

- Finance J Betts – Comments incorporated
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils Warwickshire District/Borough Council's
respective lead officers for Housing
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** (*If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps*)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by
this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Cabinet – 18 November 2010

Housing Policy

Joint Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy and the Strategic Director for Resources

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet approves and adopts the Housing Policy at **Appendix A**, specifically adopting Sections 7 to 14 as Council policy on land disposal to support affordable housing developments, subject to review in three years.
2. That Cabinet agrees to the amended Implementation Plan set out in section 3 of the main report below.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report follows on from the report and agreement at Cabinet on 22 April 2010. The reason that the Council needs a housing policy is to make a clear public statement to all our partners of our commitment to work in partnership, to ensure adequate provision of good quality, affordable housing across Warwickshire, and to set out clear Corporate Guidance on the disposal of any WCC land and property for housing.
- 1.2 As the Cabinet decision on 22 April was approved as an interim document, subject to a six month review following Overview and Scrutiny Committee input, it is necessary to bring this back to Cabinet for final approval. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have decided not to include this now in its work programme. Therefore, this report recommends a final version, which is in Appendix A. Appendix B repeats key points from the April report about the background to the policy and existing activity and Appendix C is a Glossary.
- 1.3 This report also updates the Implementation Plan approved in April.

2. Main changes since original Cabinet Report on 22 April 2010

- 2.1 The likely impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review will be to reinforce the need for a positive approach on the part of public bodies to making land available at less than best value for the development of affordable housing.
- 2.2 Some adjustments have been made to the core of the Housing Policy at paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 of Appendix A:

- 2.2.1 Instead of stating that Local Needs Surveys are the “overriding criterion” paragraph 8.2 begins “The County Council will give favourable consideration to the disposal of sites ...” if a number of criteria are met. The criteria include one that a need has been identified by a Local Needs Survey in rural areas. This change emphasises that the County Council must make the final decision on disposal and allows for the fact that a Local Needs Survey will not necessarily exist in non-rural areas.
- 2.2.2 A rider has been added that the need identified by a Local Needs Survey should be one that would not be met unless the County Council disposed of its land.
- 2.2.3 References to your Capital Receipts Strategy, the terms of any Ministerial Consents and your Protocol for the Disposal of Land at Less than Best Value have been added.
- 2.3 Other changes include additional references to key Council Policies and Strategies and in the Implementation Plan, changes to original wording to anticipate the change in size and role of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and changes made to take account of comments from Members at the Cabinet meeting on 22 April. The reasons for the changes are set out in italics after each point. References to the specific HCA Total Place funding initiative have been removed, due to funding constraints, following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

3. Next Steps/Implementation Plan

- 3.1 The Council will need to consider what next steps to take to ensure delivery of affordable housing in Warwickshire and across the sub-region, and proposals are included below:-
- (i) Agree on a countywide policy on delivery of land for new housing developments at less than best value to meet local housing needs (i.e. affordable housing) – **Appendix A**, specifically Sections 7 to 14. *Changes to numbering, due to numbering changes in **Appendix A**.*
 - (ii) Work with District/Borough partners on the necessary development work for the CSW Housing Market now that this is in place. *Change here, as County will now work proactively with the District and Borough Councils to make this a success.*
 - (iii) Develop, in consultation with District and Borough partners and appropriate Housing Associations and lenders, funding packages for equity sharing initiatives through the Council, where the Council, in partnership with Building Societies and Banks and the District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire, could facilitate equity loans to prospective home owners, to make it easier for them to purchase a property. The equity loan would be repaid, as a share in the equity realised on sale, when the property was sold. *Further detail added here by way of explanation, suggested by Members.*

