

Housing Select Committee			
Title	Affordability Review – Evidence session 1	Item No.	4
Wards	All		
Contributors	Scrutiny Manager		
Class	Part 1	27 October 2015	

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1. The Housing Select Committee has agreed to undertake a review looking at the topic of Affordability of Social Housing and the Private Rented Sector as part of its work programme for 2015/16. This report and appendix A, coupled with evidence provided at the meeting, will provide information for the Committee to discuss as part of its review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Select Committee is asked to:

- note the content of the report and appendix and consider the information presented at Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1. At the meeting of the Housing Select Committee on 15 April 2015, the Committee decided as part of its work programme to undertake an in-depth review entitled Affordability.
- 3.2. The Committee considered and agreed a scoping report at its meeting on 16 September 2016 that set out the keys lines of enquiry for the review as well as the timetable. The Committee also agreed that the focus would be around the affordability of Social Housing and the Private Rented Sector. The key lines of enquiry for the Review are as follows:
- How can we define what ‘affordability’ means at a local level?
 - What are the factors that are causing affordability issues across all housing tenures in the borough?
 - What are the Council and its key housing partners doing to alleviate the issue of affordability of housing in the borough?
 - What is the Council doing in terms of working with developers to ensure affordability issues in developments are appropriately addressed in the borough?

- Are the Council's affordable housing objectives (as in the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the Core Strategy, the new Housing Strategy etc.) being met?
- What are the policy options that could help deliver more affordable housing across all tenures in Lewisham?
- Are there any current initiatives or research being conducted that could make housing more affordable in Lewisham?

3.2 This meeting will be the first evidence session of the Review.

4. Witnesses for the First Evidence Session

4.1. Witnesses for the first evidence session for the Affordability Review have been invited from the following organisations:

- Affinity Sutton
- London and Quadrant Housing Trust (L&Q)

5. Affinity Sutton

5.1. Please see attached at Appendix A, a report from Affinity Sutton entitled 'Affordability: A Step Forward': Establishing principles for rent setting', published in May 2015.

5.2. Affinity Sutton is a national housing association, with 57,000 properties across over 120 local authorities across the country. In Lewisham, Affinity Sutton has 593 properties, which are in the Orchard Gardens and Leybridge & Newstead estates, which were both stock transfers from the Council.

5.3. Affinity Sutton were mentioned in the Scoping Paper for the Affordability Review as they have recently adopted a new rent model, which is lower than the Affordable Rent of 80% and 65% of market rate. This was after they had conducted research in conjunction with the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research to consider what the principles of setting a rent policy should be and what their new Affordable Rent policy might look like.

5.4. Affinity Sutton will be represented at the meeting by Neil McCall, Group Operations Director.

6. L&Q

6.1. L&Q manages over 70,000 homes in London and South-East England. As well as building homes, they also help manage the homes after completion and are involved in community regeneration projects. Their 'L&Q Foundation' also invests £4 million each year in opportunities for local communities, including employment training, activities for young and older residents, financial advice and community building. L&Q are partnered with local authorities, voluntary organisations, faith groups, social enterprises and business networks.

- 6.2. L&Q manages over 7,000 properties in Lewisham. Their property portfolio in the borough mainly consists of properties the Council has transferred to them in the Grove Park, Catford, Rushey Green, Forest Hill and Sydenham areas. The first stock transfer from the Council to L&Q was Lewisham Park which took place in 2007.
- 6.3. L&Q will be represented at the meeting by Steve Moseley, Assistant Director, Strategy & Operations

7. Further implications

- 7.1. At this stage there are no specific financial, legal, environmental or equalities implications to consider. However, each will be addressed as part of the review.