

**REPORT OF**    **Leader & Chief Executive**  
**To:**            **Full Council**  
**Subject:**      **Housing Provision – Update Report**  
**Date:**          **29 January 2022**

**Reference:**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

For Members to receive an update Report on the Provision of Housing Project and to request match funding to help progress the Project further.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Members will recall that in relation to the action in the Council’s Strategic Plan to “*Investigate the feasibility of becoming a direct housing provider*” an Options Report was presented to Full Council on the 1 November 2021.

**2. REPORT**

Following discussion on the Options Report at the Full Council meeting on the 1 November 2021 members unanimously agreed to instruct officers:

- Review the process of viability assessment at Planning stage of planning applications that are submitted with less than policy compliant affordable housing provision.
- Undertake an assessment of land and buildings in the Council’s ownership and score with a site assessment tool the likelihood of a site being deliverable for housing and rank sites accordingly.
- Investigate funding opportunities to help with housing delivery i.e., from One Public Estate and Homes England.
- Arrange a Strategic session with Councillors using the results of the above recommendations to develop a ‘Strategic Housing Delivery Plan’ with an agreed model for delivery and our preferred partner(s).

As an update for Members on this project a high-level Action Plan has been drafted to ensure the delivery of this strategic priority. The Action Plan includes the following:

- Commenced the Review Process of Non-Compliant applications
- Affordable Housing SPD being drafted
- Independent Viability assessments are now appended to Plans Committee reports
- Strategic Viability Assessment added to the review of the Local Plan workplan
- The Head of Communities and Place has held initial discussions with Homes England, and these will be progressed further as this project develops.
- A meeting has been held with Teignbridge District Council to establish any learnings and best practice as they have started the provision of their own housing



- ARK consultancy has been contacted regarding their site assessment tool as have Mid Devon Council who are developing a tool in partnership with the LGA.
- We have commenced the review of our land holdings to establish a shortlist of potential sites. Once this has been completed a Councillor Workshop will be held to agree sites for full assessment.
- We have obtained GIS layers of all Torridge land and buildings registered with the Land Registry.
- A list of potential partners is being drafted for the Leader and Chief Executive to make initial contact.

This strategic priority has no agreed budget and requires a resource pot to enable some of the key actions to be delivered. At the end of 2021 Officers were successful in a bid to the Local Government Association's Housing Advisor Programme and have received a £25k grant to contribute to this resource pot. We are now seeking match funding from Full Council to ensure that sufficient funds are available, and actions can be completed within a satisfactory timescale.

### 3. **IMPLICATIONS**

#### Legal Implications

Partially covered in the initial Options Report more details will need to be covered once a delivery model has been agreed.

#### Financial Implications

This will need to be covered in detail once a delivery model and next steps are agreed however a £25k grant has been obtained from the LGA and members are requested to consider match funding this grant with a further £25k to establish a resource pot to help deliver this project as there is currently no budget for this work.

#### Human Resources Implications

Resources to deliver will need to be agreed once a delivery model and next steps are agreed.

#### Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

Partially covered in the initial Options Report and more details will be covered once a delivery model has been agreed.

#### Equality/Diversity

Not applicable

#### Risk Management

This will need to be assessed in detail once a delivery model and next steps are agreed.

#### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

This report is in accordance with the action of "Investigate the feasibility of becoming a direct housing provider" within the Council's Strategic Plan.

#### Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

No personal information

#### Climate Change

Included in the initial Options Report and further details will be developed once a delivery model has been agreed.



## Leader Views - Councillor Ken James

Members will see that a lot of work is being done to build on the Full Council decision of the 1 November to “Investigate the feasibility of becoming a direct housing provider”. There is no quick solution to this issue, and we need to go through the right steps to get to where we want to be. I’m really pleased that we have been successful in obtaining a £25k grant from the LGA and I would support us match funding this to ensure we have the resources and expertise to assist us progress this work.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This is an update for Councillors to show that the project is progressing and that we were successful in obtaining a £25k grant from the LGA’s Housing Advisors Programme and as there is currently no other Council budget for this project work Members are asked to consider match funding this grant with a further £25k to establish a resource pot to help deliver this project.

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended to:

- Note the content of this report
- Allocate £25,000 (match funding of the LGA Housing Advisor Programme Grant) to establish a resource budget to help progress this project further.