- (iv) In partnership with District and Boroughs, through appropriate care and housing based services including; assistive technology, adaptations, and publicity, promotion, and development of the pilot Handyperson and Housing Options services, support older people either to live safely in their home or to move out of larger family homes, to free those up for families, and downsize or move to other more appropriate housing solutions. *Further detail added here by way of explanation, suggested by AHCS.*
 - (v) Through the Warwickshire Strategic Housing Support Partnership (previously known as the Supporting People Commissioning Body) to support the District and Borough Councils in providing accommodation and housing related support services to vulnerable people in Warwickshire including the more excluded and hard to reach groups, including Gypsies and Travellers. *Further detail added here by way of explanation, suggested by AHCS.*
 - (vi) Support the Districts and Boroughs in their funding discussions and negotiations with the HCA and in the development of the Local Investment Plan (LIP), to ensure the development of appropriate housing solutions across Warwickshire, with particular focus on an adequate supply of affordable housing for rent. *Added to take account of the new role of HCA and funding constraints, following the CSR, and need to support the District and Borough Councils in coordinating housing delivery across the County.*
 - (vii) Look to develop alternative means of funding and providing affordable housing across Warwickshire with private Developers and District and Borough Council partners. *Added to take account of the new role of HCA and funding constraints, following the CSR.*
- 3.2 This report proposes the adoption of a new Council Housing Policy, with particular emphasis on affordable housing, included at **Appendix A** (particularly Sections 7 to 14). The Cabinet is asked to approve and adopt the policy for affordable housing with implementation forthwith, subject to review in three years, in the light of any future changes in National Housing Policy.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Although there are no direct financial implications from this report for the Environment and Economy Directorate, there will be financial implications for the County overall - i.e. possible loss of assumed income from sale of land, if any sites are disposed of at nil value for affordable housing.

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7 October 2010

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Cabinet – 18 November 2010

Housing Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a crucial role in assisting delivery of housing that will support sustainable communities, including affordable, housing-related support and Extra Care Housing. Whilst it is recognised that the Council is not a housing authority and has no statutory duty to provide or manage affordable housing the Council has a role in the housing agenda as a landowner, providing sites for housing, as a strategic planning authority, with planning responsibilities for infrastructure, and as the local economic assessor. The council also holds an existing stock of housing that could be considered as affordable housing comprising provision for key workers in caretakers' housing, group homes and agricultural dwellings. The reason that the Council needs a housing policy is to make a clear public statement to all our partners of our commitment to work in partnership, to ensure adequate provision of good quality, affordable housing across Warwickshire, and to set out clear Corporate Guidance on the disposal of any WCC land and property for housing.

2. Corporate Policy Context

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the Council's policy on the disposal of land to support affordable housing developments, in the context of the council's existing policies and strategies including, specifically, but not exclusively:-
- (i) Sustainable Asset Management Policy 2009(ii) Capital receipts strategy,
 - (iii) Sustainable Community Strategy,
 - (iv) County Farms and Smallholdings Strategy 2010 – 2025.
 - (v) Protocol for the disposal of property at less than best value.
 - (vi) Strategic Asset Management Policy on Surplus Assets.

3. How the Provision of Housing Meets the Council's Vision and its Priorities:

- 3.1 The provision of sites for affordable housing contributes to the Council's priorities:
- (i) **Raising educational attainment and improving the lives of children, young people and families**
By providing affordable homes, we are addressing inequality gaps in standards of living and tackling child and family poverty. This is a significant factor in giving children greater opportunity to learn and achieve.

- (iii) **Maximising independence for older people and people with disabilities**
By seeking provision of specially adapted affordable housing for these groups.
- (iv) **Developing sustainable places and communities**
By requiring affordable housing to be developed sustainably and seek housing for key workers and agricultural tenants. In addition affordable housing can benefit the tenure mix and the sustainability of smaller settlements. However, the Council also wants to promote the right mix of housing in new developments, striking a balance between aspiration and need that encourages sustainable and cohesive communities.
- (v) **Protecting the community and making Warwickshire a safer place to live**
By seeking development, the Council influences the quality of the built environment and community cohesion so that places are safe in which to live. Also the quality of new housing will be built in accordance with 'Secured by Design' criteria.

3.2 The future vision for Warwickshire is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. One of the long term community outcomes for the vision is "housing that is appropriate and affordable" and this provides the focus for adopting a policy framework and action to enable affordable housing.

3.3 The Council, through the Public Service Board, is committed to increase the supply of affordable housing across the county and particularly in Warwick and Stratford districts.

