

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 21ST JANUARY, 2019

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 5TH DECEMBER, 2018

“545 HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (REF) -

The Head of Building Services advised that the reference had been made to the Committee to seek Members’ views prior to the reference and report being returned to Cabinet. The recommendations of the Cabinet report were:

“(1) T H A T the new Housing Asset Management Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed as a draft document suitable for consultation.

(2) T H A T the Housing Asset Management Strategy be referred to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

(3) T H A T following the referral to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee in Resolution (2) above, any comments be considered and incorporated into the draft document as appropriate and the revised draft document be presented to Cabinet prior to tenant consultation.

(4) T H A T consultation on the draft document be undertaken with Housing tenants and tenant and residents groups.

(5) T H A T the Housing Asset Management Strategy be referred back to Cabinet for finalising upon receiving the views of the public consultation.

Reason for decisions

(1) To ensure the Council had a cohesive Strategy directing available resources for the Council’s housing stock; ensuring appropriate investment decisions.

(2) To provide an opportunity for Scrutiny to make any comments.

(3) To develop the draft Strategy document prior to tenant consultation.

(4) To allow service users to contribute and shape the Strategy prior to adoption.

(5) To agree the final document prior to adoption.”

The Officer advised that with the introduction of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards the Housing Investment Programme had been predominantly focused on investing in tenants homes and neighbourhoods, which directly contributed to the

Standard. Having now achieved the WHQS Standard, the Draft Housing Asset Management Strategy sought to set out the Council's forward vision for investment in the housing stock and included the development of new homes to meet the needs of both current and future tenants.

The Housing Management Strategy was an overarching statement of objectives, goals, issues, processes and action priorities for the next five years with the comprehensive Strategy linked to all relevant legislation, the Council's Corporate Planning documents and the 30 year HRA Business Plan. The strategy also took account of external influences on housing and housing demand.

Once agreed, the actions within the Strategy would be embedded into the Council's Corporate Performance Management Framework and the Strategy would be subject to review throughout its five year term.

The Officer added that staff had been working closely with Welsh Government to target the reduction in carbon emissions and although the Strategy did not set out expenditure involved it was necessary to establish the Local Authority's direction on matters going forward.

A Member referred to the supplementary document tabled at the Committee from the Head of Regeneration and Planning regarding an update on Disabled Facility Grant applications and asked for an update in context the Strategy. The Head of Building Services advised that, within the public sector, officers had noted an increase in disabled facility grant applications, however, as the supplementary document highlighted the private sector had seen a significant decrease in the number of referrals received. However, the main point in common was there was a new policy directed by Welsh Government which had a significant impact on the relevant statistics.

A Member drew the Committee's attention to Section 14 of the Strategy which specified the need for an additional 576 homes per year to mitigate the housing crisis in Wales and also that following the changes to the subsidy system during 2015, the Council was now in a position to commence a development programme to provide new Council housing resulting in 1,146 homes. The Member highlighted that these were both major challenges for the Council and queried how successful the Council had been in producing new properties in comparison to neighbouring authorities who appeared to have produced a larger amount of homes. As a secondary point, the Member queried whether the Council had an adequate land acquisition plan.

The Head of Building Services advised that he had visited neighbouring Local Authorities to observe their methods for producing new homes and despite authorities advertising a significant amount of new homes being created only 40% of the properties built would be Council owned. The Vale of Glamorgan Council already had a land acquisition strategy in place which stated that the local authority had approximately four years' worth of development land. However, it was premature to add this fact into the strategy. It was also important to note that the Council was currently third in comparison to neighbouring authorities and the Council was seeking to expand its development team to support the development work.

RECOMMENDED -

- (1) T H A T the Housing Asset Management Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the comments of the Committee regarding the Housing Asset Management Strategy be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure the Council has a cohesive Strategy directly available resources for the Council's housing stock, ensuring appropriate investment decisions.
- (2) To ensure Cabinet is aware of scrutiny comments prior to the Strategy going out to Tenant Consultation."