

Delivering more homes and better communities

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides background to the LGA Councillors' Forum housing session.

Recommendation

That the LGA Councillors' Forum notes this report as background.

Action

As directed by Members.

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Background

1. Local and central government have a shared ambition to deliver a step change in the supply of new homes to meet demand. This needs to happen in a way that helps new communities to forge and existing communities to grow sustainably.
2. Whilst the challenges of delivering new homes vary across the country, every council needs to be playing its role in helping to address the unmet needs of the people they represent.
3. To coincide with the 1 year anniversary of the lifting of the Housing Revenue Account cap, this session aims to stimulate discussion on what more councils, as local leaders of place, could be doing to incentivise delivery of new homes, influence the location and type of housing, and ensure appropriate infrastructure.
4. The session will be chaired by Councillor James Jamieson, Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council and LGA Chair and the Forum will hear from the following speakers before opening up to the floor for discussion:
 - 4.1. Councillor James Jamieson, Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council and LGA Chair
 - 4.2. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council and deputy chair, LGA Safer & Stronger Communities Board
 - 4.3. Councillor Darren Rodwell, Leader, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and vice-chair, LGA Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board
 - 4.4. Natalie Elphicke OBE, Chief Executive, Housing & Finance Institute

Suggested questions for discussion

5. How, as local leaders of place, should councils be stimulating supply of new homes?
6. What more can councils and the LGA do to support sharing of best practice and build capacity and expertise in the sector?
7. How can government support councils' ambitions to do more?

Appendix A

Biographies

Councillor Darren Rodwell

Darren became the Leader of Barking & Dagenham Council in 2014. Since then, he has established the borough as one of the most important growth opportunities in London and the Council has won numerous awards, including LGC Council of the Year for 2018.

Since 2016, Darren has served on the London Councils Executive – first as the Executive Member for the City Development and now as the Executive Member for Housing and Planning. In his current role he has prioritised the delivery of truly affordable housing in the capital, fire safety, reducing homelessness and reducing the use of a temporary accommodation.

Darren is also a member of the Homes for Londoners Board, the Skills for Londoners Board, Arts Council England, the Arts Council for London and the Create London Board.

Natalie Elphicke OBE

Natalie Elphicke has advised central and local governments over a number of years and has served as an independent adviser to HM Government. This has included the influential Elphicke-House Report 2015 on the role of local authorities in housing supply which re-set the direction of government policy in this area. As well as on the development of the new national strategy for estate regeneration.

She has just been appointed the New Homes Quality Champion, responsible for spearheading the introduction of a New Homes Ombudsman and associated housing quality reforms.

Natalie has worked on practical delivery of housing and finance for over two decades and across the housing and finance industries, with housing associations, councils, central and devolved governments as well as investors and developers.

At the Institute Natalie leads the work on the Housing Business Ready programme to improve skills and housing delivery for councils. Its ground-breaking Housing Business Ready Springboard programme is delivered in partnership with the LGA and is in its second year.

Councillor Bridget Smith

Bridget was born in and spent her early years in Durham, but also lived in Sierra Leone in West Africa and eventually in Belfast during “The Troubles”. She left Ireland to take A levels in Bristol, subsequently reading psychology at Durham University. After graduating, she

trained for the new profession of Hearing Therapist, eventually entering the health service as a practitioner at Manchester Royal Infirmary. After 2 years, she moved to the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of Cambridge to undertake a 3-year DHSS-funded research project in communication techniques for adults with acquired deafness. At the culmination of this project, she remained at the University to study for a Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Education. Once qualified, Bridget taught for 3 years at her local Middle School, specialising in IT and music. She then became Head of Upper School at a large Cambridge Primary School.

Bridget took time out from work to look after her 3 sons born between 1990 and 1998. However, in 1996 her eldest son developed a serious medical condition which necessitated Bridget becoming a carer until he was 18. During this time she wrote and had published 2 books, did some part-time work as a music tutor and sports coach and established and ran a very successful community development charity. She is currently a carer for her elderly mother.

Whilst a carer for her son, Bridget became more interested in local politics and in campaigning for improvements to local community support provision. Her charity was responsible for the Parish Council acknowledging that the rapidly developing village needed to commit to a state of the art community facility. Bridget was then employed to project manage and to raise the required £2.3 million to deliver the scheme. At the same time, she succeeded at a by-election in becoming the local District Councillor. The success of the resultant award-winning Gamlingay Eco Hub project encouraged Bridget to work as a consultant in community development and fundraising.

After serving in a wide range of roles as a District Councillor, Bridget became Liberal Democrat group leader in 2014. Since becoming Leader of the Council in May 2018 she has also become a Board member of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Combined Authority Board.