4. What Housing is covered by this Policy?

4.1 This Policy covers the following, but not exclusively, types of housing: Social Rented, Shared Equity, Low Cost, Local Need, Key Worker, Sheltered Housing, Extra Care Housing, Specific Needs (Physical disability or mental/learning difficulties, including Young People) and Refuges, Gypsy and traveller sites (temporary and permanent sites in conjunction with District and Borough Councils) and Shelters for homeless people. A description of each of these is given in the Glossary in **Appendix C**.

5. How is such Housing Provided?

5.1 Existing housing that falls within the terms of this policy has been provided in the form of Council housing and/or housing owned and developed by Housing Associations and other registered social landlords. Until recently new Council housing was in limited supply, with stocks reducing due to occupiers exercising the right to buy and a number of housing authorities completing stock transfers to Housing Associations or Residents Management schemes. However, with possible future changes to the District and Borough Housing Revenue Accounts, there may be opportunities for directly provided Council housing by Districts/Boroughs going forward.

- 5.2 In the immediate past, new developments have been provided by Housing Associations, with funding support from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), whose role is to create opportunities for high quality, sustainable places. The HCA has provided funding for housing and bring land back into productive use. However, HCA funding support is likely to be greatly reduced in the years ahead and so the need for land to be provided at nil/nominal cost for new affordable housing development.

6. How is Affordable Housing Funded?

- 6.1 Generally, additional funding for Council housing has not been available for a number of years but central government has created funding schemes recently enabling housing authorities (not County Councils) to bid for funding to develop further Council housing. However, this HCA funding stream has now ended and any future Council house building will depend on any benefits to District and Borough Councils of any changes to their Housing Revenue Accounts. The majority of social housing has been provided by Housing Associations who can access grant funding via HCA funding and seek property backed finance against revenue income from developments. In the West Midlands, allocations for HCA grant funding have been made for schemes in the shorter term. Grant funding is a critical factor for a number of schemes with some starts being delayed until confirmation that funding has been awarded. The HCA have indicated that one area they have not achieved affordable housing targets for is for smaller rural settlements of less than 3,000 people.
- 6.2 HCA funding is likely to become more difficult in the next few years, as we enter a period of Central Government budget constraint. It is also likely that future HCA funding take the form of “investment” in sites/infrastructure, looking for some return on that investment in house sales in the future, rather than the more traditional grant funding. That will make the provision of land at less than best value and, in some cases, at nil cost much more important than it has been in the recent past.

7. WCC as Landowner

- 7.1 As a landowner with a considerable portfolio of both urban and rural land and property, the Council has a significant role to play in facilitating development in areas where gaps exist in the provision of modern affordable homes to meet the demand from low income families, to support key workers in the public sector and workers in the agricultural and rural industries. The Council can allocate its own land for affordable housing development in localities that are sparse in housing provision and where high value market housing tends to dominate.
- 7.2 There are a number of different situations where the provision of affordable housing in line with this policy can be considered. Delivery of the Housing Policy is dependent on the prospect of future development for individual sites and whilst there is a general presumption on the Council achieving best consideration from land transactions, this should now be balanced by the prospect of realising less than best consideration in order to facilitate development of housing. Therefore, the potential for future alternative development for individual sites must be assessed. Any sale price or value sites

may need to be considered in the wider context in conjunction with delivering the Council's Priorities, as described in Section 2 above, rather than simply best consideration in monetary terms, in accordance with the Protocol on the disposal of property at less than best value. Generally the Council's Capital Receipts Strategy seeks to ensure that we optimise opportunities to make best use of the capital value tied up in the Council's assets. However, when making decisions on the disposal of assets (and hence the generation of capital receipts) other factors are considered, including the impact on corporate policies and the promotion of key strategic policies. As this report outlines a key strategic housing policy for the Authority, it is consistent with the Capital Receipts Strategy. It highlights the considerations that need to be identified when we are obtaining anything less than market value for sold land for affordable housing.

