

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Joint Housing Board	Report Number: P81
To: Babergh District Council Mid Suffolk District Council	Date of meeting: 16 December 2014 17 December 2014

National Housing Federation (NHF) Yes to Homes Campaign

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the purpose of the Yes to Homes campaign.
- 1.2 To inform Members of the options for supporting the campaign.

2. Recommendations to Council

- 2.1 That the National Housing Federation's Yes to Homes campaign be supported.
- 2.2 That the wording recommended by the Joint Housing Board for a statement of support be approved.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 This report is not directly linked with any of the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risks. (NB The corporate risk register is currently under review).
- 4.2 The key risk associated with this report is that of a missed opportunity to balance the debate about how to address the housing crisis locally by giving a voice to those traditionally not heard; and therefore better informing the decision making process about how we meet local housing need.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 None

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 An equality analysis has not been undertaken at this stage.
- 6.2 The purpose of the Yes to Homes campaign is to balance the debate i.e. ensure that all who are affected are given opportunity to influence the debate about how best to address the housing crisis.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 7.1 Norwich City Council is one of the five authorities in the Country that has resolved to support the Yes to Homes campaign; and the Portfolio Holder for Housing at St Edmundsbury Council has signed up as an individual. Both of these New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) authorities are currently working with BDC and MSDC to explore the potential to address the housing crisis collaboratively through Private Rented sector delivery.

8. Key Information

8.1 Picture

- 8.2 The demand for new homes in our Districts exceeds supply.

High house prices mean that more people are excluded from home ownership and at the same time private rents are spiralling in response to the excessive demand. All of this means that we are facing a housing crisis with people struggling to pay rent, needing housing benefit to keep a roof over their heads, being unable to be near their family, or unable to buy their own home or downsize to suitable, more affordable homes.

- 8.3 The National Housing Federation launched the Yes to Homes campaign, saying that *"We need to build more homes. But, in many communities, people are saying 'no' without the other side of the debate being properly aired. All too often the people who actually need homes are missing from the discussion. That's why we have launched the Yes to Homes campaign for more of the right homes, in the right place, at the right price"*.
- 8.4 Five Councils have now agreed a Yes to Homes supporting statement, Ashfield District Council, Cheshire East Council, Plymouth City Council, Norwich City Council, and Coventry City Council. Milton Keynes and Oxford City Council are in the process of doing the same.
- 8.5 Individual Councillors from all over the Country have signed up independently and are being kept in touch with the campaign.
- 8.6 Public support for the campaign is growing with over 600 emails sent to local newspapers all over the Country from individuals stating that they are affected by the housing crisis, calling on local people to support Yes to Homes and asking for a balanced debate to end the housing crisis.
- ### **8.7 Purpose**
- 8.8 The Yes to Homes campaign is intended to raise the profile and balance the debate about how to address the housing crisis, and Councils and their Members are considered to be well placed to do this.
- 8.9 By agreeing a statement of support a Council can publicly demonstrate that it is taking action on the housing crisis, encouraging public debate about new homes and inspiring other Councils to act.

8.10 By signing up to the campaign individual Members can be kept up to date and receive support from the NHF in their role.

8.11 **Plan**

8.12 Individual Members are able to contact the Yes to Homes campaign directly at any time to register their support and receive updates and information to help them in their role. See appendix (a) *Guide for Councillors* for how to do this.

8.13 Wording recommended by the Joint Housing Board for a statement of support for the Yes to Homes campaign should be to be agreed by full Council.

Suggested wording has been based on options for statements of support included in the *Councillors Guide* at Appendix (a), which link very closely with the Councils' strategic priorities to "Shape, influence and provide the leadership to achieve the right mix and supply of housing" and to "ensure that there are enough good quality, environmentally efficient and cost effective homes with the appropriate tenures and in the right locations".

8.14 Following agreement of a supporting statement the Councils' support can be included in NHF campaign publicity.

8.15 Campaign resources including logos and infographics to use on the Council's publicity, websites and social media accounts would be made available to use as required.

8.16 **Part to play**

8.17 NHF feels that Members can help, for example by investigating why there is local opposition to new homes and find ways to alleviate those concerns; by listening to and putting forward the views of those who are in need of housing; and working with Yes to Homes supporters, local groups and organisations to actively make the case for new homes and explain the benefits of new homes for the whole community.

8.18 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have the opportunity to add their support by agreeing a supporting statement.

8.19 All Members can demonstrate their individual support by signing up and receiving updates and resources to help them in their role to balance the debate about how to address the housing crisis within the community.

9. **Appendices**

Title	Location
(a) Yes To Homes Guide for Councillors	http://www.yestohomes.co.uk/images/resources/yth_guide_for_councillors.pdf A hard copy has also been distributed to all Members

10. Background documents

Title	Location
(a) Yes To Homes website	http://www.yestohomes.co.uk/

Authorship:
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