

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 23RD MAY, 2024

REFERENCE FROM HOMES AND SAFE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 15TH MAY, 2024

“ LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT (LHMA) 2023 (DEH) –

The report, presented by the Operational Manager, Public Housing Services in conjunction with the Housing Strategy Coordinator, aimed to provide Committee Members with an overview of the draft Local Housing Market Assessment (attached as an appendix to the report) for their consideration and any comments to be forwarded on to Cabinet as part of their consideration and approval of this review, prior to submission to Welsh Government (WG).

Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 required Local Authorities (LAs) to undertake periodic reviews of their Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs). WG had requested all Welsh LAs do these reviews every 2 years. In March 2022, WG issued their new methodology by which they required all LAs to carry out the LHMA reviews. A review of the Vale LHMA was carried out using the new methodology and with data extracted on 5th June, 2023. As well as the 2023 LHMA following the new methodology introduced by WG, a new online tool was also introduced which calculated the need for affordable housing over a fifteen-year period from 2022 – 2037. The assessment was carried out on a housing market area basis taking account of the property type and size identified as being required.

The report was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, which highlighted a number of key areas and topics in relation to LHMA and its findings, including:

- How housing need was determined (based on WG housing projections, newly arising need, newly arising need from existing households and the backlog of need, including housing waiting lists).
- The challenges and caveats of calculating local housing needs i.e. the ‘rounding up’ of figures and statistics and the use of the new WG tool to calculate the demand for housing versus the supply of housing i.e new builds and re-lets.
- The average annual need over the first 5 years, using the WG tool for the backlog of existing need, would be 1,214 for social rented properties and 382 for intermediate housing (overall totals being 6,071 and 1,908 respectively).
- In terms of the supply of housing, namely new build and re-lets this would be 663 for social rented properties and 40 for intermediate housing per year coming online.
- The results of the LHMA 2023 showed a net need for an additional 1,075 units of affordable housing per annum for the next five years, comprising 687 units for social rent, 388 for intermediate accommodation, including assisted home ownership.

- The key findings suggested that demand was greatest for one bedroom accommodation, with the highest demand being in Barry and Penarth/Llandough.
- The LHMA was essential to enable the Vale to meet the demand for affordable housing, and fed into and formed part of the evidence base for the negotiation of affordable housing through the planning system, as well as the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP).

Following the presentation of the report, the following comments and queries were raised at the meeting:

- On Councillor Hennessy's query on the breakdown of the current backlog of persons on the housing waiting list by the Gold, Silver and Bronze banding or categories (approximately 6,573 persons on the list at this time), this was roughly broken down by 12% on Gold and Gold Plus banding, with 40% on Bronze and with the remainder on Silver. The Bronze category included persons who did not have an identified housing need but rather simply wished to move properties. Further details would be obtained and shared with the Committee on this topic.
- On Councillor Haines' query on how often the data from Homes4U and Aspire2Own was audited in order to check that people on those housing lists still required homes, it was explained that this was reviewed annually, with those on the list being contacted to see if they wished to stay on the list or come off. For those that did not reply or did not wish to stay on the waiting list, they then come off. Each time a review was done, all persons on the waiting lists were written to in order to update their circumstances. Typically, the Council would lose roughly 40% of the applications on the list. For those persons who did not reply, a timeframe of one month was given, with a series of reminders sent to them before they were removed from the list. However, what would subsequently happen was those same persons would then probably place a fresh application or re-register thereby replenishing the housing waiting list of 6,500 plus.
- Councillor Haines also commented that he was glad that the figures for social housing needed, for St Athan, as shown on the presentation/report, were being fed into the RLDP. He had been chasing this data from the Planning Department but had been unsuccessful in obtaining this so was pleased that this was now available.
- Councillor Morgan highlighted, which was also echoed and expanded upon by the Vice Chair, the importance of the Council considering the provision of suitable housing for older persons (including retirement housing and housing with care, as referred to in the LHMA report) in order to address the growing shift to an ageing population within the Vale of Glamorgan and thereby 'future proof' the County's housing provision and related needs for its residents. It was important that such considerations be fully embedded within Council policies, strategies and planning (i.e. the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Replacement Local Development Plan).

There being no further comments or questions, Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report, subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T, having considered the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2023 attached at Appendix A, the following comment be referred to Cabinet as part of their consideration on the LHMA:

- The Committee wished to highlight the importance of the Council considering the provision of suitable housing for older persons (including retirement housing and housing with care, as referred to in the LHMA report) in order to address the growing shift to an ageing population within the Vale of Glamorgan and thereby 'future proof' the County's housing provision and related needs for its residents. It was important that such considerations be fully embedded within Council policies, strategies and planning (i.e. the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Replacement Local Development Plan).

(2) T H A T the Committee noted that Cabinet would be asked to permit the Head of Housing and Building Services to make minor editorial changes to the document once approved.

Reasons for recommendations.

(1) To enable Cabinet to consider the comment raised by the Committee as part of their consideration of the implications of the assessment and demand for affordable housing units required in the Vale of Glamorgan.

(2) To ensure that typographical or other minor changes can be made without the need to seek further Cabinet approval, following their consideration of the LHMA."