

# Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

## Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport

**CABINET**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**CAB14/163**

### **WEST SUFFOLK HOUSING STRATEGY** (Decisions Plan Reference: APR14/01)

#### **1. Summary and reasons for recommendation**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of consultation on the draft Housing Strategy, as attached at Appendix A, and seek approval for the Strategy to be adopted by Council.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommends to Council, the adoption the West Suffolk Housing Strategy, as contained in Appendix A to Report No CAB14/163.**
- 2.2 The Cabinet considers the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allocate part of the New Homes Bonus to community facilities and a report on the options for the use of the NHB be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.**

#### **Contact details**

Name  
Title

Telephone  
E-mail

#### **Portfolio holder**

Councillor Rona Burt  
Cabinet Member for Planning,  
Housing and Transport  
01638 712309  
[rona.burt@forest-heath.gov.uk](mailto:rona.burt@forest-heath.gov.uk)

#### **Lead officer**

Simon Phelan  
Head of Housing  
01638 719440  
[simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

### **3. Strategic priorities**

3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the West Suffolk Strategic Plan:

(a) Strategic priority 3: Homes for our communities

### **4. Key issues**

4.1 It is no longer a legal requirement for local authorities to have a Housing Strategy in place. However it is recognised that a strategic overview is necessary to assess how the authority delivers a range of housing and related assets to the community.

4.2 On 15 July 2014, Cabinet resolved that the draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy be approved for consultation. The draft strategy was displayed on the Council's web site and forwarded to a range of stakeholders for a five week consultation which took place between 17 July and 20 August 2014.

4.3 Two stakeholder workshops were held, one each in Bury St. Edmunds and Mildenhall, attended by 30 people. As well as the comments received during those discussions, 11 responses were received in addition to further comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 July 2014.

4.4 The new strategy takes account of latest government initiatives and good practice. The comments and suggestions received as part of the consultation process have been included where considered appropriate to do so.

4.5 At Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 July 2014, while considering the draft Housing Strategy, Members also discussed the New Homes Bonus (NHB) in detail. The Head of Housing explained that the NHB allocations received have been taken to earmarked reserves and its use was currently being considered as part of the delivering a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy and the delivery of the new Strategic Plan. However, Members felt that a proportion of the monies received from each new house built should go back into the community where the houses had been built.

4.6 Following the discussion the Committee recommended that Cabinet consider part of the NHB be allocated to community facilities and a report on the options for the use of the NHB be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

### **5. Other options considered**

5.1 No other options were considered.

### **6. Community impact**

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 The draft strategy covers a raft of housing issues as detailed in the document

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 A Diversity and Equality Impact Assessment been completed the impacts of which have been taken into account through the strategy.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 A Sustainability Impact assessment been completed the impacts of which have been taken into account through the strategy.

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None

7. **Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 The draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy has been the subject of an Overview and Scrutiny report (23 July) and consultation via two stakeholder workshops and wider consultation via stakeholders and the web site (see section 4.3 above).

8. **Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Actions within the report will be undertaken using existing staff resources and take account of the MTFs and funding arrangements of government and the Homes and Communities Agency.

9. **Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not adopting the West Suffolk Housing Strategy	Medium	Work with partners to produce realistic and deliverable action plans	Low

10. **Legal and policy implications**

10.1 No are no legal implications arising directly from the report

11. **Ward(s) affected**

11.1 All

12. **Background papers**

12.1 None

13. **Documents attached**

13.1 Appendix A - West Suffolk Housing Strategy 2015 – 2018, as amended following consultation.