

HotSW Joint Committee

Meeting date – 12th July 2019

Housing Task Force – Continuation and Membership

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report recommends the continuation of the Joint Committee's 'Housing Task Force' and seeks member nominations to that group following recent political changes.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Joint Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Confirm the need to renew the Housing Task Force in light of significant changes in membership following the local elections in May 2019.
- (b) Seek nominations from Joint Committee members to join the task force.

3. Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure member involvement in the ongoing work related to the housing theme, and to continue to utilise all available political influences in seeking to deliver support for our desire to see quality housing growth delivered across the Joint Committee area.

4. Background

- 4.1 There is a growing sense of frustration that the solutions to a number of the issues holding growth back are not locally-achievable, and that while councils are doing everything they can to address these blockages, there is a limit to what can be achieved without the support (and where necessary, intervention) of government departments and agencies.
- 4.2 The Joint Committee has recognised housing as a priority objective to try and address issues of quality, delivery, and increasing productivity; to deliver the high-quality housing that is needed, and to try and find an avenue to engage with government at a meaningful level. As stated by a previous Chair of the Housing Task Force, this is about nothing less than unlocking and unleashing the economic potential of our area and the quality housing growth needed to provide for our communities of the future.

- 4.3 On 29th March 2019 a report covering the acceleration of housing delivery in the Heart of the South West was presented to the Joint Committee. This agreed recommendations that covered:

The pursuance of an area-based package to accelerate housing delivery including:

- a. Resourcing of a strategic delivery team (capacity funding)
 - b. A major infrastructure delivery fund to unlock growth
 - c. A small schemes liquidity fund to bring forward stalled sites
- 4.4 It was further agreed that the Housing Task Force would use this as the basis for seeking to negotiate with government on the tenants of a housing deal or bespoke package that would see housing delivery accelerated across the HotSW area.
- 4.5 The task force was instructed to engage with both MHCLG and Homes England on this basis, and to report back to the Joint Committee with updates and/or progress.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The letter to the Housing Minister was sent on 26th April 2019. We have yet to receive an acknowledgement or response.
- 5.2 A reminder was sent to the MHCLG Permanent Secretary on 26th June 2019. We have yet to receive an acknowledgement or response.
- 5.3 The letter of 26th April 2019 also went to the Chief Executive of Homes England. We have yet to receive an acknowledgement or response.
- 5.4 A refreshed Housing Task Force will clearly need to consider how best to approach this challenge in future.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 None identified

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 None identified

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 None identified

9. Business Risk

- 9.1 The support of the relevant government departments and agencies is considered vital to achieving many of the aims of the Joint Committee and its constituent members.

10. Other Implications: Health and Well-being; Health and Safety;

Sustainability; Community Safety; Privacy

10. None identified
1

11. Background papers

11.1 '*Acceleration of Housing Delivery in the Heart of the South West*' report of 29/03/19
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=357&MId=848&Ver=4>