



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Summary of Responses:

Cotswold District Council's draft Housing Plan 2016-2020 consultation



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1.0 Draft Housing Plan 2016 – 2020

The Housing Plan will assist the Council to:

- Meet the requirements of the Housing Acts of 1985 and 2004 in relation to assessing housing needs and standards. It also shows how the Council will fulfil its statutory duties in respect of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), Part 7 (preventing and reducing homelessness).
- Demonstrate how the council is seeking to address the housing issues of the district through a range of initiatives not just the development of new homes.
- Show how the Council is responding to national and local developments in housing, welfare and health.
- Communicate the Council's priorities to our partners, residents and other stakeholders so they can identify their roles in improving housing within the district.

This Housing Plan builds on the outcomes of previous plans and incorporates a number of separate policies and strategies. It includes:

- The Housing Plan
- Homelessness Strategy
- Strategic Tenancy Policy including a policy on Discharging Statutory Homeless Duty into the Private Rented Sector

Bringing together related policy and strategy documents in one place will facilitate a holistic approach to housing within the district. Whilst contributing to the whole vision each policy or strategy can be reviewed and updated individually in conjunction with its actions.

2.0 Introduction

Cotswold District Council's draft Housing Plan for 2016 to 2020 went to public consultation from the 3rd May until the 14th June.

The consultation documents and response form web links were provided through the Council's website, social media platforms and direct email communication with partners. Press releases were also published, promoting the consultation event through local media outlets.

'Drop in' events were held at Cirencester, Moreton in Marsh and Tetbury during the consultation period. Social media press releases were used to promote the public 'drop in' events.

All responses within this document are collated from the online survey, drop in events, email and written responses.



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Housing Plan at its meeting on 7th June 2016, in 'consultee mode'. The Committee raised various questions on the detailed content of the draft Plan, seeking clarification on some of the data. Other points included the insertion of key risks and information relating to armed forces personnel.



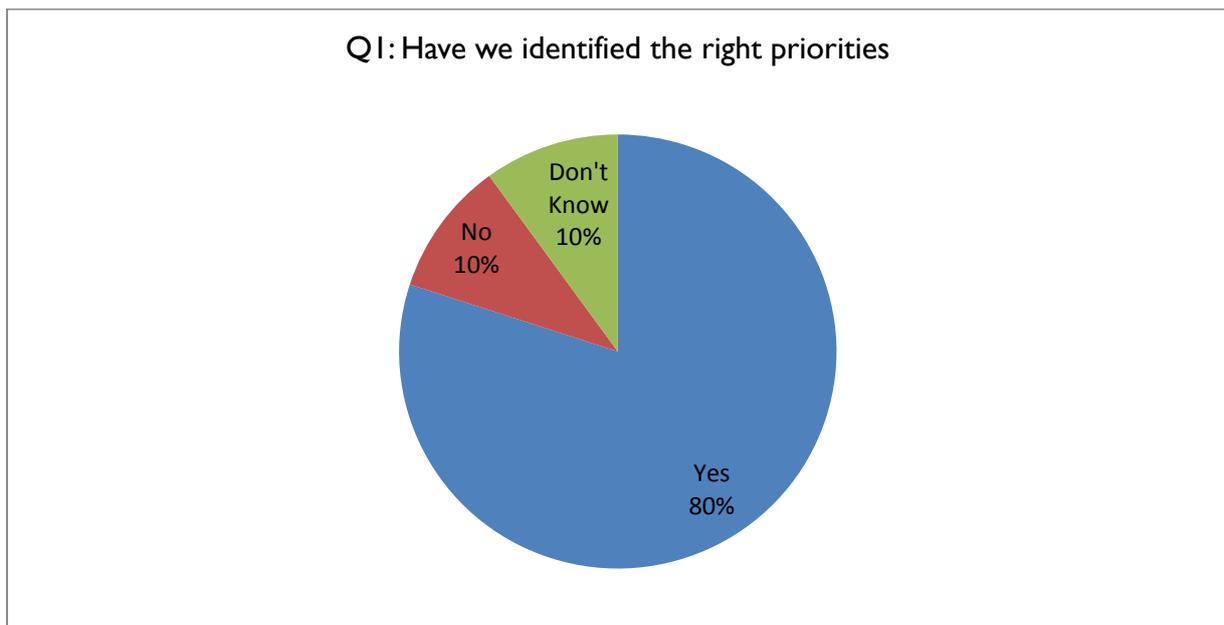
3.0 Summary of Responses

The Council received a total of 61 formal responses to the five consultation questions in the six week period. 37 responses were received online through the survey provided on the Council's website. 24 responses were received through email submissions, postal responses or by attendees at the public consultation events held within the district.

In total 37 individuals attended the three consultation events held in Tetbury by the Town Council (5 attendees), Cirencester (18 attendees) and Moreton in Marsh (14 attendees). Not all attendees provided a response to the five questions posed to the public at the events.

3.1 Have we identified the right priorities?

Cotswold District received 61 responses to this question. 80 % of respondents felt the right priorities had been identified, 10% responded with "No" and 10% didn't know.



