

Report to: **Executive**

Date: **27th January 2021**

Title: **Housing Crisis Update Report**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Judy Pearce - Homes**

Wards Affected: **all**

Urgent Decision: **Y** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: The report is for noting purposes.

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive notes the work undertaken to address the Housing Crisis and update set out in the report.

That the Executive approves the draft Homeless Strategy 2022-2027 for public consultation and stakeholder engagement.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In September 2021, the Council declared a Housing Crisis, and set out a range of activity it would be undertaking to tackle the issue. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Homes has requested that a standing item is included on the Leaders Executive Forward Plan to provide regular updates to the Executive and all Members.
- 1.2 This report will seek to inform Members of the following ongoing projects actions linked to the Housing Crisis and Housing Strategy:
 - i. Property Purchases under the Housing First funding programme
 - ii. Progress on the Homeless Strategy following All-Member consultation sessions

- iii. The Annual Rough Sleeper Count and arrangements for the outreach worker
- iv. An update on St Anns Chapel Housing Scheme
- v. An update on the SHDC owned brownfield site at Rope Walk Kingsbridge
- vi. A summary of new schemes completed in the last quarter.

2. Background

2.1 Property Purchase for Housing First

- 2.2 A 1-bedroom flat within the new development at Sherford has been reserved and exchange is anticipated in early February (subject to contract). The purchase price is £150,000 and the property is currently under construction with completion anticipated for Summer 2022.
- 2.3 This is the first of 4 approved properties to be purchased to deliver a housing first scheme for people who have, or are at high risk of, rough sleeping.
- 2.4 The property is a new build and as such, will meet all current building regulations and be ready for immediate occupation on completion. Furthermore, it is well connected to public transport and other essential amenities.
- 2.5 Progress in procuring the three further properties is challenging due to current market conditions. The Head of Housing is in dialogue with the programme lead at Department for Levelling Up and Communities (DLUC) who is aware of the difficulty in securing the 4 properties by the end of this financial year. This is not unique to the South Hams. The Council will most likely require and therefore request an extension of time to spend the funding.
- 2.6 These homes must be a good fit and the type and location of each property is specified to ensure a good sustainable match for intended residents.

2.7 Progress on the Homeless Strategy

- 2.8 Attached to this report is the draft homeless strategy 2022-2027(appendix 1) which, if the Executive agrees we will commence public and stakeholder consultation from the 2nd of Feb. Following this a final draft will be presented to members in the early spring with adoption from April 2022
- 2.9 Following the executive report of the 2nd December 2021, there was an all member workshop on the 6th January which detailed the approach to the strategy
- 2.10 The proposed drivers for the strategy are:
 - Prevent
 - Relieve

- Sustain
- Provide

2.11 The different types of customers have been identified as;

- Rough Sleepers
- Single & Couples Households
- Families
- People with additional needs

West Devon Members will be asked to approve public consultation at their hub meeting on the 1st of February and after this as it is a joint strategy it is anticipated we will commence public consultation and stakeholder engagement.

Annual Rough Sleeper Count & Outreach update

- 2.12 Every year all Local Authorities are required to submit a 'snapshot' estimated figure on the number of rough sleepers in the local area during a specified night between 1st October and 30th November 2021.
- 2.13 The Council submitted an estimate based on the number of people believed to be sleeping rough on the night of Monday, 8th November. It also conducted a 'snapshot' count in Totnes as the main hotspot for people sleeping rough.
- 2.14 The Council submits an estimate as the most accurate way of arriving at a number because the large geographic area of South Hams makes an actual count unrealistic. Instead, the Council works with partnership agencies such as the Police, Rough Sleeper Drop-In centres and Park Rangers to collate a figure based on verified sightings of rough sleepers or individuals we have very strong reason to believe were rough sleeping on the specified night.
- 2.15 The definition of a rough sleeper, for the purpose of the Government's estimate is as follows:
- People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").*
- 2.16 This year the Council's estimate was 2 people sleeping rough in the area. While this is an increase on last year's count of 1 this is still a significant decrease to the years prior to the current intensive approach to ending rough sleeping when the numbers could reach as many as 14.

2.17 The information gathered through this process helps the Council to ensure it gets the most accurate figure possible to report back to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and helps the Council to design future services.

2.18 The Council is currently in the process of bidding to retain these current vital services and will be looking to add to this in phase of bidding with the addition on an HMO for people who have a history or risk of rough sleeping, but have completed the Leap Pad programme.

2.19 St Anns Chapel Housing Development

2.20 On 25th November 2021, the Council approved the St Anns Chapel Housing Development, namely construction of the 8 Affordable Homes, 3 Open Market Units and 2 serviced plots (“the Project”), at a total project cost of £4.2 million.

