

Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 17 November 2016	AGENDA ITEM NO: 5
Report title: Task & Finish Panel – Housing	
Author: Jenny Barker, Bicester Delivery Manager	
Tel: 01295 221828 Email: jenny.barker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the work identified by the Task and Finish Panel with regard to housing, for the Board to consider, and agree the work to be undertaken.

2. Background

- 2.1 Nationally the amount of new housing being delivered is below the rate that has been identified as necessary and the government has been seeking opportunities to increase housing delivery. The Government's response to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Built Environment Nov 2016 states;

There is no doubt that for decades we have been building insufficient homes to meet our country's needs and that therefore we must increase the supply of new housing. Improving the housing market remains a top priority for the Government. We are clear that we will continue our work to ensure everyone has a safe and secure place to live and to devolve planning and housing powers to enable local authorities and communities to shape the development of their own area.

- 2.2 The Garden Cities programme is one of the measures identified to support housing delivery and in the context of Bicester Garden Town capacity funding has been provided with a view to supporting work to speed up housing delivery.

- 2.3 The Cherwell Local Plan identifies the level of housing growth in Bicester to 2031. The plan identifies 10,129 to be delivered within the plan period 2011 - 31. Land has been identified for 1300 new homes some of which could be delivered beyond the current local plan period. The Government is encouraging the Council to look for mechanisms to increase housing delivery.

- 2.4 The impact of housing delivery failing to keep pace with demand is higher house prices and rents making it more difficult for people to get on the housing ladder, affecting individuals, families and communities. The National Housing strategy (2011) states;

Housing should provide a secure foundation for individuals to live the lives they want to live. Finding the right home, in the right place, can be an essential platform for people seeking to support their families and sustain work.

Housing is an increasingly important asset: families can draw on the wealth stored in housing to open up new opportunities – such as education, or helping the next generation to secure their own homes.

But too many families struggle to meet their housing needs. It has become too difficult for many households who wish to be homeowners to secure the mortgage they require. Many households face rising rents, and social housing is not providing the right support to the people who need it most.

And the slow pace of new housing supply means that we are missing out on economic growth and on jobs.

- 2.5 In Bicester average house price is £335,987, compared with £365,945 in the South East and £273,453 in Banbury. Average income is £30,305 so the cost of the average house is over 11 times average income. Rental cost also continue to increase and average costs for Bicester are set out in the table below;

Bicester average—£1,051				
Property Size	1	2	3	4
Average Rent per month	£731	£933	£1,150	£1,501
LHA rate	£548.67	£684.64	£816.34	£1,079.14
Difference between average rent and LHA rate	£182.33	£248.36	£333.66	£421.86

Therefore there is continuing pressure on affordability of housing in Bicester.

3. Task

- 3.1 The Task & Finish panel identified the following tasks;

The rate of housing delivery will be reported to the SDB so the Board is aware of progress against targets. It is anticipated that this will be done annually.

As at March 2016, 956 properties had been delivered within the local plan period, leaving 9,173 properties remaining to be built by 2031. Of these 3,414 have planning permission but are not yet built. In addition resolutions to grant planning permission have been taken on applications for 4,326 dwellings, but legal agreements are not yet complete, so permissions are yet to be issued. In addition planning applications for strategic sites are currently with the Council for determination for a further 1680 dwellings. There is therefore sufficient land allocated to meet the housing requirement, significant planning permissions to support delivery and developer interest in securing planning permission on other allocated sites. This is summarised at appendix A. Therefore within Bicester the progress of sites through planning and moving into delivery is key to increasing housing delivery.

The progress of each strategic allocation will therefore be reported to the SDB so the Board is aware of progress but also so that the Board can consider if there is any action it or its members can take to progress delivery. It is anticipated this will be reported every 6 months.

Small sites are periodically identified that may be suitable to deliver housing. These small sites can make a valuable contribution to housing delivery and in addition can provide opportunities to tidy up sites and remove problems and deliver different types of housing. Examples of such

sites are garage courts that are under used and sites no longer needed for its current purpose such as the Magistrates Court sites.

Where sites are identified the Task and Finish panel will explore with appropriate partners the potential for the sites to be used for housing and how they might be brought forward. The Board can identify sites and for any sites identified the outcome of investigation will be reported to the Board. It is anticipated this will be reported following the identification of site(s) as appropriate.

National changes to housing policy and funding opportunities

There have been significant changes to planning policy during the course of the last few years as the Government has sought to increase the delivery of housing. This has included measure such as neighbourhood planning, increased permitted development for changes of use to residential properties and increased focus on the time it takes to process planning applications. A further white paper on housing is anticipated in November which again will look at increasing housing delivery.

An outline of significant changes in policy or legislation that impact on housing delivery will be reported to the Board. Funding opportunities will also be reported to the Board. Reporting will be at the next available Board meeting.

4. Recommendations

The Board are asked to consider the tasks identified and confirm they meet the requirements of the Board or identify other work they wish to see undertaken.