

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	COMMUNITIES
DATE OF MEETING	13th May, 2014
TITLE	Section 106 agreements for affordable housing
AUTHOR	Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr John Wyn Williams
PURPOSE	To provide some context relating to the possible effect of Section 106 Agreements on the viability of communities.

Background

1. The preparatory meeting for the Communities Scrutiny Committee was held on 8th April 2014. One of the items that the committee was keen to scrutinise were matter relating to the use of Section 106 agreements and their possible effect on the viability of communities. This item has been on the Scrutiny Committee's forward programme since 2013
2. During the preparatory meeting a series of questions were identified which the members wanted to be considered at the Scrutiny Committee on the 13th May 2014. These questions vary from the numbers of planning applications made which were subject to Section 106 agreements, how many affordable houses with Section 106 Agreements had been built, along with questions relating to the advantages and disadvantages of using section 106 agreements in Gwynedd.
3. The committee was also keen to gather information from the Cabinet Member in relation to other potential arrangements which could be made to enable local people to stay and live within their local communities and the possible effect that the changes to the planning system in Wales could have on the provision of affordable housing and using section 106 agreements in the future.
4. The questions were very varied in their nature and it was not an easy task to provide a full written response in a committee report without overcomplicating the issue.
5. There are a number of various elements relating to the provision of affordable housing in Gwynedd and the use of section 106 agreements to ensure that they are affordable in the future.

6. It is the intention of the Cabinet Member to respond to the questions asked along with any supplementary questions asked by the Committee verbally at the Scrutiny Committee on 13th May.

Section 106 agreements and self-build

7. Many of the questions asked in relation to section 106 agreements relate to the self-build sector. It appears that section 106 agreements with registered social landlords and housing associations work reasonably well but that the obstacles which have been raised with members and in the press regarding the provision of affordable housing and primarily relating to individual self-build projects across the County. However, from the evidence available, the numbers of applications falling into this category are very low.
8. Earlier this year, a research report was prepared on behalf of the Cabinet Member to report to the Planning and Housing Achievement Panel. This work was undertaken in the context of the task identified in the Strategic Plan which notes the need to consider other possible models for delivering affordable housing in the County in the future and if it is possible to overcome any obstacles relating to section 106 agreements
9. This work was undertaken by the Strategic Housing Unit and the report prepared by them based on their research has been appended. It should be noted that this report was prepared a few months ago and the context has changed somewhat since then. However, it does provide answers to a number of the questions raised by the Scrutiny Committee.
10. The Cabinet Member and relevant officers will be available to verbally respond to questions raised by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on the 13th of May.