

Swale Borough Councillor's report

Swale Council to build affordable homes in Swale.

When we stood for election, we called for more affordable homes in the towns, close to transport links, where people could meet their daily needs without having to use a car every time they left home.

This vision has taken a great leap forward. The Rainbow Coalition running Swale Borough Council is setting up a local housing company to meet the need for affordable housing that is not being provided by the market.

The housing company, *Swale Rainbow Homes Ltd*, will be wholly-owned by the council. It will not place any financial burden on the council or the taxpayer. Council-owned land at the old bus depot in East Street, Sittingbourne, and the car parks at Fountain Street and Cockleshell Walk, also in Sittingbourne, will be transferred in exchange for equity in the company. The sites will be used to provide around 139 new homes. The development will provide an income from assets that will appreciate over time.

Setting up a local housing company will enable the council to intervene directly in the local housing market to provide decent affordable housing. It will give the council control of the number, location and energy efficiency of affordable homes, meaning that the council will not be at the mercy of developers trying to maximise profit.

The number of local people in need of affordable housing is rising. The company will enable us to build affordable housing in addition to those provided through the planning system, enabling Swale Borough Council to begin to meet that need.

As your Green Party councillors participating in the Rainbow Coalition, we are pleased to have worked with our partners on this initiative. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the work of Cllr. Ben J Martin (Liberal Democrat, Cabinet member for Housing) and Cllr. Glin Whelan (Labour, Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing) who have led this work.

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