

HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 19 JANUARY 2021

HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Bob Evans
Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

Reason for Report and Recommendation: To provide an update to Members of the Policy Development Group on the development of a revised corporate Housing Strategy.

The reason for the recommendation is to ensure members are informed on the emerging scope of the strategy and its relationship with other strategies, policies and corporate plan priorities of the Council. Also, that members agree with the member representation on the proposed strategy project board.

Recommendation: Members note the update and agree the proposals for membership of the strategy project board

Financial Implications: None directly arising from this report.

Budget and Policy Framework: There are no direct budget implications of this report.

This report sets out the preliminary work that has been completed in the development of an updated Housing Strategy. This strategy will set out those opportunities and challenges in respect of several key delivery functions; housing delivery, enabling and renewal/standards alongside housing needs and homelessness. As such this will link with a much wider policy framework, adopted or in development.

The current strategy was adopted in 2015 and ran for the period 2015-20. It is therefore due for review and updating to reflect the current priorities, needs and aspirations of our community in respect of having access to affordable, safe and healthy housing.

Legal Implications: The strategy has no formal basis and is no legal requirement for have one. Nonetheless, it will provide links to a number of formal requirements on the Council, for example in acting as the Housing Authority and social housing provider and the Local Planning Authority.

Risk Assessment: The new strategy should provide a framework for the delivery of those key functions and priorities outlined above. In doing so, it will help in the development of a coherent and consistent approach to housing across the district.

Equality Impact Assessment: Not applicable.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Our Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 has four key priority areas one of which is Homes. Within each priority strand the Council has committed to ensuring we are working towards sustainable and prosperous communities. This includes a recognition that our villages and towns need affordable housing for local people. There are number of specific actions that underpin this commitment includes targets for the delivery of affordable housing, working with

community land trusts and private sector landlords and working to improve the supply of quality housing.

Impact on Climate Change: Decisions relating to the management and maintenance of the homes belonging to the Council and influence the carbon performance of market or community led housing will enable officers and Members of the Council to influence the direction of travel against appropriate targets. We can use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level.

1.0 Introduction and context

1.1 Homes are a basic necessity and a fundamental requirement for everybody. Local authorities have a broad role to play in supporting and regulating the housing sector, and in facilitating the delivery of new housing.

1.2 All agencies, including the NHS and social care are impacted by housing - in relation to its availability, quality and suitability where poor housing leads to significant health inequalities. In short, good quality housing is the foundation of upon which people can build happy and successful lives. The economy also relies on a sufficient supply of housing in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

1.3 Tackling our housing needs and requirements are not something that one service or organisation can achieve on its own. Local authorities, registered social landlords, developers, the NHS, social care and the voluntary/ community sectors all have important roles to play.

1.4 With budgets are under pressure, and economic reality of the Covid-19 pandemic just starting to be realised there is an increasing demand for our services and safe, affordable accommodation. Having a clear, coherent strategy in place that sets out our leadership and direction is more important than ever where effective internal and external partnerships are in place.

1.5 This report sets out the preliminary work that has been completed in the development of an updated Housing Strategy. This strategy will set out those opportunities and challenges in respect of several key delivery functions; housing delivery, enabling and renewal/standards alongside housing needs and homelessness.

1.6 In addition to the helping to shape the delivery of our Corporate Plan priorities around Homes, the strategy will link with and/or be influenced by a much wider strategy and plan framework, either adopted or in development. Examples of this are given below (not an exhaustive list):

- Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-33 and Strategic Market Housing Assessment
- Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document
- Housing Assistance Policy 2019-22
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy
- Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25
- Community-Led Housing Policy

- 1.6 In addition to those internal strategies and plans set out above, the Housing Strategy should be consistent with key external strategies at a Devon or regional level. An example of this is the Healthy Lives, Vibrant Communities and Housing Choices 2020-2025' strategy. This is a joint Devon County Council and NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group housing and accommodation strategy recently published by Devon County Council. The strategy recognises the importance of housing and accommodation in promoting the independence of people with social care needs and sets out how the authority will work in partnership with District Councils, providers and relevant partner agencies to increase the range of housing and accommodation.
- 1.7 Within the context above, a Housing Strategy contributes to more than just housing. It should also incorporate aims to:
- Promote a better quality of life for the residents of Mid Devon through activities that improve health, resilience and well-being
 - Ensure development meets future needs, with associated investment in infrastructure and sustainability.

2 Strategy overview

- 2.1 Between September – November 2020, a project group of officers from across Leadership Team, Housing and Building Services, Public Health and Forward Planning met to review and develop a strategic overview for an updated Housing Strategy 2021-25. It also met with senior commissioning officers at Devon County Council to understand synergy with the DCC/NHS Housing and Accommodation Strategy and Better Care Fund principles. This overview is provided in Annex 1.
- 2.2 This strategic overview sets out a broad and positive context for taking forward our aspirations. At the same time, we have to be realistic about the challenges that we face and prioritise the limited resources that we have. We must also make sure we have a sustainable 30-year projection for our existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and current housing stock, taking into account major Council schemes already being commissioned (e.g. Post Hill Tiverton).
- 2.3 The above and other factors, such as the growing and ageing population, are likely to increase the demand for services while simultaneously reducing resources. Nevertheless, the challenge - and our intention - remains to maximise the supply and quality of suitable homes across tenures, while supporting broader goals around health and wellbeing, and tackling climate change.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 In January 2021, the officer project group will meet to review feedback from this PDG and develop a framework and project plan for the delivery of the Strategy.
- 3.2 Given the scope of the Strategy, then it's proposed that specific components and goals within the document will be led by specific lead officers

for the relevant area. Overall, the project will work under the following project management structure:



3.3 Within the above standard project structure the following roles are proposed:

- Project Board
 - Executive – Director (Jill May) and Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration (Jenny Clifford)
 - Senior User – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Cllr Bob Evans)
- Project Manager – Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing (Simon Newcombe)
- Project Team - specific lead officers from Housing/Building Services, Asset Management, Forward Planning and Private Sector Housing
- Project Support – officers from the above teams to provide specific support and input on an ad-hoc basis as required
- Project Assurance – wider Corporate Management Team

3.4 It is proposed to have a draft Housing Strategy for in place for wider internal and external consultation in July 2021.

4 Recommendation

4.1 That Members note the update and agree the proposals for membership of the strategy project board

Contact for more Information: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report:

Members of the Housing PDG
Cllr Bob Evans, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services
Leadership Team
Corporate Management Team and other Service Managers
Legal Services

List of Background Papers:

Current MDDC Housing Strategy

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/>

Devon County Council/NHS Housing and Accommodation Strategy

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/providerengagementnetwork/devon-housing-and-accommodation-strategy/>

Annex 1 – Proposed strategic overview, Housing Strategy 2021-25

Strategic overview

Key delivery functions:

- Housing enabling
- Housing delivery – Local Plan (market/affordable) and HRA (council new build and social rent)
- Housing needs and homelessness
- Private sector housing (renewal, assistance and housing standards)

Set out **Opportunities** and **Challenges** and wider policy/strategy framework, adopted or in development

Funding – Council, mixed, market and self-build

Align to Corporate Plan and relevant policy framework but have specific goals:

Overall **GOALS**:

HOUSING – increase delivery of quality designed, well-built affordable homes

- Place shaping to enable affordable and social housing delivery
- Building design standards and SPD
- Meeting housing needs of rural communities
- Preventing homelessness
- Gypsy and traveller provision

OPTIMISE – social wellbeing, climate change/fuel poverty and economic recovery

- Building sustainable, adaptable and energy efficient properties (needs of disabled, climate change and fuel poverty)
- Recognise links between improving public health/addressing health inequalities and housing standards
- Meeting housing needs of older people (ageing well strategy) and younger people
- Links with Economic Strategy

MAKE – the most of our existing homes – all stock, tenures, private and social

- Housing renewal and Housing Assistance Policy
- Private Sector Housing functions and working with landlords
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Empty Homes Plan
- Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)
- Retro-fit measures and improvements
- Buy-back of previous RTBs

ENGAGE – with relevant agencies, tenants/owners, private sector landlords, organisations and delivery partners

- One Mid Devon Housing (combined HRA)
- Working with Housing Associations and Social Landlords. Working with Private Sector Landlords
- 3 Rivers
- Partnerships with other LAs and
- Homes England
- Community-led housing
- Public-Private sector partnerships
- Advocate for multi-agency working and partnerships (vulnerable persons, domestic and sexual violence, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Devon Home Choice and links into Community Safety Partnership)