
Council House Build Programme: Updating the Cardiff Design Standards

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with background information to aid their contribution to the development of the Cardiff Design Guide.
2. Attached at **Appendix A** is the draft Cardiff Design Guide document.

Scope of Scrutiny

3. During this scrutiny, Members will have the opportunity to review and have input into the development of the Cardiff Design Guide and explore:
 - I. Key factors shaping the document's purpose, objectives, visions, and principles.
 - II. Feedback on the identified vision and principles
 - III. Useability of the document
 - IV. If it will stay current
 - V. Next Steps and timelines
4. Members are reminded that **Appendix A** is a working, draft document which is yet to be finalised and formatted. The feedback Members provide at the meeting will help influence and shape the final document.

Background

5. The Administration's 'Capital Ambition: Our Continuing Commitments for Cardiff' contains a commitment to deliver at least 2,000 new Council homes, of which 1,000 will be complete by 2022, and to work with developers and partners to deliver 6,500 affordable homes across the city by 2026.

6. In order to achieve this, the Council has established a number of development delivery routes as follows:

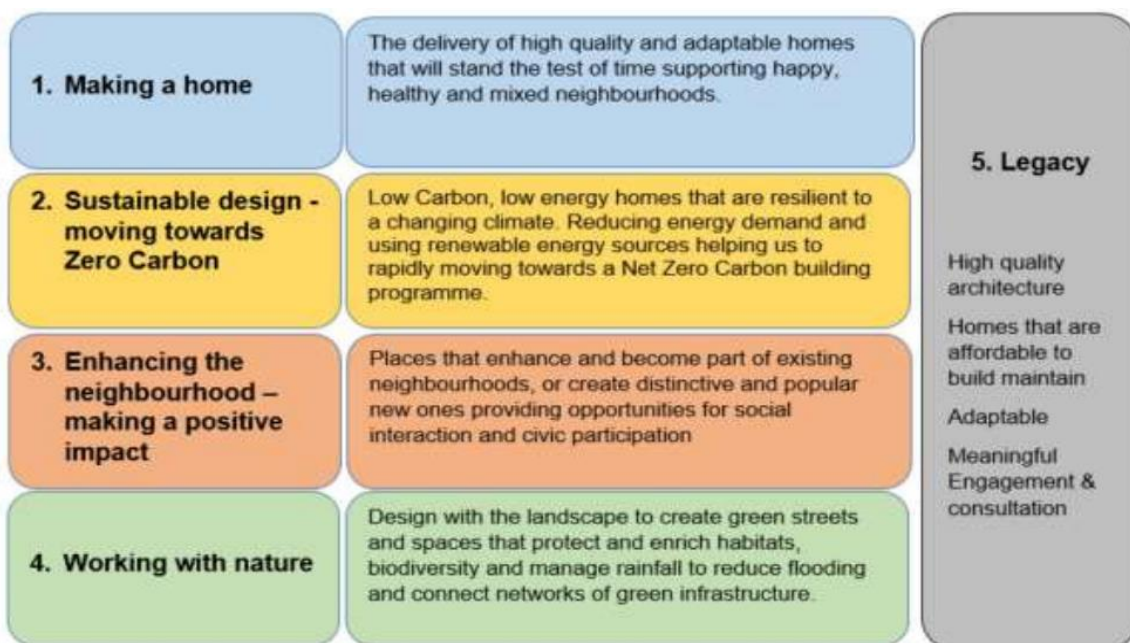
- Cardiff Living Development (300 target)
- Additional New Build Programme (outside of Cardiff Living) (400 target)
- Open Market Buy-Backs (100 target)
- Developer Package Deals (100 target)
- Convert buildings to Council Homes (50 target)
- Meanwhile Use of Land (50 target)

(N.B The targets listed above relate to the 1,000 properties aimed to be complete by December 2022)

7. The Council House Build Programme benefits from a significant HRA Capital allocation but also attracts external funding in the form of Grants, Planning Gain and income from the sale of land or low-cost homes through the Assisted Home Ownership scheme. Currently, just under £31 million has been achieved through these routes.
8. To date, the Council House Build Programme has successfully bid for 5 Welsh Government Innovative Housing Grants attracting over £8.7 million to deliver innovative and low-carbon schemes.
9. Previously, the Social Housing Grant (SHG) had only been available to Housing Associations. However, the Welsh Government confirmed that from April 2021, Council's with a Housing Revenue Account will be able to apply for the Grant, which in turn will help provide a Capital subsidy for its developments.
10. Schemes approved for SHG funding will be required to meet the standards and viability parameters set by Welsh Government, known as 'Design Quality Requirements'.
11. In August 2021 the Welsh Government updated the Design Quality Requirements which included an update in energy performance standards along with a move to net zero carbon standards. The updated Design Quality Requirements produced by the Welsh Government are available [here](#). Members are to note that the updated Requirements produced by the Welsh Government are embedded within the draft Cardiff Design Guide's requirements.

Cardiff Design Standards Document – Its Purpose

12. The Cardiff Design Guide is intended to clearly set out the Council’s vision, objectives and minimum requirements which will underpin every development site. As it will be used to underpin every development site, it will need to provide a clear focus on the importance of quality in the creation of new homes, and places the Council make.
13. To achieve this, the Council’s Housing Development team have reviewed the Council’s policy framework and other best practice guidance to define 5 clear and focused principles to be delivered through the design and development of the Council’s New Build Programme. Those principles are:



14. The 5 design principles are intended to provide clarity on what matters to the Council. With an intended focus on outcomes by explaining what Council developments must do or be; as opposed to being too prescriptive or subjective about what they must look like.

Cardiff Design Standards Document – How the Document will be used

15. The document will be used to brief design teams to ensure that the design principles contained in the document are embedded throughout all stages of the New Build Programme. The design principles should be followed through the entire bidding, design and implementation process; acting as a key reference point, underpinning decisions at every stage and remaining the test of a successful scheme.

Document Structure

16. The proposed document structure is as follows:

- Forward
- The Council's Ambition & Vision
- Purpose of the Document
- Key Principles
- How the document will be used
 1. Making a Home
 2. Sustainable Design (Moving Towards Zero Carbon)
 3. The neighbourhood (Making a Positive Impact)
 4. Working with Nature
 5. Legacy

Way Forward

16. Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member – Housing & Communities), Sarah McGill (Corporate Director – People & Communities) and Dave Jaques (Operational Manager – Development & Regeneration) will be available to answer Members questions and contribute to discussions.

17. Following this item, Members will then be able to decide what comments, observations or recommendations they wish to pass to assist in the document's development.

Legal Implications

18. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and Recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

19. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the information provided in this report, its Appendix and information received at the meeting;
- ii. Decide what comments and feedback it wishes to relay to assist in the document's development.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

9 Sep 2021