



RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision ✓

SUBJECT: FACILITATING HOUSING PROJECT PLOT SHOP PILOT

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Regeneration & Planning to:

Progress the Plot Shop pilot, including survey work to establish latent demand, and submit a funding bid to Welsh Government to support the development of the pilot project.

DELEGATED DECISION: (DATE)

It was **AGREED** that:

- i. The Plot Shop pilot is progressed, including survey work to establish latent demand.
- ii. A funding bid is submitted to Welsh Government to support the development of the pilot project


Chief Officer Signature

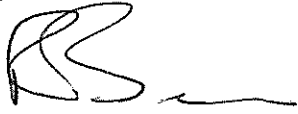
JANE COOK
Print Name

23.11.2017
Date

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution



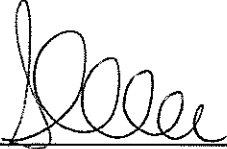
CONSULTATION



23/11/17

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE



23.11.17

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (Service Director Planning)

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (Director of Corporate Estates)

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE (Director of Financial Services)

DATE

CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YES

NO ✓

Reason for urgency:.....



If deemed urgent - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Mayor)

.....
(Dated)

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

FOR CABINET OFFICE USE ONLY

PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

PUBLICATION

Publication on the Councils Website:- 23.11.17

DATE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 5 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be 1.12.17.

DATE

Chief Executive

CDBRASHAW

Print Name

23/11/17.

Date



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & PLANNING

NOVEMBER 2017

FACILITATING HOUSING PROJECT, PLOT SHOP PILOT

AUTHOR(s): Simon Gale, Service Director Planning

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the Plot Shop pilot and the work which had been completed to date to develop the initiative. It also sets out the next stages of development for agreement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
- i. the Plot Shop pilot is progressed, including survey work to establish latent demand.
 - ii. a funding bid is submitted to Welsh Government to support the development of the pilot project

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 House building can have significant economic benefits through the creation of construction jobs, through the supply chain, and increased spending in the surrounding area. This is in addition to the regenerative impacts new housing developments can bring to our communities, together with, the provision of decent homes across all tenures.
- 3.2 'Self' or 'Custom' Build housing has an important role to play in the delivery of a mixed and balanced housing offer in RCT, but this sector is underperforming. Evidence shows there are a number of barriers to people wanting to build their own home. This project seeks to address those barriers to stimulate more custom build homes in RCT, via a Plot Shop pilot.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There are many positives around the housing industry in RCT, with the number of new homes built increasing year on year since the LDP was adopted in the depths of recession in 2011. Housing completions have doubled since the LDP was adopted with 713 new homes delivered in RCT in 2016-2017.
- 4.2 Nevertheless there are also big challenges, often in the valleys areas where sites are more constrained by topography or where upfront investment is needed to deal with the legacy of the coal industry.
- 4.3 The Council already employs innovative ways of stimulating housing such as its unique Developer Forum¹ where barriers to housing investment are discussed and solutions developed.
- 4.4 Cabinet considered reports in July 2015 and March 2017 which identified a variety of opportunities which could be developed to stimulate house building, with incentivising custom build being one of a number of initiatives identified in March.

5. THE PLOT SHOP PILOT FOR CUSTOM BUILD

- 5.1 The term 'self build' is well known but the term 'custom build housing' is being increasingly used to describe homes built or commissioned by individuals or groups of individuals for their own use, either by building the home on their own or working with builders.
- 5.2 'Self' or 'Custom' Build has contributed as little as 2% of all new homes built in the region over the last few years. This compares to 10% in England and between 30% and 80% across Europe.
- 5.3 There are many smaller sites in RCT that are not attractive to the larger housebuilders, but which have an important role to play in delivering variety in the housing offer in the valleys, helping to maintain sustainable communities and delivering regeneration benefits.
- 5.4 There are a number of barriers which discourage people from doing custom build projects in South Wales. These include:-
 - finding land
 - accessing finance
 - 'red tape' - buying the land, finding architects, planning permission etc.
- 5.5 The aim of this pilot project is to overcome these barriers through the creation of a 'one stop shop' approach. A Plot Shop is like a physical or

¹ ¹ The Developer Forum meets quarterly and involves all of the main PLC house builders, regionals such as Llanmoor and Davies Homes and all RSLs that operate in the area along with planning, legal, highways and housing officers



virtual marketing suite which not only promotes the sale of building plots, but it also has the full range of supporting matters to allow building to happen easily.

5.6 Further detail around the concept is set out below:-

- **Land**

Officers from a number of Service areas have worked through the Council's land ownerships and have identified areas of land that are surplus to requirements, and could be used to support the plot shop pilot. The criteria used, included them being able to accommodate up to 5 plots, and being accessed directly off an adopted highway to avoid the need for any infrastructure provision. The potential sites are shown at Appendix A

- **Sale Price**

Usually the Council takes sites to the market to ensure best consideration is achieved. However as this project aims to deliver an uncomplicated and streamlined way to buy a housing plot, an independent valuation for each of the plots is needed so that each plot can have a clear price.

