

May 2021

Housing Development Framework

Briefing for All Elected Members

Dear Member,

The establishment of a Housing Development Framework was presented and approved by Cheshire East Cabinet in April 2020 and subsequently discussed at the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The invitation to tender was opened via the Cheshire East Chest on the 11th March 2021 and the deadline for submissions was 10th May 2021. This note provides further background information for members in relation to this framework to provide clarity and assurance

Why is Cheshire East Council establishing a Housing Development Framework?

Developing the right type of housing in the Borough in the right locations at the right price is a key objective of the Council. This is important so that the housing in the Borough meets the needs of existing residents and also attracts residents in the Borough, particularly those with the skills required to support our local businesses

Unlike many councils, Cheshire East Council does not own or manage housing since this housing stock was transferred to registered providers by the predecessor authorities

However the Council still retains the statutory responsibility to address housing need this includes:

- developing and maintaining a Local Lettings Policy which determines how social housing is to be let
- preventing and relieving homelessness

To fulfil these responsibilities, we have to rely on our partners to develop social housing. With the need for social housing increasing, it is the Council's duty to consider ways in which we can assist in increasing supply of the right type of housing in the Borough. We currently have over 8,900 applicants registered on Cheshire Homechoice for social housing (March 2021) and we receive on average 600 new applications each month. Over the last 12 months 1394 properties were available for allocation, which demonstrates that need is far outstretching supply.

In addition to working with our partners the Council is also able to influence the delivery of housing through the planning process. Typically, housing developers are required to allocate 30% of their housing developments for the provision of affordable housing, which is secured through the S106 process.

Registered Housing Providers also develop affordable housing on sites which they have acquired.

However, the Council has seen that there is the case for further intervention in the housing market so that it can influence the design, location, tenure and style of housing to meet the many needs of our local residents.

Therefore, there are a number of benefits to the framework, which gives the Council the ability to:

- Contribute towards the housing supply across the Borough in order to address identified housing need, including specialist housing provision and older persons housing provision.
- Enable the Council to influence the type of housing and tenure developed on Council land, which can include specialist housing, older persons, rented and market housing.
- Support our economic ambition to increase the levels of working age professionals living in the area.
- To reduce the current use and cost of temporary accommodation.
- Have the potential to provide a revenue stream for the Council as opposed to a one off capital receipt.

How would the Housing Framework work?

A Housing Development Framework is an agreement put in place with a selected number of Housing Providers/Developers to enable the Council to dispose of identified land assets in their ownership for the provision of housing.

A framework agreement is established through a procurement process which once established enables the Council to conduct mini competitions for the development of individual or packaged parcels of Council owned land.

The agreement lasts for a period of 4 years, in line with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, however the Council do not have to provide a guarantee of the volume of sites to be procured through this route nor be contractually locked into this arrangement should a more viable alternative route be identified.

Will the Council be disposing of Public Open Space?

We are predominantly looking at brownfield and strategic land holdings for the purpose of the framework. Local Plan policies seek to protect and enhance open space provision. Careful regard will be had to planning policies, whether they relate to those protecting open space or other planning matter relevant to a site, in deciding which areas of land to include in the framework. Early discussion with the Planning team will therefore be an important part of this process.

Will any scheme require Planning consent?

The selected partner from the framework will be required to go through the same planning process as any normal applicant. They will be required to go through the pre

application process and submit a planning application in the same way. It will be for the Planning Committee to determine if planning consent is to be granted.

Do you know yet which sites are going to be put through the Framework?

The Council has a number of assets including buildings and land, however the sites which will go through the framework will only be considered if they are no longer required for operational purposes by the council and have been declared surplus. These sites are predominately Brownfield sites for example former care homes, car parks, schools and offices. Consideration is also being given to sites which have already been identified within the Local Plan (Allocated sites). What we can give confidence in, is that a site will not be progressed without consideration to a number of Planning policies including the Affordable Housing Policy (SC5) and Rural Exception Policy (SC6)

How are Elected Members to be informed which sites will go through the Framework?

The intention is to keep Elected Members updated on the progress of the Framework via the new Committee system. Elected Members will be made aware of the sites which have been selected for the Framework.

What type of housing will be developed?

Consideration will be given to a number of factors when determining what type of housing will be required on each site. We will consider the housing needs for the area, taking into account housing waiting list data, the housing needs of young professionals seeking access to the housing market and local families.

Consideration will also be given to the need for specialist provision taking into account the data within the Vulnerable and Older Persons Housing Strategy and also the site as well for example can an existing building be converted. Some sites will provide a mix of tenures, including open market sale or private rented provision.

The use of Section 106 payments.

Consideration will be given to the use of Section 106 payments which have been received in lieu of affordable housing. The use of payments are outlined within the Section 106 agreements and can only be used to provide affordable housing. If a payment has already been allocated to a scheme then they will not be considered.

Where can I access further information?

If you have any further questions please contact Karen Carsberg – Head of Housing

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