Comments made clarifying the responses in Q1 were wide ranging. One common theme within the responses was the inclusion of future infrastructure, protection of conservation areas and the identification of current and strategic sites within the Housing Plan. This has been addressed in the draft Housing Plan's foreword by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities which clarifies the respective roles of the Housing Plan and the Local Plan.

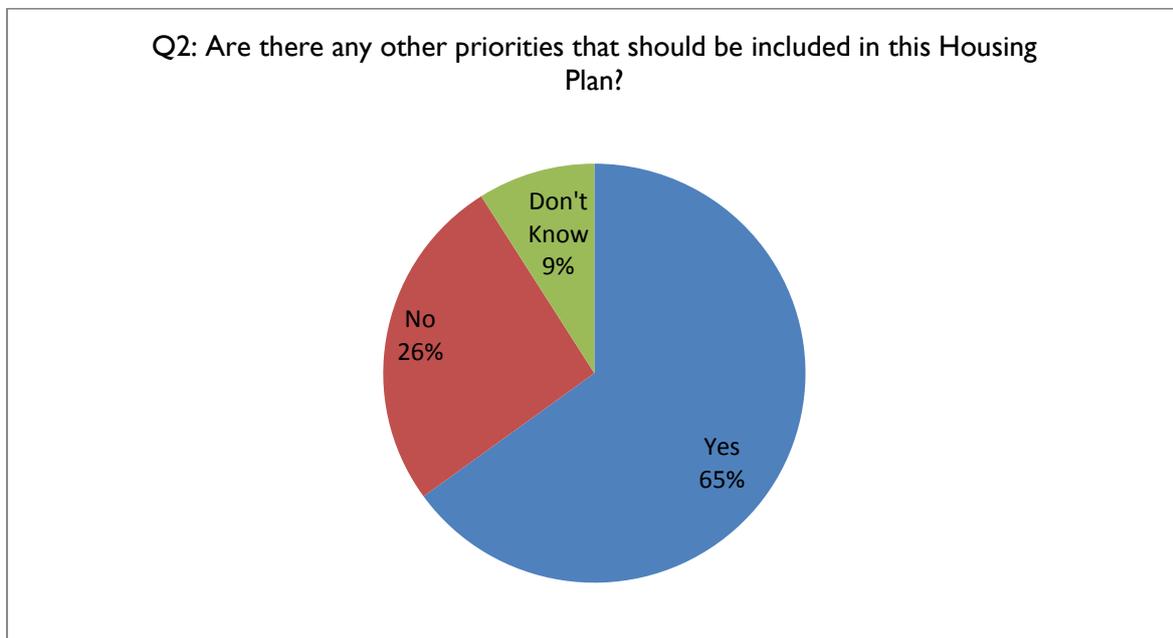
Other comments strongly supported Priority Two "Increase the supply and access to housing across all tenures" identifying the importance of building relationships with landowners, developers and local agents. Some respondents wished to see a stronger emphasis on a more varied mix of dwelling types (for example bungalows, maisonettes etc.)



and tenures within new developments. Respondents would also like to see a requirement placed on developers to ensure that affordable properties are marketed to people with a connection to the local area. Currently, the S106 legal agreements for new developments prioritise people with local connections for the affordable housing. However, new Government initiatives are reducing the ability to require local connection. A voluntary agreement with exists in relation to the Council's housing stock which was transferred to Fosseway Housing Association (now part of Bromford).

3.2 Are there any other priorities that should be included in this Housing Plan?

The consultation received forty three responses to the above question. 65 % felt additional priorities should be included, 20% said “No” and 9% didn't know.



Additional comments to question two again supported the delivery of affordable housing, increased tenure mix and priority for people with a local connection (see paragraph 3.1).

Some respondents again suggested the inclusion of infrastructure plans within the Housing Plan. The emerging Local Plan will deal future infrastructure development (see paragraph 3.1). Comments relating to the emerging Local Plan have been passed to Forward Planning for informal consideration.

