

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 12th July 2021

Wards: all

Subject: Draft housing delivery strategy for public consultation

Lead officer: Director of Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency, Councillor Martin Whelton

Contact officer: Deputy FutureMerton Manager, Tara Butler

Recommendations:

- A. That Cabinet approve six weeks of public consultation on Merton's draft housing delivery strategy
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. It is recommended that six weeks of public consultation take place on Merton's draft housing delivery strategy.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Building more homes is one of the ways government, the Mayor of London and the council use to help meet housing needs for Merton's residents.
- 2.2. Increasing the supply of high quality homes is a priority for the council. On 7th July 2021 the strategic theme for full council will be on housing supply.
- 2.3. In addition to the uncertain housing market caused by macroeconomic change (the covid19 pandemic, leaving the EU), Merton is substantially built up since the 1800s and has fragmented land ownership. The characteristics of the land market is one of lots of small sites, with relatively limited larger single-ownership sites available for housing. This makes economies of scale difficult for housebuilders.
- 2.4. Work undertaken by the council's housing scrutiny task group in 2015 demonstrated that Registered Social Housing Providers also seek out larger sites and do not usually develop smaller sites such as those found in Merton.
- 2.5. Despite these challenges, for many years the borough has built more its share of London's new homes. The council has supported initiatives ranging from modular affordable housing at Y-cube Mitcham to estate regeneration in conjunction with Clarion Housing Group. However there remains a consistent need to increase the supply of new homes, particularly affordable homes.
- 2.6. The council is undertaking a number of projects towards increasing the delivery of high quality new homes. This draft housing delivery strategy

should be read in conjunction with other council strategies, such as Merton's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan, Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, Merton's draft Local Plan and associated housing delivery research and guidance.

- 2.7. In 2020 / 2021, consultancy Campbell Tickell undertook consultancy work for Merton Council to develop a draft housing delivery strategy as one of a range of actions Merton is undertaking to increase the supply and the quality of new homes.
- 2.8. The work included research on Merton's housing supply and interviews with Registered Housing Providers and others involved in housing supply in Merton.
- 2.9. The strategy is laid out to include chapters on:
 - Introduction
 - Vision
 - Background and context
 - What does Merton need?
 - Barriers and Constraints
 - Delivering the Right New Homes
 - Partnership
 - Direct Intervention
 - Density and Intensification
 - Housing for Particular Needs
 - Using and Improving the Existing Stock
 - Governance and Decision Making
- 2.10. The strategy is accompanied by a draft action plan for each chapter, that sets out a number of actions to deliver each section. Officers are working on the outputs for the actions
- 2.11. It is recommended that six weeks of borough-wide public consultation take place on this draft housing delivery strategy. The consultation feedback will be used to inform the final housing delivery strategy.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The alternative option is not to undertake public consultation on the draft housing delivery strategy. This is not considered a reasonable alternative option as increasing the supply of quality homes is a priority for the council and not undertaking public consultation would weaken the final strategy.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Public consultation will be borough-wide. Exact dates will be confirmed to consider the holiday periods and ongoing engagement on "your Merton, your place"

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The exact timetable for public consultation will be confirmed.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Funding for the preparation of this draft housing delivery strategy has come from existing resources.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no legal implications at this stage.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. An equalities impact assessment will inform the final housing delivery strategy.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Draft housing delivery strategy and action plan 2021

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. London Plan 2021 and London Housing Strategy
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land>
- 12.2. Merton's Strategic Housing Needs Assessment
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/SHMA%20Report%20July%202019.pdf>
- 12.3. Merton's Local Plan <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan>
- 12.4. Merton's housing delivery evidence
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/Documents/Merton%20Housing%20Delivery%20Research%20Final%20Report%20March%202021.pdf>
- 12.5. Merton's affordable housing viability study 2020
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Merton%20Local%20Plan%20Housing%20Viability%20Study%202020.pdf>

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