- 7.3 Funding housing development incurs significant capital cost, often dependent on HCA grant funding to ensure affordable housing schemes are viable. Where HCA funding is required, the HCA will ask the Council to consider different options, including at nil cost, for the transfer of Council owned land to support affordable housing developments. This applies where identified housing sites are owned by the Council, rather than a requirement that the Council acquire further identified sites. In this way, HCA funding support delivers a greater number of housing units, rather than part of the HCA funding being required for land acquisition. Clearly, the HCA approach will not meet the Council's general requirement to achieve best consideration for sales of land and buildings. However, given the need for housing and the opportunity to move families out of some smallholding properties that do not meet current Decent Homes Standards, it may be appropriate to dispose of land at less than best value or even at nil value, to meet wider County social objectives. However, in addition there are a number of properties occupied by the non-agricultural tenants. The relocation of these tenants will free up some assets with considerable value (typically £200-500k) and, at the same time, release the Council from some onerous repair and maintenance obligations.
- 7.4 There is also the possibility of the Council making significant revenue savings on housing and related support costs, if more homes are provided locally, if people are willing to relocate back to Warwickshire to suitably adapted property from out of county accommodation funded by the Council due to lack of suitable more locally available accommodation. This provision will need to fit with relevant Council future strategies and policies: for example a Learning Difficulties accommodation strategy is currently being developed.

8. General Policy

- 8.1 The County Council will give favourable consideration to the disposal of sites for affordable housing development, provided it is satisfied that the criteria below in 8.2 are met. Account will need also to be taken of the current requirements of the Capital Receipts Strategy.
- 8.2 Criteria to be met:-
- (i) the disposal of land does not conflict with other Council property development or other Council strategies

- (ii) the disposal of land does not adversely affect the value or future development potential of the Council's retained land
 - (iii) there is a demonstrated need for the affordable housing, identified by a Local Needs Survey for sites in rural areas, which is unlikely to be met without the disposal
 - (iv) the proposed site and its development meet planning criteria and policies
 - (v) where relevant, the terms of any Ministerial Consent and the requirements of the Council's Protocol for the disposal of property at less than best value are satisfied
 - (vi) full account is taken of the estimated Capital Receipt forgone by accepting less than best consideration.
- 8.3 If any of the criteria are not met, the presumption would be not to dispose of the site for affordable housing.
- 8.4 If the Council proposes retaining any adjoining or neighbouring land, it will reserve sufficient rights and impose any necessary covenants to enable future development of the retained land (for any purpose).
- 8.5 Development requirements of the Council are to seek maximum sustainability for any housing development. This is defined, but not limited to, the following:-
- (i) Sufficient plot sizes for units (allowing some potential for extension and adequate garden/recreation space to satisfy 'Home for Life' criteria) (definition in the Glossary in **Appendix C**)
 - (ii) Construction and operation of the units to be in accordance with the Council's Sustainable Asset Management Policy 2009.
 - (iii) Housing to meet 'Homes for Life' design standards, wherever possible
 - (iv) Developments to meet 'Secured by Design' standards, wherever possible (definition in the Glossary in **Appendix C**)
 - (v) Where possible the Council would seek best practice and exemplar developments rather than compliance with design criteria.

9. Specific Situations

- 9.1 In addition to general policy issues there are a number of different situations where disposal of land for housing requires specific issues to be considered. These can be classed into the following:-
- (i) Rural Exception Housing Sites (no foreseeable development potential).
 - (ii) Small Housing sites (with development potential) considered for 100% affordable housing.
 - (iii) Housing development sites with affordable housing requirements.

