

**Executive Response to the Interim Report of the
Adoptable Estates Task Group**

Purpose

1. To present the response of the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste to the Interim Report of the Adoptable Estates Task Group. (The report was endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on 9 December 2014.)

Foreword

2. The Task Group was established prior to the elections in May 2013 based on concerns over the conditions attached to planning approvals being open to abuse or being ignored to the detriment of council activity, owner- occupiers and tenants. This is manifested in the forms of: defaulting on or being slow to pay S106 money and failing to complete the installations of lighting, sewage and other infrastructure to a satisfactory standard for adoption resulting in long delays whilst problems are resolved.
3. It was agreed that the Task Group would continue as a legacy item at the June 2013 meeting of the Environment Select Committee. Also, it was recognised that the Task Group's work was not totally independent of the CIL Task Group; Cllr Wayman sits on both Task Groups.
4. The Task Group agreed their terms of reference to be:
 - To examine the regulations attaching to the drafting and the imposition of conditions;
 - To examine the contractual arrangements made with Wiltshire Council;
 - To review the enforcement processes and recommending any desirable changes;
 - To review the timing of and protocols for adoption, including discussions with utilities on the objectives they have for the adoption process;
 - To review other councils' scale of success in development adoptions and examining their protocols to identify any improvements possible to the Wiltshire Council process (Cornwall and Shropshire as large unitary authorities were suggested, specific questions to be developed).

5. The Task Group had the following membership:

Cllr Tony Deane (Chairman)
Cllr Bridget Wayman
Cllr Mollie Groom
Cllr Peter Edge
Cllr Jose Green
Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr Julian Johnson
6. On 9 December the Environment Select Committee endorsed the Task Group's final report, including the following recommendations:
 - I. That due to the conflicting evidence presented to the Task Group that the Task Group is stood down in lieu of further investigation and review of the process by the service;
 - II. That the review is completed by a suitable individual or small team who is able to take a fresh and somewhat impartial view. This may include consideration of best practice utilised elsewhere, the use of bonds, the use of New Homes Bonus monies as a means of funding the streamlining and rationalising of the planning process; a revised template for s106 agreements and the need for additional officer training;
 - III. That the Task Group reconvene once the review has been undertaken to support its progression and implementation.
7. The Committee resolved to refer the Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 17 February.

Response to the Task Group's recommendations

8. The following response was received from the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste:

I have noted the Task Group recommendations and accept an internal review should be arranged and will arrange for the findings to be reported back to the Task Group to enable them to support its progression and implementation.

Next Steps

9. The Task Group will monitor and report back to the Committee on progress made on the internal review as required.

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