

South Lakeland DC Housing Advisory Group

Minutes to Meeting Held 10.00 a.m. – Wednesday 29th July 2015

Town Council Chamber, Kendal Town Hall

1. Welcome & Apologies

Present: Cllr Heidi Halliday - SLDC
Tony Whittaker – SLDC
Julie Jackson – SLDC
Dave Pogson – NPS Group
Cath Purdy – SLH
David Stubbs – SLH
Martyn Nicholson – Russell Armer Homes
Martin Nugent – Story Homes
Dan Hudson – SLDC
Carl Lis – YDNPA
Elsa Brailey – Home Group
Paula Allen – LDNPA
Greg Denwood – Two Castles HA
Elaine Glennon – South Lakes Housing
David Peters – CALC
Andy Lloyd – CRHT
Jayne Potts – CRHT
Dai Howells – Progress Housing

Apologies: Anne-Marie Wilmot (Impact HA)
Graham Hale (CCC)
Michael Barry (CCC)
Ian Storey (Storey Homes)

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. JJ reported 37 people have been assisted to downsize, there is one organisation still to respond.

DH reported that CIL events have taken place and SLDC had received applications for exemptions already.

3. South Lakeland Housing Strategy (Presentation and Discussion) – Tony Whittaker, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager. Presentation attached.

Following the presentation, members raised the issue of the need for greater flexibility. The use of various low cost home ownership schemes were put forward as options to improve flexibility. The group agreed it was in everyone's best interests to work together for better delivery.

The group discussed the importance of accurately measuring housing need in rural areas. It was agreed that the Council and LDNPA need to work together to consider new ways of assessing need.

HH spoke about the need to engage with people (particularly young people). The evidence could be distorted because people weren't coming forward for housing, as they assume they would not qualify. More needs to be done to encourage people to register with Cumbria Choice.

Targeting specific groups was discussed.. It identified that there were barriers making it difficult for single people to buy. The issue of older people wanting to downsize but being unable to because of a lack of suitable properties, was also raised.

The group then discussed housing need from a wider community perspective. GD stated that the local economy and infrastructure are crucial. A range of housing products were needed to facilitate economic growth including executive homes and keyworkers homes. It was noted that the definition of the term keyworkers was vague and needed clarification. Supporting economic growth by providing a wide range of housing as opposed to targeting just keyworkers was agreed.

JJ explained the definition of "extra care" as being, half way between residential care and sheltered housing. Residents live in self-contained units usually with a care team on site and communal space is provided. CCC have commissioned some research into extra care needs to update the last study undertaken in 2009.

TW informed the group that there had been a change in disabled adaptation funding. It used to come to district councils, it now goes to CCC. They passed on the full amount this year but there is no guarantee that they will do the same next year.

A discussion took place about the vacuum of evidence regarding housing need for supported housing and for disabled adaptations. TW advised that Supporting People used to do statistical needs analysis and it is difficult to measure. JJ suggested that evidence is available through the JSNA and this could be used along with evidence from the Central Access Point run by Supporting People.

TW summarised that we need to provide a range of housing types and tenures suitable to the evidenced housing need. A balanced mix of properties is required for economic growth and viability.

Targets - DH informed the group that SLDC are allocating above household growth to accommodate additional economic growth needs.

Improving standards – modest take up of the landlord accreditation, more work needs to be done to promote this with incentives planned.

and decided it wasn't for them, they have been offering cavity wall insulation.

TW informed the group of the key targets including the introduction of the affordable homes for sale target he asked the group to email him with ideas for specific targets.

ACTION: TW to take account of the views of the Group when amending the draft Strategy.

4. Low Cost Housing Ownership Issues Report – Tony Whittaker, Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager.

TW – There has been no increase in the set affordable house prices for over 5 years. A price increase could help with viability and scheme deliverability. An increase would need to go to cabinet. The prices increase proposed would be by

£5000 per property size. It was proposed that another way to increase the prices fairly would be by a percentage, so that all types went up equally.

TW – SLDC is also to consider discounted shared ownership model as well to give as mixture of tenures and at different models.

MN – said the increase would be welcomed by developers.

PA – why do SLDC use the median figures and not the lower quartile figures? TW responded that the rest of the country uses the median figures, which allows comparison between SLDC and other councils. JJ said the lower quartile were more likely to rent or choose shared ownership.

TW – is there support for raising prices? The group agreed.

Bungalows -. The group agreed that bungalows needed to be considered on a scheme by scheme basis and don't rule anything out. Need to be flexible.

Affordable Price Definition – It was agreed that the proposal to close the loop-hole in the present model agreement should be closed and amended accordingly.

ACTION: TW to take account of the Group's views when reporting to Cabinet.

5. Government Budget Implications

CP explained that RP's have intended and planned increases and the rent reduction will have a cumulative effect on the capacity for improvements and community initiatives. GD agreed that plans will have to be adjusted and incomes revised, the scales of development programmes are also likely to be affected, stopping organisations expanding, reviewing less viable schemes and not doing marginal schemes.

HH – RTB will impact on generations to come, with some rural communities being unable to replace right to buy homes as there are no land allocations in these areas.

The RTB has the potential to be devastating, but there are no details as yet so it will all depend on the detail to come.

6. Any Other Business

PA informed the group that LDNPA are taking their Housing Provision Document to September Committee.

MN raised highlighted concerns over the CCC Sustainable Drainage Consultation, claiming it goes beyond national standards for the industry.

7. Next Meeting: 27th November 10am. Kendal Town Hall.