10. Rural Exception Housing Sites

- 10.1 These were sites, usually on the fringe of settlements that do not meet planning criteria currently for development (e.g. market value housing or employment development). However a potential 'exception' has been the delivery of affordable housing, which meets identified local needs. Evidence of both local need and why development of the proposed site is the most suitable on planning grounds is required. The position on this is likely to change, however, with the Coalition Government's proposals on localism, the Big Society and local funding incentives for new house building.
- 10.2 Historically, supporting evidence has usually been generated by the settlement or Parish themselves via a Local Needs Survey identifying the extent of local need requirements and potential locations which can be appraised. Identified needs would include the number and size of units required and also any mix of tenure (e.g. social rented/low cost, etc.). Alternatively developments and sites were identified by landowners and promoted via the planning process or by the local planning authority themselves. However, whichever route any new future proposals come from, they will need to be supported by the local community.
- 10.3 In the event that a Council site is identified as a rural affordable housing exception site the General Policy criteria, Section 8 above, would be considered initially. If the general criteria are met, the Council should consider the following criteria more specific to this circumstance: Land transaction type and Disposal Price/land value.
- 10.4 Land transaction - To seek disposal of land by way of a long ground lease (i.e. 125 years), wherever possible/practicable. By granting a lease, rather than disposing the freehold interest, the Council is able to maintain greater control as to use of the land and to have an input regarding nominations for occupiers. A long lease term is required by housing providers to satisfy funding criteria for the development of affordable housing.
- 10.5 Disposal Price/land value - Consideration for the lease to be either a lump sum premium followed by an annual peppercorn rent (capital payment) or alternatively a ground rent with reviews. The decision as to method of payment would be dependent on funding issues for the housing provider / developer and also the Council's preference in receiving capital or revenue. Sites will have an existing use value which will usually be agricultural or pony paddock value. As an exception site there is no real prospect of alternative development for the short to medium term depending on timing for new Local Development Frameworks and other planning policies and plans. This minimises additional hope value for sites. However, in some circumstances, it may be necessary to transfer the freehold to the developing Housing Association (HA) (e.g. when lenders to HAs require this) and at nil value, if genuinely affordable housing is to be delivered.
- 10.6 Wider consideration/benefits to the Council by release of sites: (Nominate occupiers with specific needs) - Subject to occupancy criteria and nominations agreements between the Borough or District housing authority the Council to seek the ability to make nominations for occupancy of some of the housing,

where it would be suitable to relocate or accommodate people that the Council have responsibilities for. Examples to consider include: housing for retired smallholdings' tenants/farmers and housing for people with special housing needs for adapted housing. A significant proportion of the Council's rural houses do not meet the 'decent homes' standards. In some circumstances it may be more cost effective to dispose of some of these Council houses which require significant investment, or are particularly valuable, to provide market value housing.

- 10.7 Housing for people with special housing adapted needs - Occupiers requiring special adapted needs affordable housing can include: families, adults or older people with physical, or mental or learning difficulties and also specifically for younger people. Specially adapted housing is most efficiently provided as new build, rather than adapting existing housing, where needs can be identified. Increased development costs can make provision of this type of housing less attractive to housing providers / developers, but can be realised by Council control arising from ownership of the land and grant of a long ground lease.
- 10.8 The Council will continue to explore and discuss with the District and Borough Councils how such proposals can be achieved and aligned with planning conditions and housing nomination criteria.

11. Small Housing Sites Considered for 100% Affordable Housing

- 11.1 These sites could be small infill sites within settlements(villages or towns). Dependent on planning policies such sites will be capable of redevelopment, either for housing or for employment uses. Dependent on planning policy and site area, any housing development may trigger a requirement for an element of affordable housing. However, the Council may consider providing a larger proportion of affordable housing on the site up to 100% affordable to meet needs and satisfy wider Council priorities and strategies.
- 11.2 The Council may determine that a site should be developed for 100% affordable housing. Any land transaction to enable this is likely to be at less than best consideration. Any disposal would need to be in accordance with the General Disposal Consent for disposal of sites at less than best consideration. This would need to reflect that the Council is foregoing a higher capital receipt for alternative development and dependent on HCA funding issues any receipt may be further restricted to satisfy HCA aims that local authorities 'gift' land for affordable housing.
- 11.3 Opportunities may arise for enhanced affordable housing schemes as part of the HCA "placemaking" agenda to realise additional community facilities through Total Place/Total Capital initiatives, to pool partner resources. Provision of a village shop, library facilities a village hall, adult social education centre or group home accommodation, Police and Health facilities can be considered, particularly multi functional space that can support a number of community functions, linking with other public bodies including the Districts and Borough Councils, Health and Police. Such benefits would be considered as part of the wider consideration realised by enabling an affordable housing scheme.

12. Assisting with Wider Accommodation Needs

- 12.1 The Council may consider alternatives to 100% affordable development to help address wider housing or accommodation needs such as providing gypsy and traveller sites or shelters for homeless people. Such developments would not be considered as affordable housing in planning terms or need to satisfy HCA land 'gifting' aims.

