

**Funding Approval for Indicative Affordable Housing Programme E2663**

This subject and a version of this paper came to the meeting of the PDS Panel for Housing and Major Developments on 27 May 2014, where it was generally welcomed by panel members.

This panel was a good place to discuss the proposals because the measures recommended in it clearly need to be seen in the wider context of housing delivery in Bath and North East Somerset, and the difficulties experienced in a number of the current major projects in getting adequate amounts of affordable housing built.

As a member of the General Development Control committee it is a matter of great frustration to me and other committee members that there are 4000 unbuilt dwellings which have received planning permission since 2007, and of course we also have the issue of meeting the Core Strategy targets in due course. However, the panel was informed that this measure would not ease the situation.

It seems it is going to be a developer-led initiative because, I quote from the Draft PDS Minutes: 'it was about pursuing developments when approached by partners.'

Personally I would like to see our officers being more pro-active in identifying bottlenecks and taking the initiative to unblock things – which I guess might be the argument behind the Radstock item later. Nevertheless the panel welcomed the paper. Obviously if Council votes a sum of money to aid the delivery of affordable housing, and decides to do this by enhancing the partnership with Recognised Providers, then there has to be an efficient way of doing this, and spending the agreed council funding in an accountable and transparent way. The proposals in the paper would seem an acceptable way of doing this, as the PDS panel said. Delegated authority in this way is the only practical solution.

My question concerns scrutiny: I would hope that there will be a mechanism for this exercised by the Resources Panel. I am also concerned because repeatedly (and nationally) developers weasel out of their commitment to deliver affordable housing so that we may end up missing the Core Strategy quotas. We may also find ourselves struggling financially if the New Homes Bonus ends.