

**Agenda Item No:** 9.4 **Report No:** 119/16

**Report Title:** Report and Recommendations  
of New Homes Project Working Group

**Report To:** Cabinet **Date:** 28 September 2016

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Andy Smith

**Ward(s) Affected:** All

**Report By:** Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive

**Contact Officer(s)-**

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### **Purpose of Report:**

To inform Cabinet of the findings and recommendations of the New Homes Project Working Group, presented here alongside the review carried out by the Council's external auditor into the New Homes Project Governance Arrangements.

### **Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1** To note the findings and recommendations of the New Homes Project Working Group, set out in Schedule 1.
  - 2** To note at Schedule 2 the findings and recommendations of the review by BDO, the council's external auditor, into the New Homes Project governance arrangements; and to note the Council's management response to this review.
  - 3** To require the Chief Executive to produce a management action plan in response to the Working Group's recommendations, addressing together the points raised both by the Working Group and BDO's review.
  - 4** To require the Chief Executive to submit the composite action plan referred to in Recommendation 3 above to Cabinet for approval.
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## **Reasons for Recommendations**

### **1**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15 December 2015, full Council approved the formation of a cross-party Working Group to review certain aspects of the New Homes Project. Once formed in January 2016, the Working Group met seven times to review the Project, consider lessons learned and formulate recommendations applicable to future Council strategic projects.
- 1.2 The Working Group's recommendations are now complete, and presented here for Cabinet consideration.
- 1.3 Separately, the Council's auditors have conducted a review of the New Homes Project governance arrangements as part of their audit of the Council's use of resources for year ending March 2016.
- 1.4 Since the findings and recommendations of both the Working Group and BDO are broadly consistent, it is appropriate that Cabinet consider them together and request that a management action plan is produced, addressing the points from both sources.

## **Information**

### **2**

- 2.1 The Working Group consisted of 6 elected Members, between them representing all political Groups on the Council, and an independent chair appointed by them. The Chair was neither an officer nor Member of the Council.
- 2.2 The Working Group's full report is out in Schedule 1, within which –
  - (i) Appendix 1 provides its membership and terms of reference;
  - (ii) Appendix 2 lists the witnesses who gave evidence; and
  - (iii) Appendix 3 is the complete set of recommendations.
- 2.3 The external auditor's report (including the management response to it) is set out in full at Schedule 2.
- 2.4 The auditor's report and management response is to be considered by the Council's Audit & Standards Committee on 26 September 2016, as part of that Committee's remit in providing independent scrutiny of the Council's financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk. A minute of that business item will be made available to Cabinet in time for its meeting on 28 September 2016.

### **Financial Appraisal**

- 3** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4** The Working Group was established as an advisory body. As such, it has no decision-making powers of its own but is able to make recommendations to any Council body. Given the strategic nature of the project and Cabinet's prior involvement, the appropriate body to consider the Working Group's recommendations is Cabinet itself.

### **Background Papers**

- 4** Report no. 30/16 to Cabinet of 17 February 2016

### **Schedules**

- 6** Schedule 1: Working Group report and recommendations  
Schedule 2: External auditor's report on New Homes Project governance arrangements