

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E 3424

Adoption of First Homes Interim Position Statement

Decision maker/s	Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing
The Issue	<p>First Homes are a discounted market housing product (discounted by 30%) which emerged from Government in a Written Ministerial Statement. This proposed that 25% of housing on qualifying sites should be provided as First Homes as a form of affordable housing and these would replace shared ownership tenure homes in B&NES.</p> <p>Evidence based analysis of recent shared ownership purchase data, showed that nearly all households who purchased a shared ownership home would not have been able to purchase it, had the tenure been First Homes. To address this, an Interim Position Statement on First Homes has been prepared which will act as guidance until the new Local Plan is adopted</p>
Decision Date	4 th February 2023
The decision	<p>The Cabinet member agrees that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The First Homes Interim Position Statement (Appendix 1) is approved providing interim guidance 2) The Head of Planning has delegated authority to make any necessary minor editorial changes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing, prior to publication of the approved First Homes Interim Position Statement
Rationale for decision	<p>To address the relative unaffordability of First Homes, the Council's Interim Position Statement on First Homes states that it is not mandatory for developers to provide First Homes on qualifying schemes/sites. Instead, the Council will encourage provision of the low-cost home ownership element of affordable housing contribution to be delivered in the form of shared ownership tenure. There may be circumstances where First Homes are considered suitable, such as First Homes Exception Sites and provision is made for this within the Statement.</p> <p>The First Homes Interim Position Statement is approved in advance of adoption of the Local Plan 2022-2042 to act as guidance. Taking this approach enables the Council to respond to the issue as set out above and also to assess the effectiveness of the Interim Position Statement prior to preparation of the Local Plan.</p> <p>The First Homes Interim Position Statement sets out the Council's requirements in respect of developer contributions where First Homes are proposed as part of a new development</p>

	<p>scheme and upon approval will be a material consideration in decision-making. Planning applications that make provision for First Homes will also be determined against national policy, including the Written Ministerial Statement of May 2021.</p> <p>The guidance within the First Homes Interim Position Statement will apply as soon as it is approved and be reviewed as part of the plan making process of the Local Plan 2022-2042.</p>
Financial and budget implications	The preparation of the Interim Position Statement has been undertaken by the Housing Enabling & Development Team and the Planning Policy Team and the costs have been covered within the existing salary budgets.
Issues considered (these are covered in more detail in the report)	Sustainability; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Property; Equality; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations
Consultation undertaken	Public Consultation; Ward Councillor; Cabinet colleagues; Other B&NES Services; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer
How consultation was carried out	Public consultation was undertaken based on the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A Consultation Statement has been prepared – refer Appendix 2 to Report.
Other options considered	<p>Two other options were considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Implementing First Homes as per the Written Ministerial Statement and other guidance. This option was not selected based on evidence that First Homes are less affordable than the existing preferred tenure, shared ownership 2) Increasing the discount applied to a First Home in B&NES to make it more affordable. This option was not pursued because increasing the discount level would take developer contribution resource away from rented delivery. Rented delivery best meets local need and a loss of this would have negative equalities impacts.
Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision, including any dispensation granted:	None.
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	None.

Signatures of Decision Makers	Councillor Tim Ball Cabinet Member for Planning Bath and North East Somerset Council
Date of Signature	4 February 2023
Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision	