

# Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025

Report of the Housing & Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

## **Recommended:**

**That Cabinet approve the Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 and associated Delivery Plan as shown at Annex 1 and Annex 2 to the report.**

### **SUMMARY:**

- Building on the Council's Corporate Plan consultation in 2018, the Housing & Environmental Health Service completed a comprehensive Housing Strategy Evidence Base & Review of Homelessness during 2019. This work included consultation with stakeholders and residents.
- A set of clear Housing Strategy priorities emerged from the evidence gathering and these were developed into a Housing Strategy for the borough that will directly contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 has been developed around four key themes. The Delivery Plan will be monitored and reviewed, including updates which will be published annually.

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 will deliver initiatives that will contribute to meeting need identified in the evidence base. It sets out that we will:

- Enable the delivery of new homes that people can afford and meet different types of need in our communities
- Improve access to and quality of existing housing
- Meet the challenge of an ageing population
- Prevent & relieve homelessness and rough sleeping

1.2 The Delivery Plan provides a detailed roadmap setting out how the Council will work with partners to deliver its aims. It will develop further during the life of the strategy.

## **2 Background**

2.1 Since the last Housing Strategy was developed, there have been huge changes in the national policy landscape including changes to primary legislation and to guidance.

- 2.2 The strategy has been developed taking into account the national direction of travel and any potential opportunities or pressures that may arise from future changes.
- 2.3 In light of the constantly moving policy agenda, the strategy and associated Delivery Plan will need to be adjusted accordingly, from time to time, to ensure they remain up to date and reflect the Council's approach to proactively tackling emerging pressures and to developing innovative solutions.
- 2.4 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 has been developed in light of local policy too, and with reference to the Test Valley Revised Local Plan. It represents an overarching strategy with a focus across all areas of the Council's responsibilities for meeting housing need.
- 2.5 To accompany the Housing Strategy, and in particular, to ensure the Housing Strategy delivers on its aim to effectively prevent and relieve homelessness, a Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has also been produced and will be considered by Cabinet in a subsequent report.
- 2.6 The Housing Strategy links with the Council's Home Energy Conservation Act Action Plan, the Private Sector Renewal Policy, the Allocations Policy, and the Empty Homes Policy.

### **3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities**

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 was developed in light of the new Corporate Plan "Growing Our Potential" and with due regard to the outcomes of the extensive consultation undertaken in 2018.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan contains a number of elements reflecting a commitment to provide adequate advice and support to both residents and to stakeholders, and also, to meeting the identified housing needs of the borough through the delivery of new affordable homes.
- 3.3 In this way, the Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 will directly contribute to delivering the following corporate objectives to grow the potential of:
  - (a) Town centres – to adapt and be attractive vibrant, and prosperous places
  - (b) Communities – to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths
  - (c) People – to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations
  - (d) The local environment for current and future generations

## **4 Consultations/Communications**

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 has been drafted using the results of research, data analysis and benchmarking.
- 4.2 It has also been developed through extensive consultation, including with residents, stakeholders, elected members and staff.
- 4.3 This is demonstrated in the Housing Strategy Evidence Base and Review of Homelessness 2019, which is available to download from the Council's website at [www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk).

## **5 Options**

- 5.1 The options are primarily whether the Council chooses to publish a Housing Strategy or not to do so.

## **6 Option Appraisal**

- 6.1 Whilst section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 conferred the power on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities to have a housing strategy, this was repealed by section 29 of the Deregulation Act 2015. This means there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy.
- 6.2 Nevertheless, the Council's constitution includes a Policy Framework that references a Housing Strategy as a key strategy or plan.
- 6.3 The Council is committed to delivering best practice housing services, and to doing all it can to meet the identified housing needs of the borough. It is considered best practice for a local housing authority to set out its future strategic plan in a Housing Strategy, and for that strategy to have been developed through evidence and consultation.
- 6.4 Publishing a strategy is, therefore, strongly recommended. It is vital for the Council to provide a clear and accessible statement of intent to its staff, residents and stakeholders, reflecting its firm commitment to meeting housing need.
- 6.5 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 will support the Council to deliver its Revised Local Plan and Corporate Plan, and the evidence base that underpins the strategy is being used to finalise a new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which will also be brought to Cabinet in due course.

## **7 Risk Management**

- 7.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's risk management process and has identified 3 amber risks.
- 7.2 These themselves are, to an extent, beyond the Council's control and relate to:

- (a) Future funding decisions that may be taken by Hampshire County Council (and which could impact on local services), and
  - (b) The potential for economic factors leading to an increased demand on statutory services.
  - (c) Future changes to national policy (and particularly planning policy) that could impact on the Council's ability to deliver new housing that meets locally identified needs.
- 7.3 The Housing Strategy includes actions to support risk management in this context, and the risks will be managed as part of the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

## **8 Resource Implications**

- 8.1 There are no additional resource requirements arising from the approval of the strategy. All immediate activity summarised in the strategy is accounted for within existing budgets. Any additional activity identified as part of the Delivery Plan will be considered for feasibility within the normal yearly budgeting activity.

## **9 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

## **10 Equality Issues**

- 10.1 The strategy will impact positively on significant numbers of individuals in housing need by increasing the supply of affordable homes in the borough, preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping, and creating sustainable and diverse communities.
- 10.2 The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

## **11 Other Issues**

- 11.1 Community Safety – the Housing Strategy will contribute to social cohesion and sustainability. It will also seek to ensure that new housing is well designed and meets modern secure by design standards.
- 11.2 Environmental Health Issues – the Housing Strategy includes actions to improve the environmental quality of homes and reducing fuel poverty.
- 11.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – The Housing Strategy includes actions to ensure homes are built to a high standard and are as energy efficient as possible. It also includes actions to promote available help to local residents.

11.4 Property Issues – aspects of the Housing Strategy (for example, preventing and relieving homelessness) include actions around the Council’s use of temporary accommodation to meet homelessness duties. Whilst it is not anticipated this will have any immediate impact on Property, the Housing & Environmental Health Service regularly liaises with both Registered Provider partners and Estates colleagues on any matters that may arise.

11.5 Wards/Communities Affected – All wards.

## 12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

12.1 The Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025 has been carefully developed through an inclusive process to ensure it has, as far as possible, taken into account a range of views and the results of considerable evidence and analysis.

12.2 The strategy is a key document that details the Council’s priorities for delivering new homes, ensuring good quality homes in the private sector, and enabling vulnerable residents to remain in their homes.

12.3 The Delivery Plan will directly support the Council to meet the aims of its Corporate Plan.

### Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 to 2023 (*Please see subsequent Cabinet Report and associated Annexes*)

### Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	2	File Ref:	N/A
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	15 April 2020