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| Report Title:                                | Response to the Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market'   |
| Contains Confidential or Exempt Information? | <i>NO - Part I</i>  |
| Member reporting:                            | Cllr Wilson, Lead Member for Planning<br>Councillor Dudley, Lead Member for Housing<br>Councillor McWilliams, Deputy Lead Member for Affordable Housing |
| Meeting and Date:                            | Cabinet - 25 May 2017   |
| Responsible Officer(s):                      | Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director   |
| Wards affected:                              | All   |

## REPORT SUMMARY

1. On 7 February 2017 the government published its Housing white paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market'. It contains a series of proposals intended to improve the delivery of housing and inviting responses by 2 May 2017.
2. This report summarises the key aspects of the white paper and the Royal Borough's response. There are no direct costs associated with the report. The response is in line with the council's strategic outcome to continue investing in infrastructure and support the regeneration of our towns whilst protecting the character of the Royal Borough and its overall ambition to build a borough for everyone.

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:**

**i) Strongly endorses the RBWM submitted response to the Housing White Paper consultation which is detailed in Appendix A**

## 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The aims of the white paper, 'Fixing our broken housing market' are to boost housing supply and create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely match the needs and aspirations of all households.
- 2.2 There is a role for local authorities, private developers and a variety of other stakeholders including local communities, housing associations and not for profit developers, lenders, institutional investors, utility companies and infrastructure providers to play to turn the proposals into reality.

### **Key issues for the borough**

- 2.3 There are a number of significant areas of interest for the council given its progress to date in adopting the Borough Local Plan and in light of its ambitious regeneration agenda.
- 2.4 Key amongst these are:
- Proposed changes to wording of the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development.
  - The plan making process.
  - Changes to duty to co-operate.
  - Assessing housing requirements.
  - The role of Green Belt land.
  - Housing land supply certainty.
  - Changes to planning fees to boost local authority capacity.
  - The introduction of a housing delivery test.
  - Build to rent.
  - Changes to s106 / CIL.
  - Extension of right to buy and its implications for the council.
- 2.5 In general the Council welcomes the range of changes proposed in the consultation, recognising the challenges that the borough has faced to date in producing its own local plan, some of which are acknowledged through the proposals (such as the introduction of a standardised approach to assessing need; and greater clarity about the role of Green Belt reviews in delivery against an area's housing requirement).
- 2.6 Three of the four chapters were subject to consultation. There were 38 questions in the consultation and the Borough's responses are available in Appendix A; the deadline for responses was 2 May. The final chapter confirmed the government's commitment to introduce a number of previously trailed measures (see 1.10) and did not form part of the consultation.
- 2.7 Appendix B illustrates the affordability ratio of local authorities, highlighting the severe problem in the south east. The Council has acknowledged this problem affecting the Royal Borough specifically and acutely and has therefore considered the emerging proposals and responded to the consultation.

### **Chapter 1: Planning for the right homes in the right places**

- 2.8 The proposals have the potential to affect the council significantly. These include changes to ensure local authorities have up to date, sufficiently ambitious plans that are easier to produce and more accessible; maximising the use of suitable land, clarifying reasons to restrict development whilst maintaining the presumption in favour of sustainable development; the role of Green Belt land; strengthening neighbourhood planning and design and using land more efficiently for development.

### **Chapter 2: Building homes faster**

- 2.9 This seeks to address the lag between plans being developed, permissions for homes being granted and those homes being built. Again, a number of the proposals directly affect the council's role in the housing market through proposals to provide greater certainty around housing land supply by adding the option of agreeing this on an annual basis rather than five years; deterring

unnecessary planning appeals; sharpening tools for councils to speed up housebuilding; and the introduction of a housing delivery test.

### Chapter 3: Diversifying the market

2.10 This looks at ways to improve the amount, quality and choice of housing that people want; including looking specifically the role of local authorities in delivering homes themselves beyond using their planning powers.

