

Title of Report:	Affordable housing
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	21 October 2014

Purpose of Report: To introduce to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission the terms of debate for the examination of the arrangements for affordable housing.

Recommended Action: To conduct scrutiny and make recommendations as appropriate.

Commission Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Brian Bedwell (0118) 942 0196
E-mail Address:	bbedwell@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Nick Carter
Job Title:	Chief Executive
Tel. No.:	01635 519101
E-mail Address:	ncarter@westberks.gov.uk

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 20 May 2014 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission agreed that it would review the process for delivering affordable housing.
- 1.2 This report sets out the context of the review in order that the Commission might carry out its examination of the subject.

2. Scope of the review

- 2.1 The topic was proposed for scrutiny by Councillor Tony Vickers. His submission as considered by the Commission is shown at Appendix A.
- 2.2 The minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2014 record:

Affordable Housing Process

Councillor Tony Vickers requested that the process for obtaining and delivering affordable housing within new developments, using Parkway as a case study, be added to the Commission's work programme.

Following discussion at, and also after, the previous meeting of the Commission, Councillor Vickers had reviewed the scope of his suggestion and amended it to request consideration of the process by which affordable housing is agreed and delivered, rather than scrutiny of planning policy. Councillor Vickers wished the Parkway development to be used as an example as the money invested by the Council in the development had shown no return benefit to the local population. Councillor Vickers added that it would be necessary to review how CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) related to this process.

Councillor Webster agreed that the process for delivering affordable housing would be a suitable topic for scrutiny, but did not wish it to include a review of how the Parkway development was handled. Councillor Webster believed that the review should focus on improvement for the future rather than unpicking past actions.

The Chairman clarified that it was not intended that the Parkway development would be discussed, and that the focus would be on the system and how it was operating to the benefit of West Berkshire residents.

Councillor Jeff Brooks explained that by reviewing some details of the Parkway development lessons could be learnt for the future.

Councillor Hunneman told the Commission that there were one or two sizeable developments expected in his ward, and it would therefore be beneficial if this scrutiny could be undertaken soon.

The Commission agreed to add this item to the work plan.

3. Conduct of the review

3.1 To enable the Commission to appropriately examine the process for the delivery of affordable housing, the following officers will be in attendance at the 21 October meeting:

- (1) Nick Carter, Chief Executive
- (2) June Graves, Head of Housing
- (3) David Holling, Head of Legal Services
- (4) Gary Lugg, Head of Planning
- (5) Bryan Lyttle, Planning and Transport Policy Manager
- (6) Gary Rayner, Development Control Manager

3.2 The following aspects of the topic will be covered:

- The policy framework
 - Housing policy (to include its demand and the differing forms of 'affordable housing')
 - Planning policy (national and local)
- The planning approval and adoption process
 - The application process (including pre-apps and consultation with the Housing Service)
 - Viability (the National Planning Policy Framework and local process, including the use of consultants, and decision making)
 - Legal agreements
 - Enforcement
- Parkway
 - Policy vs the approved scheme and why there were variations
 - The use of S106 funding
 - The legal agreement

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the Commission conducts scrutiny and makes recommendations as appropriate.

Appendices

Appendix A Scrutiny topic request form