13. Housing Development Sites

- 13.1 Where a proportion of affordable housing is required as a planning condition and satisfied by completion of a S106 Agreement or unilateral planning undertaking this can be considered a normal transaction, not affected by this policy. The Council would generally dispose the freehold interest of the land on an open market basis. If a purchaser has a special interest (for example, a ransom strip or controls adjoining land where joint development enhances value a one to one deal can be considered). Disposal of the whole site would be to a developer who in turn would need to satisfy the affordable housing requirement either by transferring affordable plots or developing affordable housing directly (or via a Housing Association either with or without HCA funding support). In this way, as the Council does not transfer land directly to an affordable housing provider, there is unlikely to be any need for the Council to transfer affordable housing land at nil consideration to satisfy HCA aims, as the responsibility for developing the affordable housing rests with the developer.
- 13.2 The Council may determine to realise a greater amount of affordable housing on the site in which case this policy will apply. However, unless the site is identified for 100% affordable housing the disposal route outlined in this section should be adopted with a covenant included in the sale requiring the appropriate affordable housing proportion is developed.
- 13.3 There may be some opportunities where the Council, as landowner, can seek offsetting for affordable housing i.e. increase the proportion on one site to offset a lower or nil proportion of affordable housing on another. The driver for this should be planning and needs based, but it should be recognised that there is potential to enhance the combined consideration for sites. For example well located sites with close access to services are particularly attractive for affordable housing for more vulnerable residents with more limited access to travel, whereas edge of town developments may be less attractive to those residents.

14. Process for Disposing of Housing Sites

- 14.1 Any proposed transactions that fall into sections of this policy to be reported to Cabinet seeking approval. The report to Cabinet would demonstrate compliance with this Housing Policy.

Cabinet – 18 November 2010

Housing Policy

Key points from original Cabinet Report on 22nd April 2010.

Introduction

- 1.1 The main enablers for housing across Warwickshire are the District and Borough housing authorities, supported by private sector Developers and Housing Associations. However, although the County Council is not a housing authority, as the main strategic planning body for the county of Warwickshire, and a provider of major services (e.g. education, transport, adult services) and the local economic assessor for the County, the Council does have a clear role in the growth agenda, of which housing is a critical part. The Council is fully engaged with all the Districts/Boroughs on housing issues (and also with Housing Associations and private Developers), as infrastructure is crucial to any successful housing development, and the Council has a clear responsibility for overseeing infrastructure, for example, transport, education and adult services. In addition, with the Council's work through the Public Service Board, the Environment and Economy Directorate is working hard to ensure that full account is taken of issues around training and employment, to secure strong economic development, as part of any future proposed housing development, in partnership with the Warwickshire Districts, Boroughs, Coventry City Council and Solihull MBC. The Council has been closely involved in the developing Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) Housing, Spatial Development and Transport Strategies.
- 1.2 The Council is also, through its Housing Strategy Lead, working closely with the District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire in developing a county-wide Local Investment Plan (LIP) for affordable housing. Although this is no longer a mandatory requirement for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), all partners feel that this exercise will add value in assessing housing needs and delivering the housing to meet those needs going forward. The Council's Housing Strategy Lead is also in active discussions with private developers, to look at innovative new ways of providing much needed affordable housing in the future, given the likely funding constraints that both Local Authorities and the HCA are expected to face in the next few years.
- 1.3 The Council also has a proven track record in delivery in this area of work, as it is a founder member and key player in Pride in Camp Hill Ltd. (PinCH), a major housing and regeneration initiative in Camp Hill, Nuneaton. PinCH is a Company Limited by Guarantee, with the

Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, and Advantage West Midlands being the main funding stakeholders, along with the local residents, businesses, Primary Care Trust, Chamber of Commerce, Learning and Skills Council, and specifically concerning housing, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Prince Charles's Foundation for Architecture. In addition, the strong partnership working needed to deliver on the Care and Choice Accommodation Programme (CACAP) and on Housing Related Support Services, through the Warwickshire Housing Support Partnership (previously known as the Supporting People Commissioning Body) will stand us in good stead for the future.

