

**HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
20 JULY 2021**

HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT

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 Members of the Policy Development Group with an opportunity to review the proposed consultation draft of the revised corporate Housing Strategy.

The reason for the recommendations is to ensure we can progress to the next key consultation stage leading to the adoption of the Strategy and have approval with regards to the overall adoption process.

Recommendation:

(a) Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-25 attached in Annex 1 for external and public consultation

(b) Members note the proposed timeline and stages for adoption of the Housing Strategy as set out in section 3.2 of this report

Financial Implications: None directly arising from this report.

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

This strategy sets 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 it links 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 was 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 Strategic Housing Authority and social housing provider and the Local Planning Authority.

Risk Assessment: The new strategy provides 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 at this stage. An EIA will be attached to the final draft of the Strategy post-consultation.

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.

More detail on the links between the Strategy and our actions on climate change is set out in the document itself and as summarised in Section 4 below.

1.0 Introduction

- 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 follows on from a previous update provided to members in January 2021 and sets out the proposed consultation draft of the updated Housing Strategy 2021-25.
- 1.6 As agreed by the Policy Development Group in January, the development of this draft document has been led by a Strategy Working Group with a wide range of internal stakeholders and contributors as set out below.

Project Board

- Cllr Bob Evans – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services
- Jill May - Director of Business Improvement and Operations
- Jenny Clifford – Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Project Lead and Manager

- Simon Newcombe – Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

Project Team

- Tristan Peat - Forward Planning Team Leader
- Arron Beecham - Principal Housing Enabling and Forward Planning Officer
- Andrew Busby - Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure & Climate Change
- Tanya Wenham – Operations Manager for Public Health and Housing Options
- Claire Fry – Operations Manager for Housing
- Michael Lowman – Operations Manager for Building Services
- Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist

2.0 Strategy overview

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy sets out our vision a Council for the provision and management of housing over the next five years. In particular, as set out in the document foreword, it puts forward the following vision.

Our vision is to meet the housing needs and aspirations of our residents through a greater choice of high-quality new and adapted homes. This will help us to support the social wellbeing needs of everyone who lives in Mid Devon and provide high quality growth in a high quality environment

Purpose

- 2.2 Building on this vision, the purpose of the Strategy is to provide a clear direction, for the next five years, to offer more housing with more choice by developing new homes and improving existing homes and communities. There is a particular focus on affordable and social rent properties alongside a strong commitment to having low-carbon, accessible and adaptable homes. This means we can support our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain good quality housing which meets their needs.

Strategic context

- 2.3 The Housing Strategy for Mid Devon does not stand alone and most of the priorities and actions within it operate alongside existing strategies, delivery plans and policies. In particular, it is guided by policies and priorities outlined in the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 and the Corporate Plan 2020-24.

- 2.4 This Strategy has also been developed in the context of the role of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership which aims to boost the regional economy across the Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay region with high living standards and outstanding quality of life.
- 2.5 It is important that Mid Devon continues to contribute towards regional ambitions for growth by continuing to work with other Local Authorities and regional partners. From a national perspective, in recent years the Government has introduced a raft of new legislation to stimulate and speed up housing supply across all forms of tenure and to reform the welfare system. Most recently, in November 2020 we saw the publication of the Government's Social Housing White Paper which will place new responsibilities on us as a Social Landlord and direct provider of social housing.
- 2.6 We have taken these changes, opportunities and strategic direction of travel into account within the development of this draft document. It is also important that we are responsive to further legislative changes as they emerge and shape these policies to meet the needs of our local housing market. This Strategy sets out Mid Devon District Council's considered housing plans and actions for the period 2021-2025 taking into account the national, regional and local context as discussed in more detail in the introduction to the Strategy itself.

Priorities and objectives

- 2.7 In recognising the above context, the following 'HOME' priorities have been developed, as previously introduced in the January report, taking into account the supporting evidence and documents that underpin the Strategy.

