



Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23rd April 2024

Item

Public



New Housing Developments Task and Finish Group Action Plan update

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Chris Schofield		

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny committee an interim update on the progress being made on the action plan agreed at the meeting on 9th November 2023. The review period was 12 months.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Task and Finish group evolved from a Place Scrutiny committee discussion regarding the quality of housing development in Shropshire. Concern was raised primarily regarding poor internal finishings, lack of good quality open space provision and the lack of timely adoption of access roads to properties. Members wanted to explore with officers where responsibility for these issues sat and what influence they may have over improving the quality of housing developments, consequently improving the lives for occupiers of new homes in Shropshire.
- 2.2. The review concluded with a decision for officers to report back to the committee with an action plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the committee note the progress being made on the agreed action plan which is highlighted in red on Appendix A.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. There are no human rights or equalities implications as a result of this report.
- 4.2. The work of the task and finish group and the subsequent action plan continues to provide the opportunity to increase members and the public's understanding of the role and influence the Council has in areas such as building control, for example, Shropshire Council's Building Control service is in direct competition with the private sector.
- 4.3. It provides an opportunity to strengthen the role of planning services in ensuring new residential developments feature well-designed open spaces which improves the appearance of the developments, but also enhances the health and well-being of residents living in these areas.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. There are no specific climate change implications arising from the recommendation. However, when implementing the action plan, officers should also set out whether there are any impacts on climate change because of their suggested course of action. In particular, there is the opportunity through the improved communications for Building Control to share the requirements for developments to produce significantly less CO₂ emissions to meet the governments targets on net zero, which is an important step for the industry ahead of the Future Homes and Buildings Standard in 2025. It is better to build in the efficiencies within the initial design rather than retrofit later.

7. Background

- 7.1. The task and Finish group considered a number of concerns and complaints about poorly designed developments and the impact they were having on creating attractive places for our residents to live. A list of issues were gathered and the review which involved members, officers and developers gave an opportunity to gain a better understanding of roles and influence and how collectively we can tackle some of the difficult issues to improve the environment. This also included the construction of homes and explored how building control works so that this was better communicated to residents.

- 7.2. The findings of the task and finish group resulted in a list of recommendations that were approved by Cabinet on 19th April 2023 and an action plan was approved later in the year.
- 7.3. Cabinet required the progress on the action plan to be reported back to Scrutiny committee 12 months from the date of approval, ie. November 2024.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. Therefore, officers will continue to progress the action plan and report back to Scrutiny committee in November 2024.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Report of the Housing Development Completion Task and Finish Group Feb 2023 to Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Housing Development Completion Task and Finish Group 19th April 2023 to Cabinet

Report of the Housing Development Completion Task and Finish group 9th November 2023 to Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Local Member: Cllr Chris Schofield – Portfolio Holder for Planning

Appendices

Appendix A – Action Plan