2.21 Further to this decision, work is progressing to bring the project forward. This work includes:

- preparing the necessary application to Homes England for required grant funding,
- seeking approval of the Affordable Housing Scheme in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement with an increased number of Affordable Rental Units,
- discharging all pre-construction planning conditions,
- liaison with stakeholders and local community and
- Making all necessary contract awards necessary for the delivery of the Project.

2.22 Currently, it is anticipated work will commence on site in spring 2022.

2.23 Brownfield site at Rope Walk Kingsbridge

2.24 The Council owns a brownfield site which was formerly a Devon County day centre and was purchased with a view to development aligned to the Joint Local Plan (JLP) allocation for the site.

2.25 There is a housing need in Kingsbridge and the availability of private rented accommodation that is affordable is in extremely short supply (there was 1 x 2-bed property available on the 22nd December in the whole of Kingsbridge). Devon Home Choice currently has the following households registered for social housing in the TQ7 1 postcode

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Totals
Band A	0	0	0	0	0
Band B	7	4	2	1	14
Band C	1	3	7	4	15
Band D	38	6	4	1	49

Band E	36	16	8	2	62
Totals	82	29	21	8	140

- 2.26 The recent development at Applegate Park received on average 71 applications per property.
- 2.27 Officers are engaged in discussions with the local Members and the Town Council to ensure the vision for bringing forward this site is aligned.
- 2.28 Viability, programme, site & planning constraints and any design are yet to be considered.
- 2.29 The final proposal and business case will be subject to both Executive and Council approval.
- 2.30 **New Schemes Quarter 3 2021/22**
- 2.31 There have been 47 affordable properties completed this quarter including:
- 11 units of supported accommodation at Dartington,
 - 3 affordable rented and 3 shared ownership at Newton Ferrers,
 - 5 affordable rented and 4 shared ownership in Kingsbridge and
 - 21 shared ownership properties in Dartmouth.
- 2.32 Much has been made around challenging the affordability of shared ownership, and whilst the price of a majority share may be out of the reach of a number of people, shares start from 30%.
- 2.33 What this means is someone who wants to own their own home can start small and purchase incrementally, stair casing upwards to full ownership.
- 2.34 The changes to shared ownership, particularly over repair responsibility have meant this is now a viable option for a number of people who simply cannot afford to buy on the open market. In the past, some of these buyers would have chosen affordable rented tenures, adding to the pressure on the limited supply.
- 2.35 An example of recent properties sold or currently in conveyancing in the district are:

Scheme	% sold	Mortgage	Deposit	Rent (monthly)	Service charge (monthly)
Sherford 2 bed	50%	£105,000	£54,500	£290.38	£22.00

Sherford 2 bed	25%	£52,500	£10,000	£435.50	£22.00
Parsonage Farm – 1 bed	50%	£105,000	£52,500	£224.30	£26.50
Parsonage Farm – 1 bed	25%	£52,500	£42,500	£112.15	£26.50
Venn Farm – 3 bed	35%	£93,499	£4,501	£242.55	£47.50
Wrangaton 3 bed	40%	£104,500	£7,500	£277.20	£29.00
Wrangaton 3 bed	40%	£108,000	£6,000	£277.20	£29.00

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 These reports will be presented to the Executive at each of its meetings to ensure the opportunity for Members to be appraised of the work to date in tackling the housing crisis.
- 3.2 If agreed, public consultation can commence in early February of the draft Homeless Strategy.

4. Proposed Way Forward

That the Executive notes the update and continues to receive as a standing item on its agenda.

That the Executive also approve the draft Homeless Strategy for public consultation.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		As the report is for noting, there are no legal implications arising from this report.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		The first property purchase is for £150,000 as set out in Section 2.1. On 25 th November 2021, the Council approved the St Anns Chapel Housing Development, namely construction of the 8 Affordable Homes, 3 Open

		Market Units and 2 serviced plots ("the Project"), at a total project cost of £4.2 million. Other financial implications are as set out in the report.
Risk		There is a risk that the funding for the 4 units of accommodation for housing first will not be spent by the 31 st March 2022 because of the challenges in the housing market and the need to consider very specific accommodation and geographic areas. We continue to monitor this and are in regular contact with the Government specialist advisor.
Supporting Better Homes better Lives		Homes & Community Wellbeing
Consultation and Engagement Undertaken or Proposed		Public consultation as previously agreed in relation to the Homeless Strategy 2022-2027 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the Council's website and Survey Monkey • A stakeholders strategy consultation event • Consultation with targeted service users and groups
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impact
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		The new homeless strategy will be subject to an equality impact assessment
Safeguarding		No direct impacts
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct impacts
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Homeless Strategy 2022-2027

Background Papers:

None