



Report of the Chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Policy Development Committee

Cabinet – 17 January 2019

Co-operative Housing

Purpose:	The report provides an update on the work undertaken to date by the Economy and Infrastructure Policy Development Committee supporting future Co-operative Housing initiatives and asks for approval of the policy.
Policy Framework:	Council Constitution.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Cabinet approves the Policy; 2) Cabinet approves any subsequent perusal of future expressions of interest resulting from its publication.
Report Author:	Geoff Bacon
Finance Officers:	Jayne James / Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Catherine Window

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 2016 Welsh Government has made a commitment to build 20,000 homes during the lifetime of the Government. It has made a housing pact with Community Housing Cymru, the trade body for housing associations in Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association about how to do this.

The pact includes potential development of Co-Operative Housing. The Welsh Government provides some capital funding for the development of affordable rented housing and low cost home ownership products, and is further exploring its loan (as opposed to grant) funding programmes to enable available funding to go further.

What this means is that viable co-operative and community-led housing schemes of a variety of types and tenures are likely to receive Welsh Government support.

Swansea Council is committed to playing a role in supporting such developments within the county as per the current Corporate Plan and Manifesto commitments. See **Appendix A** - Summary paper submitted to PDC on 8th March 2018.

2. Activity to Date

- 2.1 Swansea Council has consulted with the Wales Cooperative Centre, and local social housing landlords on the introduction of such a policy. All parties have welcomed the idea and if approved would be the first in Wales which could be used as a best practice document.
- 2.2 There has been a recent approach from a small public group who have expressed an interest in setting up a 'Grass Roots' community led scheme on Council owned land. Discussions are continuing.

3. Draft Co-Operative Housing Policy

- 3.1 A policy has been drafted (**Appendix B**) to set the parameters around how Swansea Council will offer support to Co-Operative proposals.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 4.2 An EIA has been carried out for this project and is attached as **Appendix C**. The impact has been determined as low priority and as such, a full EIA is not required at this stage. If approved by Cabinet, we will seek advice

from the Access to Services Team as each public expression of interest is received.

All submissions will need to demonstrate consideration of equity amongst the community concerned, treating people fairly, according to their needs.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: 'None'

Appendices:

Appendix A: Summary Report to PDC – 8th March 2018

Appendix B: Draft Co-Operative Housing Policy

Appendix C: EIA Screening Form