Current regulations allow an authority to dispose of land at less than best consideration provided that the authority considered that the disposal would contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the whole or any part of its area, or all or any persons resident or present in its area.

- **Architects Plans**

The Plot Shop could be supported by a pattern book of house-types and detailed plans. This would be a suite of pre-drawn plans for detached houses which would be acceptable on the sites in the Plot Shop, and which plot buyers could use at no further cost.

The plans would need to be developed and officers have discussed this with Cardiff University's School of Architecture which has completed considerable work already on innovative solutions for facilitating housing in Wales.

- **Planning**

Potentially a Local Development Order (LDO) could be developed to cover the sites in the Plot Shop. The LDO would grant a blanket planning permission for the sites, on the basis of the pattern book house types.

- **Building Regulations**



The pattern book could be subject to a full plans approval process so that the only time any potential customer would need to involve Building Control would be in construction when the relevant stages would need to be inspected.

- **Finance**

Officers are exploring a number of mechanisms for a finance offer as part of the Plot Shop, including whether the Council could offer 'loan finance', and what the private sector can offer in this context. This will require further development before a recommended way forward is reached.

- **Site Preparation**

The pilot sites have been chosen in part because they require little in terms of upfront infrastructure, however some are overgrown or have trees. The potential benefits and costs for site clearance are being reviewed.

- **Other Considerations**

Terms and conditions for the Plot Shop will need to be developed. These would need to cover a range of issues including land-banking, multiple plot purchases, re-sale etc.

- 5.7 Clearly a number of these areas require further development and through positive discussion with Welsh Government officials the Council has been invited to bid for funding to develop the Plot Shop, particularly to fund plot valuations; Pattern Book; Local Development Order surveys; Building Regulations Approval; Finance potential Treasury Management advice; site preparation; web development and marketing.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business officer.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Officers have engaged with a number of key stakeholders including Welsh Government (Planning and Housing), a leading building society, the Federation of Master Builders, Igloo Regeneration (a market leader in delivering custom build housing) and Cardiff School of Architecture.
- 7.2 The proposed social survey will help further shape the project.



7.3 In terms of the chosen sites consultation has been undertaken with Services across the Council including Highways, Drainage, Ecology and Building Control to establish the suitability of the sites for the pilot.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 Positive discussions have taken place with Planning and Housing officials at Welsh Government who have invited the Council to bid for financial support for the development work to progress 'Plot Shop' pilot project.

8.2 The implementation of a Plot Shop would have wider financial implications which would be fully considered once the development work has been completed.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications currently, however this will be reviewed as part of the project development.

9.2 The Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003 has been considered in relation to best consideration

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.

10.1 The project specifically supports the Economy priority of the Corporate plan by seeking to increase the number of dwellings built in the year. It also supports a strong economy by supporting the local supply chain, increase spending in local centres and supporting local businesses (including SME builders). The scheme is also linked to the place priority as house building including self build can improve the environment and increase pride in an area and increase community cohesion and indeed keep communities together. By seeking to increase the choice of housing in the Borough the project will meet the vision of the Council in promoting opportunities for all.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The Plot Shop could increase the level of 'Self' or 'Custom' Build housing in RCT, which has an important role to play in the delivery of a mixed and balanced housing offer in our communities.

11.2 To ensure that the benefits can be realised, the pilot project needs further development.



Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity

Background Papers

None

Contact Officer

Simon Gale, Service Director Planning 01443 494716 or
simon.gale@rctcbc.gov.uk



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF DIRECTOR OF
REGENERATION & PLANNING**

**FACILITATING HOUSING PROJECT,
PLOT SHOP PILOT**

Background Papers:

Officer to contact: Simon Gale, Service Director Planning 01443 494716 or
simon.gale@rctcbc.gov.uk



APPENDIX A

List of Potential Plot Shop Pilot Sites

Rhondda

Site 16 - Corbett Street Treherbert

Site 60 - Penrhys Road adjacent to Gwauntroeda Bungalow Ystrad
/Tylorstown

Site 75- Land at Jones Street Clydach Vale

Site 89- Land at the entrance to Hendregwilym Penygraig

Cynon

Site 19- Land rear of Brecon Road Hirwaun

Site 27- Land adjacent to Gwladys Street Penywaun

Site 81- Junction of Brynmair Road and Fforchaman Road Cwmaman

Taf

Site 42- Land adjacent to Pinewood Flats Glyncoch

Site 61- Land opposite 149 High Street Gilfach Goch