- 1.4 The proposed approach on Housing Policy, outlined particularly in Sections 7-14 in **Appendix A**, will also support the Coalition Government's plans on "localism" and the Big Society. Further evidence of the need for integrated service provision is provided by the 'Blueprint for Warwickshire' (to be found on the Warwickshire Observatory website).

2. Housing Priorities

- 2.1 There are a number of key housing priorities for the Council and our District and Borough partners going forward:-
- (i) Securing the right mix of housing across Warwickshire to meet existing and emerging needs. This includes sufficient affordable rented housing in the more deprived areas in the north of the county and in some of the more affluent areas in the south; more "aspirational" housing in the north; sufficient Key Worker housing; and an appropriate mix of housing to meet changing needs in the economy. This housing will be provided through Housing Associations and private Developers, often as part of Section 106 Agreements to provide "affordable homes", as part of a wider housing development.
 - (ii) Ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to meet the changing needs of those who need care and/or support in their own homes across Warwickshire.
 - (iii) Delivering sufficient Extra Care Housing to meet the needs of Warwickshire's growing older population.
 - (iv) Delivering sufficient Independent Living opportunities within Warwickshire to meet the housing and care needs of Adults with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health.
 - (v) Supporting the Districts and Boroughs in their developing work regarding adaptations, home improvement agency services and moving forward with assistive technology. Assistive technology is in early stages of a strategy development but needs to

progress as another option for people to remain living in their own home safely.

3. The Council's Direct and Supporting Roles

3.1 Direct roles:-

- (i) Coordinating and ensuring delivery of Extra Care Housing Strategy and a Housing Strategy for Adults with Learning Difficulties. Work is well in hand, through the Care and Choice Accommodation Programme (CACAP) to reshape countywide provision of care accommodation options and services for all client groups, in order to provide increased choice and independence for customers through building and developing strategic partnerships. Plans are well advanced to deliver over 500 affordable new Extra Care Housing units for older people by 2013. Already, 64 units are complete at Briar Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon, 45 under construction at Farmers Court, Rugby, and a contract awarded for a further 21 units next to Attleborough Grange, Nuneaton. Also, preferred partners have been appointed to continue to deliver the growing programme for County Council-owned sites – housing21, Midland Heart and Bromford/Bloomsbury Consortium.

- (ii) Coordinating and ensuring delivery of Housing Related Support Services, through the Warwickshire Housing Support Partnership (previously known as the Supporting People Commissioning Body). As with the Extra Care Housing strategy, partnership working is well advanced in this area too, through the Warwickshire Housing Support Partnership, to commission and coordinate high quality housing related support services for those who need it in the right kind of housing across the County. A significant outcome of this so far has been the agreement of all partners to seek to develop a countywide Home Improvements service across all of Warwickshire, to assist older people in carrying through the home improvements they need to continue to live safely in their own homes, with a base service agreed for all areas and enhancements delivered, as required, to meet local/individual needs. Along with this, the partnership has secured additional funding for a Countywide Handyperson service and Housing Options service for older people. This has resulted in the partnership being given a national award for best commissioning of Home Improvement Agency services. A further significant outcome has been the ability of the partnership to make efficiency savings through value for money assessments and to re-invest these savings into services to meet identified need and gaps in services across the County. This is a clear example of the benefits of partnership working in practice and fits well with the Coalition Government's ideas on the Big Society.

