



## Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission                      12 December 2024  
Executive                                      8 January 2025

Wards affected:                              All wards

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### Scrutiny review: Housing and homelessness

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Report of the Scrutiny Commission

#### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To present recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission to the Executive.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 The Executive supports the principle of provision of additional staffing to investigate empty properties and bring them back into use.

2.2 The Executive supports the principle of an increase in capacity and therefore expertise within the relevant team to benefit from opportunities to acquire S106 properties.

2.3 The Executive lobbies government in relation to:

- Section 106 sites: relating to affordable housing, engagement with registered providers, community infrastructure and viability
- Right to buy: restricting the sale of council properties to support the council in retaining housing stock
- Empty properties: funding to assist with bringing empty properties back into use
- Officer capacity and funding: funding for staffing to progress housing initiatives and requesting additional financial support for developing and acquiring council housing
- General: promoting a more coordinated approach to housing-related policies across government departments (for example, resettlement schemes, homelessness, prison discharge).

### **3. Background to the report**

- 3.1 At the overview & scrutiny member workshop in July 2023, housing and homelessness were identified as priorities for members to look at in more detail through the overview & scrutiny process.
- 3.2 A paper was produced for the Scrutiny Commission which outlined the key challenges in relation to housing in order to inform the review and a task and finish group was set up to undertake the review.
- 3.3 Councillors J Crooks, C Gibbens, Harris, Lambert, Surtees and Williams were appointed to the task and finish group, with Councillor Crooks appointed chair at its first meeting. The group met on four occasions to consider evidence and call witnesses.
- 3.4 The key findings of the review are contained in the attached report, along with recommendations, some of which were directed to officers and the remainder for the Executive.
- 3.5 The report was considered and endorsed by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 12 December and the recommendations within the report were agreed.
- 3.6 Recommendation 5.2 of the report requests that the Executive considers providing additional staffing to investigate empty properties and bring them back into use in order to alleviate some of the pressure on availability of housing. This recommendation seeks support from the Executive to explore provision of additional staffing and is not seeking approval for additional budgets at this time – this will be taken through the appropriate decision-making process when further work has been undertaken, should the Executive support the recommendation.
- 3.7 Recommendation 5.3 of the report requests that the Executive considers increasing capacity and expertise within the relevant team to benefit from opportunities to acquire S106 properties with the aim of increasing the availability of housing. This recommendation seeks support from the Executive to explore provision of additional staffing and is not seeking approval for additional budgets at this time – this will be taken through the appropriate decision-making process when further work has been undertaken, should the Executive support the recommendation.
- 3.8 Recommendation 5.5 of the report requests that the Executive lobbies the government in relation to:
  - Section 106 sites: relating to affordable housing, engagement with registered providers, community infrastructure and viability

- Right to buy: restricting the sale of council properties to support the council in retaining housing stock
- Empty properties: funding to assist with bringing empty properties back into use
- Officer capacity and funding: funding for staffing to progress housing initiatives and requesting additional financial support for developing and acquiring council housing
- General: promoting a more coordinated approach to housing-related policies across government departments (for example, resettlement schemes, homelessness, prison discharge).

#### **4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**

4.1 To be taken in open session.

#### **5. Financial implications**

5.1 None at this stage.

#### **6. Legal implications (ST)**

6.1 None.

#### **7. Corporate Plan implications**

7.1 This report supports the following aims within the corporate plan in relation to people:

- Increasing the availability of affordable housing
- Working to prevent all forms of homelessness.

#### **8. Consultation**

8.1 As part of its evidence gathering, the task and finish group spoke to officers from the relevant service areas and a local letting agent. More detail on this is provided in the attached report.

#### **9. Risk implications**

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 Whilst there are entries on the risk register associated with housing and homelessness, there are no specific risks resulting from this report.

## **10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications**

10.1 Whilst housing and homelessness has clear impacts on the community, the recommendations within this report seek improvements to help to address the issues.

10.2 There is no change in service proposed as part of this report.

## **11. Climate implications**

11.1 There are no climate implications as a direct result of this report.

## **12. Corporate implications**

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

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Background papers: None.

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