Housing - increase delivery of quality designed, well-built homes across the housing market to meet identified needs

Optimise - fit for purpose healthy, sustainable, adaptable homes optimised for high energy efficiency and low carbon impact

Making the most - making the most of our existing homes across the private and public sector in all forms of tenure

Engage - engaging and working with others including partner organisations to deliver our aims

- 2.8 Consequently, the Strategy is divided into four chapters which expand upon each of our key housing priorities. All priorities have equal weighting; each impacts on the other and much of the work around these priorities will necessarily be overlapping and interdependent.
- 2.9 Within each chapter are specific objectives and targets to deliver the different elements that make up each priority.
- 2.10 Overall, some 40 objectives are described within the Strategy and ultimately this provides a detailed but strong framework; setting direction for each of our partners and stakeholders involved in housing; residents, ward members, housing associations, developers, government bodies, regulators, investors,

private landlords, charities, voluntary groups and the Council – to provide the right type of homes that are needed.

- 2.11 Members will therefore need to consider the document and the objectives set out holistically within boundaries of where we have an influencing, commissioning or direct delivery role with regard to the provision of housing. Within the latter, members have previously expressed a direct interest in the delivery of new Council Houses. These are covered in Chapter One of the document and Objectives 5 and 6 specifically. More information is provided in Annex 2 on the information that underpins a combined target to provide 160 new Council Houses by 2025 of a mix of social and affordable rent.
- 2.12 Finally, the Strategy, in its conclusion, sets out how its priorities and objectives will be delivered, reviewed and updated going forward.

3.0 **Proposed adoption timeline and consultation**

3.1 The Mid Devon Scrutiny committee meeting in June 2021 considered the pending adoption of an updated Housing Strategy and noted that the document would be considered by this PDG and Cabinet in its first round for approval to go to consultation and then be considered by Scrutiny committee prior to it coming back to the PDG ahead of a final recommendation to Cabinet to adopt the final Strategy.

3.2 Accordingly, the following consultation roadmap and timeline is proposed:

- 20 July – Housing PDG with recommendation that Cabinet approve draft for consultation
- 16 August – Scrutiny Committee
- 31 August – Cabinet with recommendation to approve draft for consultation
- September external consultation
- 20 September – verbal update to Housing PDG on initial consultation feedback
- Late September – early October – final updates to Strategy document
- 26 October – Cabinet recommendation to adopt final strategy

3.3 In addition to general public consultation, it is proposed that a targeted consultation on the draft Strategy will be carried out with a wide range of interested regional and local organisations as set out in Page 11 of the Strategy.

4.0 **Links with Climate Change**

4.1 Housing is one the largest contributors to carbon emissions and is itself potentially very widely impacted by the effects of climate change. A key thread throughout the Strategy was recognising and responding to this link and support our wider climate aspirations within both the Corporate Plan and our Carbon Action Plan. This is explored further below.

4.2 Our Corporate Plan and links to this strategy on Climate Change:

- Introduce zero carbon policies for new development

- Encourage the piloting of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and self-build opportunities
- Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc)

Sustainability

- 4.3 Mid Devon District Council is committed to tackling climate change and how our whole way of living influences our environment. Sustainability is a priority within this Strategy and the specific Objectives set out how we will address sustainability issues through partnership and innovative design and development of new housing and the refurbishment of existing properties.
- 4.4 Sustainable development can be defined as “*development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”.
- 4.5 Protecting and conserving the natural environment is an important essential part of that, but sustainability also incorporates economic and social elements. This means meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity.
- 4.6 The Council will also strive to improve the natural environment, including flood protection and to work to reduce consumption, increase recycling and promote low carbon energy. Existing homes and the building of new homes contribute heavily to CO₂ emissions and therefore climate change impact. Sustainability can be said to encompass the following key aspects.

Economic

- 4.7 Affordability of rent / purchase and running costs; proximity to a range of well-paid employment opportunities; availability of suitable and sustainable modes of transport and connectedness to local services, shops and educational opportunities.
- 4.8 The opportunity to achieve both environmental and economic sustainability by ensuring that homes combine the benefits of low or zero/no carbon energy or heating performance with the economic benefits of lower running costs are critical.