3.2 Indirect/supporting roles:

- (i) Providing land for housing development, in exchange for nomination rights/securing wider Council objectives on sustainable communities/Housing and Support/Extra Care. **Appendix A** sets out a proposed countywide policy on land disposal at less than best value to facilitate the right kind of housing provision across Warwickshire. The Council owns a number of sites identified as potential strategic housing allocation sites. Furthermore the Council is increasingly receiving requests in its capacity as landowner to dispose of sites for smaller scale developments, in particular on the outskirts of rural settlements for affordable housing. Usually such proposals are for rural exception housing where there has been, in the past, little prospect of planning permission being granted for other development. This may change now, however, with the proposed move towards more “localism” and communities being enabled to make decisions on local housing and planning matters. We do not yet have definitive detailed information on how these proposals will work in practice and will be working to ensure that we can provide the required support to local support to communities, in partnership with the District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire. Other requests from Borough and District Councils include the disposal of Council land for temporary and permanent gypsy and traveller sites. This means of providing subsidy for affordable housing, by making land available for nominal sums, will become more important in the next few years, as direct funding for affordable housing becomes more difficult to secure.
- (ii) Supporting Warwickshire Districts/Boroughs in the development and delivery of the CSW Housing Strategy and in their funding discussions and negotiations with the HCA and in the development of the LIP in partnership with the HCA. Elected Members and senior staff have been fully involved in developing the CSW Housing Strategy through the CSW Forum. Working relationships and cooperation with and between District and Borough partners have improved considerably over the past year to eighteen months. Heads of Housing for the Districts and Boroughs now meet regularly together, with input/attendance from WCC, particularly through the County’s Housing Strategy Lead, and each District/Borough Head of Housing has taken on responsibility for a specific part of housing policy and development.
- (iii) The housing agenda is becoming increasingly important to this Council in terms of sustainable development and countywide planning policy. In particular, large proposed housing developments identified in Core Strategies informing draft Local

Development Frameworks offer significant opportunities for place shaping and development of public service infrastructure, looking at joint partnership working approaches on Total Place/Total Capital initiatives with the public, private and voluntary sectors, rising to the challenges presented by the Coalition Governments ideas on “localism” and the Big Society. The County Council could also, continuing on the “localism” and Big Society theme, become involved in innovative new ways of funding/providing affordable housing, in partnership with private developers; for example, as part of planning discussions on the Mast Site near Rugby. There are a number of ways that this could happen:-

- (a) working with Developers identified by AHCS Directorate in their Framework Agreement approach for Extra Care Housing, to provide general needs affordable housing on larger potential Extra Care sites, rather than considering agreements on individual sites.
- (b) looking with Developers at cross-subsidy between higher value sites and providing lower value/affordable housing elsewhere.
- (c) working with Developers on providing land at nil cost as subsidy for new models of provision, for example, rented housing with no grant, supported by higher rents on Housing Benefit (HB).

However, this last idea may prove not to be sustainable, as the Coalition Government is clearly committed to reduce the HB bill significantly.

Cabinet – 18 November 2010

Housing Policy

Glossary of Housing Terms

1. Social rented housing - The property is owned by the District or Borough Housing authority (Council housing), a Housing Association or registered social landlord and leased as an affordable rather than market rent. Tenants of Council housing have a right to buy social rented property.
2. Shared equity housing - Similar to social rented property but the occupier has an equity share in the property whilst leasing the remainder. The housing provider generally retains some equity interest in the property to ensure its continued use as affordable housing.
3. Low cost housing - The occupier purchases the property with a restriction on its use which limits value to less than an unrestricted market value.
4. Local Need housing - Similar to low cost housing, but the restriction on use is to satisfy criteria for local needs or a link to locality. Local need housing can be social rented, shared equity or low cost.
5. Key worker housing - Similar to Local Need but with an employment restriction.
6. Sheltered housing - Usually with an age restriction or for people with a disability. Usually social rented, but sometimes through private sale and/or equity sharing schemes. Residents have some access to assistance which may be off site.
7. Extra Care housing - Housing accommodation for older people and/or for people with specific needs. Can be social rented or low cost. Residents have the choice to access personal care provision on site together with other services and assistance. This is a housing model not a residential care model.
8. Specific Needs housing (Physical disability or mental / learning difficulties, including Young People) - Housing for people with special adaptations or specific needs. Residents may have access to communal facilities, personal care provision, together with other services and assistance.
9. Refuges - Housing accommodation for vulnerable people, usually families, grouped together with access to services and possibly communal facilities.
10. Shelters for homeless people – Similar to refuges, but generally for single people.
11. Homes for Life – Design standard and dwelling layout that allows easily for future adaptations due to age and/or disability.

12. Gypsy and traveller sites – Both temporary and permanent sites developed in conjunction with District and Borough Councils.
13. Secured by Design – Design standard and estate layout that focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and promotes the use of security standards.