2.11 The council had already advanced its plans to seek to do much of this through its property company, RBWM Property Company Ltd; adopting a business plan in December 2016. The business plan had three aims: to best put the council's assets to use for the council tax payer and resident, by turning assets as efficiently as possible into revenue generating streams; to develop an affordable housing property portfolio and to be a key part of Maidenhead regeneration by increasing housing in the town centre. The consultation response therefore considers the impact of any proposals on its existing plans and ambitions.

### Chapter 4: Helping people now

2.12 Recognising the fact that some of these changes will take time to have an impact, there are also proposals designed to help people immediately. These are confirmation of changes already discussed so are not covered in the council's response. These include the introduction of the Lifetime ISA, an income cap on eligibility for Starter Homes, dropping the mandatory 20% of new developments to be Starter Homes in favour of using local discretion, securing fairer deals for renters and leaseholders and improving the use of empty homes.

**Table 1: Recommended options**

| Option  | Comments   |
|---|--|
| Endorse the council's response to the white paper 'Fixing our broken housing market'.<br><b>This is the recommended option.</b> | Provides clarity to government, residents and other stakeholders on the council's views on emerging significant policy changes.  |
| Note the response to the white paper 'Fixing our broken housing market'.  | Residents, stakeholders and the government note the submitted response by the council but do not endorse the comments. The council's position on significant policy changes therefore remains unclear.<br>This is not recommended. |

## 3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

**Table 2: Key outcomes**

| Outcome  | Unmet            | Met           | Exceeded | Significantly Exceeded | Date of delivery |
|--|------------------|---------------|----------|------------------------|------------------|
| Council's views on emerging policy submitted for | After 2 May 2017 | By 2 May 2017 | N/A      | N/A                    | 2 May 2017       |

| <b>Outcome</b>               | <b>Unmet</b> | <b>Met</b> | <b>Exceeded</b> | <b>Significantly Exceeded</b> | <b>Date of delivery</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| consideration by government. |              |            |                 |                               |                         |

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications on the budget by endorsing the consultation response.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the Cabinet paper. The council will have to adapt or amend its policies and / or approach when any proposed changes become legislation.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 There are no risks associated with responding to a consultation. Not responding, puts the council at risk of not having its views considered by the government.

#### **7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

- 7.1 The report is for noting and the impacts of any policy changes resulting from the consultation will be assessed at the appropriate point.

#### **8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Table 3: Timetable for implementation**

| <b>Date</b>             | <b>Details</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|
| 7 February 2017         | Consultation published   |
| 8 February – 2 May 2017 | Council response formulated in conjunction with relevant lead members, lead officers and other consultees (see 8.1). |

- 8.2 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately

#### **9. APPENDICES**

- 9.1 Appendix A: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Consultation Response.  
Appendix B: Affordability ratio by local authority, 2015.

#### **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 10.1 The full consultation can be viewed here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market>

## 11. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

| Name of consultee | Post held  | Date sent | Commented & returned |
|-------------------|--|-----------|----------------------|
| Cllr Dudley       | Chairman of Cabinet<br>Lead Member for Housing       | 27/4      |                      |
| Cllr Rankin       | Lead Member for Economic<br>Development and Property | 27/4      |                      |
| Cllr Wilson       | Lead Member for Housing                              | 27/4      | 28/4 & 1/5           |
| Cllr McWilliams   | Deputy Lead Member for<br>Affordable Housing         | 27/4      | 2/5                  |
| Alison Alexander  | Managing Director                                    | 27/4      | 1/5                  |
| Russell O'Keefe   | Executive Director                                   | 27/4      | 27/4                 |
| Andy Jeffs        | Interim Executive Director                           | 27/4      |                      |
| Rob Stubbs        | Section 151 Officer                                  | 27/4      | 27/4                 |
| Terry Baldwin     | Head of HR   |           |                      |

### REPORT HISTORY

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Decision type:</b><br>For information  | <b>Urgency item?</b><br>No |
| Report Author: Jenifer Jackson, Head of Planning 01628 796042 with Anna Robinson and Alan Baldwin |                            |