

Minutes of Strategic Housing Working Group

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 11 October 2023, starting at 10.00 am
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Atkinson

M Robinson

In attendance: Strategic Housing Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors J Atherton and R Ray, the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning.

2 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

3 UPDATE ON LONGRIDGE COMMUTED SUM SCHEME

The Housing Strategy Officer informed Members that Onward Homes had now provided further information with regards to the development. The only thing outstanding is for them to provide a plan showing which units on the site the Council will be contributing towards

The Director of Economic Development and Planning and the Housing Strategy Officer have had discussions with the Council's legal department and the legal agreement for the grant is now in the process of being drawn up.

Members were happy with the progress being made and were very pleased that the development would provide a broad mix of houses including shared ownership, discounted market sale and rent to buy properties.

4 ASSISTED PURCHASE SCHEME PROPOSAL

Members were advised that the Council had some receipted s.106 off site affordable housing commuted sum monies from projects in Chatburn, Barrow, Chipping and Clitheroe amounting to £430,000. It had previously been agreed at Health & Housing Committee in March 2022 for this money to be utilised to deliver equity share options for first time buyers in those areas.

The Housing Strategy Officer canvassed a proposal for a scheme where the Council would offer first time buyers a deposit of up to £24,000 to purchase a property. The amount given would be converted into a percentage equity share of the house bought. The Council would register a secondary charge on the property and the percentage share would be recouped when the property is sold in the future.

Eligibility criteria for the scheme was suggested and would include:

- For first time buyers
- For a property with a value of up to £240,000 in the Ribble Valley with a Council tax band A-D.
- The maximum income per annum for a single purchaser would be £60,000; £80,000 for a couple.
- Maximum 3 bedroom properties if there are children, otherwise 2 bedroom without children.

Members discussed the above and felt that it would be beneficial to widen the scope of eligibility to include those who are first time buyers in their own right (so they could have previously bought as a property jointly with someone else).

Discussion took place around whether priority should be given to the residents in the Parishes where the s.106 monies have been received from i.e. Barrow, Chipping and Chatburn. However, it was noted that a small amount had been received from Chipping, and would be problematic to implement. The consensus was that the scheme should be open to the whole Borough.

It was noted that Cheshire East Council had run a similar scheme and advice had been sought from them. After 10 years, they do revisit the households and review their situations, with a potential for earlier repayment. Members felt that this system felt quite punitive and were not in favour of adopting this approach.

5 ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW PROPOSAL

It was agreed that there should be a separate working group to discuss the Housing allocation policy. Onward Homes would be invited to attend as they manage the waiting list on behalf of the Council.

6 AGREE HOUSING FORUM DATES

Officers are to make arrangements for the next Housing Forum to take place. Suggestions were made as to who could potentially attend, including Homes for England, a Registered Provider, a developer and a local agent.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that Officers would try to set up a meeting between Councillor Hirst, Councillor Atkinson and the Chief Executive of Onward Homes to discuss future use of their office building in Clitheroe.

The meeting closed at 10.54 am

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Jenny Martin .