he would look into including mention of this in the strategy.

In response to a Member question, the Local Plan Project Manager said the developers who the Council was working with on the garden communities had been required to sign a Quality and Collaboration Agreement with the Council to ensure development took place to the standards required by the Council.

In response to a Member question, the Local Plan Project Manager said each garden community would have different needs in terms of its residents and their supporting employment.

In response to a Member question, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said a Downsizing Policy would be a part of the Housing Strategy. The Local Plan Project Manager said a section specifically about downsizing could be added to the brief.

Councillor Dean said it was important to have mechanisms in place to maintain the affordable housing supply.

APPROVED to endorse the brief appended to the report so that work can commence on preparing the evidence for the refresh of the Uttlesford Housing Strategy and amendments to the Allocations Policy.

HB21 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING UPDATE

The Environmental Health Manager – Protection gave an update on private sector housing:

- The Council had now got an improved range of powers to deal with rogue landlords. It could now issue civil penalties of up to £30000 for each offence. This could be used as an alternative tool for prosecution which could be long-winded.
- A new definition of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) had been introduced. The Council had now licenced 13 and there was still work to do to find others. Fines could be issued for not coming forward to register as a HMO.
- A national review of Disabled Facilities Grants was underway, looking at the way financial allocations were made to each council. Uttlesford District Council were employing an Occupational Therapist on a temporary basis for one day a week to work as part of a pilot exercise to look at ways grants could be used to ensure that those who used the grants were able to look after themselves, such as rapid changes for entry into properties. The Housing Board would receive a review of this pilot after a year.
- Work on empty houses was progressing as normal. A Compulsory Purchase Order had been issued, but the landlord was now progressing with the work as requested.

HB22 DEVELOPMENT SITE - SAFFRON WALDEN

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager gave a summary of the report, which detailed proposals to purchase a development site in Saffron Walden from the General Fund for use for an affordable housing scheme. She said the scheme would pay for itself over 30-35 years. The department had negotiated a price at the lower end of the range of what the site was worth.

APPROVED to recommends that the development site in Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden is transferred from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for the consideration of £1.02million, subject to planning permission being secured for a scheme suitable for affordable housing.

HB23 **DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager gave a verbal development update.

Hatherley Court – Phase 1 was now complete and tenants had moved in. It was hoped that Phase 2 would be complete by the end of the year.

Frambury Lane and Newton Grove – these sites were progressing. The latter's car park was now complete. Properties were now up to the first floor, and it was hoped they would be finished in July.

Walden Place – Officers were looking at detaching the listed building from the sheltered accommodation scheme. The plans were being re-examined and it might be that less existing flats had to be demolished and more could be added on.

The Moors – This site had been hit by planning delays but some issues had now been ironed out. It was hoped to have an application heard by the Planning Committee in April.

Great Chesterford site – the Council was looking at buying and developing a site to develop council housing. Cabinet had already approved this as it had been necessary to act to buy the site at short notice, but the decision was subject to satisfactory change to the planning application.

HB24 **DRAFT TENANCY FRAUD POLICY**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager introduced the draft Tenancy Fraud policy.

Members noted the draft policy.

The meeting closed at 11.25.