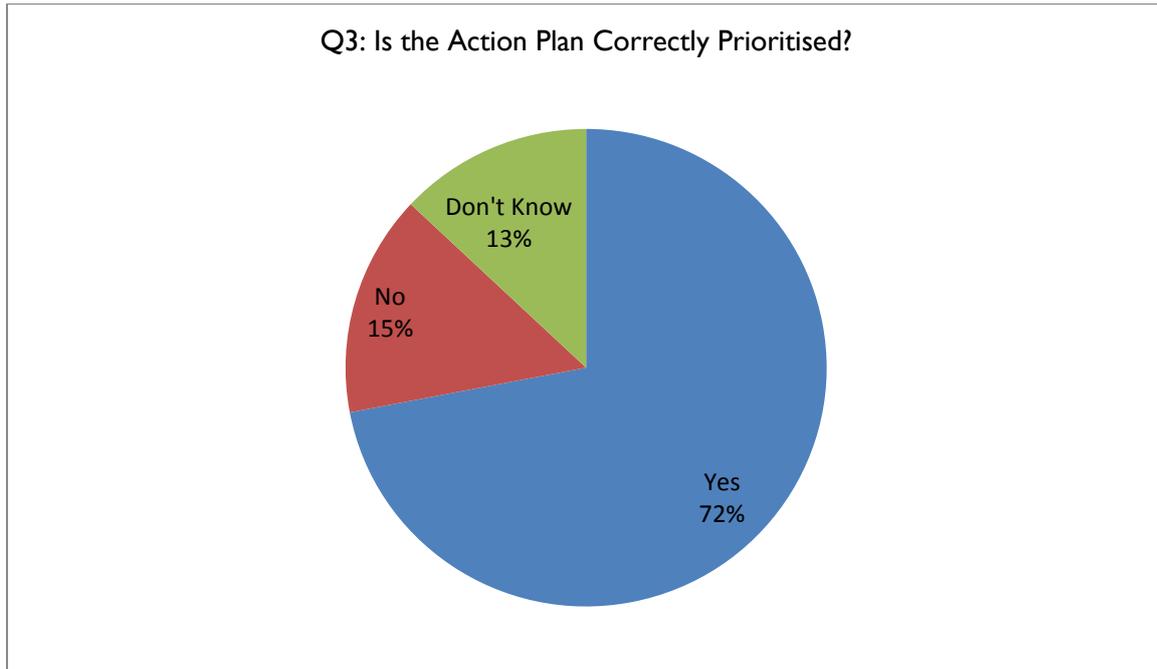
It was felt support for alternative housing models such as Community Land Trusts (CLTs) should receive greater emphasis within the final action plan. CLTs have been specifically mentioned in the Action Plan under Strategic Priority Two. More delivery timelines have been added to the Action Plan in response to one comment. These will be reviewed



regularly and additional information will be included as work on delivering the actions progresses.

3.3 Is the Action Plan Correctly Prioritised?

The Council received 60 responses to the above question. 72% answered “Yes”, 15% “No” and 13% “Don’t know”.



Overall comments were broadly in agreement that the Action Plan was correctly prioritised. Suggestions were made that the action plan should include progress updates and more time frames.

3.3.1 Q3a: High Priority Action Points (Public Drop – in events consultation response)

Attendees of the public consultation events in Cirencester, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury were asked to highlight four action points within the six priorities which they believed should receive the highest priority.

The top action points highlighted by attendees were;

- Review results of empty homes survey and develop initiatives to bring empty homes back into use (15 votes)
- Work with planning colleagues and partners across the county to commission a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (10 votes)



- Deliver 150 affordable homes per annum in a range of tenures to meet local need across the district using S106 agreements and local policy and evidence e.g. rural exception sites (8 votes). This target figure has since been target figure has been amended to a minimum of 150 homes within the first two years of the Action Plan.
- Seek to develop market and affordable homes which can be flexible to enable people to remain in their homes as their health changes (8 votes)
- With partners monitor and review performance of floating support services and supported accommodation to ensure they meet the District's needs. Explore other models which could improve provision (8 Votes)
- Explore opportunities that promote employment, education and training for homeless households (8 Votes)

3.4 Q4: What might pose a threat to the delivery of our priorities?

Respondents to the above question provided a wide variety of responses to what may be potential threats to the delivery of the Housing Plan priorities. The main threats identified were:

- Changes to Government and/ or Government policy,
- Outcome of the European Union Referendum
- Imbalance or negative influences on the housing market,
- Local opposition to development
- Local government and central government finance,
- Land availability
- Infrastructure in the District remaining at its current capacity.

Many of these risks are external. The Housing Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to record progress against targets. Those reviews will consider the wider housing landscape, nationally and locally. Where feasible, actions will be incorporated or amended to take advantage of new opportunities and militate against risks.

3.5 Q5: What other comments or suggestions do you have about this plan?

The question prompted respondents to provide a broad spectrum of statements. One recurring theme related to infrastructure. As previously mentioned, these have been referred to Forward Planning as the Local Plan sets out the vision and a framework for the future development of infrastructure. Requests for inclusion of Health, Young People and Armed Services specific tasks have been studied and where appropriate included within the Action Plan, if not already part of the Plan. Additional requests for 'task and finish' groups on specific subjects will be considered.



In response to comments received under question five, annual progress reports on Housing Plan delivery will be available. In addition, progress will be reviewed every six weeks in conjunction with the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

Some alterations have been made to improve the content and structure of the Housing Plan in response to suggestions received. These include changes to the statistical information and the Strategic Tenancy Policy. The Housing Plan 2016 – 2020 will be considered by the Cabinet in September 2016, with an anticipated recommendation for full adoption by the Council at a subsequent meeting.

4.0 Conclusion

Overall 80% respondents believe the Council has identified the right priorities for inclusion within the Housing Plan. 72% of respondents also felt the Action Plan had been correctly prioritised.

65% of respondent believed there were additional priorities that should be included with the Plan, where appropriate, additional tasks and references have been included. Where comments relate to other Council documents, such as the emerging Local Plan, responses will be shared with relevant officers responsible for the authoring of such documents.

If you have any further queries regarding the summary of responses to the draft 2016 – 2020 Housing Plan please email the team at housing-strategy@cotswold.gov.uk