

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	15 th October 2013
Report of:	Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Subject/Title:	National Housing Federation Campaign Backed by Central Government
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Don Stockton, Housing, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Cheshire East Council believes that housing provision must be representative of local communities, and development sites must accord with the needs and wishes of local people.
- 1.2 As such, the Council is committed to ensuring that the right homes are built in the right places, at the right prices in accordance with the views of local communities and stakeholders.
- 1.3 These impulses are shaping the formation of the Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan has adopted a pro-growth approach to housing, now the subject of further consultation, currently provisioning around 27,000 homes and meeting the Council's targets for the next five years. The Plan is also scrupulously designed to represent local people, to ensure that any housing developments align with the needs of Cheshire East constituents, are located appropriately, and will deliver improved outcomes for communities.
- 1.4 In light of the emerging Local Plan formulation, the Council wishes to reiterate and bolster our commitments to housing, expressed in the likes of our housing strategy 'Moving Forward'. The Council:
 - Recognises the national need for increased housing provision, and is concerted pro-growth with regards to housing – provided such growth is in the right places, of the right type, and at the right price in accordance with the needs of local people.
 - Will continue to promote housing options to achieve balanced and sustainable communities through a mix of property types and tenures.
 - Will ensure that Cheshire East residents have the opportunity to live in the local area at a price they can afford through the delivery of market and affordable housing.

- Will ensure decent homes across all types of tenure, maximising the use of our existing housing stock.
- Will meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents by ensuring access to housing options and appropriate housing support.
- Will meet the housing needs of our ageing population through good quality, adaptable housing and access to support services.
- Will promote and enable self-building in the Borough to give local people further control over the kinds of properties and development they want to see, and encourage communities to band together to create self-build projects.
- Will work to provide homes for key workers, so vital skills are retained in the Borough.
- Will facilitate the wide menu of housing products promoted by central government, enabling working families to realise the dream of homeownership. This includes intermediate rent, NewBuy, Help to Buy, and First Buy.
- Will look to address and reflect housing issues and needs unique to rural communities – for instance, capturing the need for affordable housing in rural areas and facilitating appropriate development.
- Will work with communities to ensure that housing unlocks the potential of local people regardless of where they live, promoting the Localism agenda and utilising housing to address health inequalities.
- Will deliver all of the above objectives in consultation with local people and in accordance with their identified needs, to ensure any housing development is appropriate and representative.

- 1.5 The 'Yes to Homes' campaign is promoted by the National Housing Federation and supported by central government officials such as the planning minister, Nick Boles MP. It aims to promote consultation and engagement with the local populace in order to develop the right homes, in the right places, at the right price in accordance with local need. As such, the campaign is deemed to align with Cheshire East's aforementioned housing commitments and ethos.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the report.

- 2.2 In line with the objectives outlined in the report, the Council wishes to formalise its support for the 'Yes to Homes' campaign, which promotes the engagement of the local populace in the development of the right homes, in the right places, at the right price.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Cheshire East is at a critical juncture in the delivery of its housing objectives. The Local Plan is being finalised and proposed development sites scrutinised prior to inclusion. At this stage, the Council wants to reinforce the outcomes it hopes to achieve through housing development. The guiding principles outlined in section 1.4 have informed, and will continue to inform, the proposition and assessment of housing developments.
- 3.2 The Council recognises the need to bolster housing provision to address national deficiencies. There is a recognised housing shortage across the United Kingdom, with only 9,600 new homes being built in the North West in 2011/12.¹ Rising house prices are debarring many people from home-ownership and driving them into the private rented sector, which is causing rents to rise along with demand.
- 3.3 Cheshire East is committed to improving this housing context locally, and is already playing a facilitative and active role in setting the growth agenda. This is reflected in the emerging Local Plan, which is inherently pro-growth and aims to deliver around 27,000 new homes in the Borough over its lifespan.
- 3.4 However, the Council is equally aware of the need to ensure that local people are best represented in any future housing developments. The Council is committed to ensuring that the right homes are developed in the right places, at the right price. This involves stimulating and encouraging engagement with local people via consultation, so that local views are best captured and reflected in any development.
- 3.5 In accordance with this objective, the Council wishes to commit its support to the 'Yes to Homes' campaign. The end goal of the campaign, in accordance with those of Cheshire East, is to create the right homes, in the right places, at the right price in accordance with the needs of the local community. Endorsed by central government, it aims to catalyse and capture the demand for housing across the country, ensuring that there is a balanced debate regarding any new housing developments. Cheshire East hopes to support the campaign to reinforce the organisation's desire to reflect and represent as thoroughly as possible the views of the local communities in new developments.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

¹ Communities and Local Government (CLG) Statistics

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

- 5.2 If the recommendations of section 2 are adopted, local ward members are encouraged to promote 'Yes to Homes' in their wards to capture the degree of local support for new housing, ensuring that any development best accords with the needs of the local community.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 Cheshire East's housing commitments complement and reinforce the objectives of the corporate housing strategy, as well as informing the emerging Local Plan core strategy and site allocations.
- 6.2 The 'Yes to Homes' campaign will form another element of the public engagement taking place as part of the Local Plan consultation and the Housing team's wider programme to foster awareness of, and support for, new housing.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no significant financial implications anticipated. Any resource commitments associated with support will be absorbed into existing capacity.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the Council acknowledging its support for the National Housing Federation scheme that is supported by central government.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Not applicable

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 'Yes to Homes' is a campaign co-ordinated by the National Housing Federation designed to empower those people who need homes across the country and counterbalance the concerns that often surround new housing propositions.
- 10.2 The National Housing Federation represents housing associations nationwide and seeks to drive initiatives for better housing. The 'Yes to Homes' campaign is one such initiative designed to ensure that the national need for housing is being captured and utilised to drive housing investment and growth.
- 10.3 The campaign hopes to make the need for new homes visible. It specifically targets Councils and Councillors to advocate new housing locally as well as represent those individuals who need it in development fora and plans.

Ultimately this is intended to present a balanced argument and progressive strategy for new homes.

- 10.4 The campaign will assist its advocates with information, data, and guidance to best capture and utilise support for new housing developments.
- 10.5 The campaign is not a commitment to guarantee new homes or approve all housing development planning applications. Rather, it is a promise to foster a more balanced debate, where those who need housing are encouraged, consulted, and represented.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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