Social

- 4.9 Includes the suitability of housing for different types of households and incomes; adaptability of housing to meet different stages of life. As well as ensuring that accommodation for people with particular care and support needs, including those with learning and physical disabilities, are met within supportive and sustainable neighbourhoods. For example, designing homes with suitable technology to assist in care; ensuring that development of housing with support and care is included in housing developments and appropriately staffed and funded; encouraging housing providers to ensure that housing

developments incorporate space for play and recreation; considering how to facilitate intergenerational living as well as housing designated for particular age groups.

Environmental

- 4.10 In the realm of new homes development, design features and construction methods can play a critical role in mitigating adaptation to the effects of climate change, such as flooding and overheating and in addition to mitigating climate impacts by avoiding further contributions of greenhouse gas to CO₂ emissions.
- 4.11 Modular construction methods can reduce environmental impact from construction waste and transportation and build homes more quickly and with future flexibility. The location of new homes and design policies can help conserve Natural Capital, enhance rather than threaten biodiversity, and wildlife and create homes and neighbourhoods that encourage lower carbon living and more sustainable lifestyles. Local authorities have a critical role to play in planning for and guiding housing development and supporting retrofitting, in order to enhance, rather than compromise, our environment. The Council's policies and associated strategies, including Public Health policies all have a part to play in delivering economically, socially and environmentally sustainable housing.
- 4.12 In the realm of existing homes, retrofitting and improving the environmental efficiency of homes is a key aspect of decarbonising our society, reducing fuel poverty and meeting our climate targets.

Community-led and self-build Housing

- 4.13 In recent year's central government has encouraged community groups, parish councils and local authorities to promote community-led affordable housing development and opportunities for self-build. Dedicated funding has been made available through the Community Housing Fund to build capacity for community-led housing initiatives.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendations are therefore made:
- (a) Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-25 attached in Annex 1 for external and public consultation
 - (b) Members note the proposed timeline and stages for adoption of the Housing Strategy as set out in section 3.2 of this report

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
Service/Operations Managers
Legal Services
Housing Strategy Working Group

List of Background Papers:

Current MDDC Housing Strategy
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/>

Annex 1 – Proposed consultation draft Housing Strategy 2021-25

Annex 2

Objective 5 of the Strategy seeks to retain a viable Council Housing stock baseline of a minimum 3,000 properties through full use of available Right to Buy (RTB) 1-4-1 receipts.

How measured - Monitor the number of social rent properties delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock

Target - Deliver 60 new Council homes between 21- 25 and a further 20 by 2027

The initial 60 unit target for 21 – 25 is set out in the MDDC 5-Year Right-to-Buy (RTB) receipts 1-4-1 Build Programme as summarised below. This is a rolling plan and once future receipts are ascertained then years 26-27 will be added with an estimated target of 20 units.

Year Of Receipt	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Totals
Year of Accountability	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
1-4-1 Receipts	£1,040,248.82	£539,555.82	£484,409.82	£568,409.82	£836,409.54	£3,469,033.82
Utilisation Expenditure @ 40%	£2,600,622.05	£1,348,889.55	£1,211,024.56	£1,421,024.55	£2,091,023.83	£8,672,584.54
Residual Funding Requirement (MDDC)	£1,560,373.23	£809,333.73	£726,614.73	£852,614.73	£1,254,614.30	£5,203,550.72
	1-4-1 Usage	Units				
Location in Cullompton (6 Pods) - see Note 1	£390,000.00					6
Location in Tiverton (8 Pods) - see Note 1	£550,000.00					8
3 Buy Backs at Average Cost	£160,000.00					3
2021/22 Total						17
Beech Road, Tiverton (3 new)		£190,000.00				3
Westfield Road, Tiverton (1 new)		£14,000.00				1
Siddalls Gardens, Tiverton (2 new)		£52,000.00				2
3 Buy Backs at Average Cost		£160,000.00				2
2022/23 Total						8

Wordland Cross, Cheriton Fitzpaine (6 new)			£300,000.00			6
3 Buy Backs at Average Cost			£160,000.00			3
Hunters Way, Culmstock (1 new)			£56,000.00			1
2023/24 Total						10
Palmerston Park, Tiverton (1 new)				£54,000.00		1
Barnes Close, Willand (1 new)				£54,000.00		1
3 Buy Backs at Average Cost				£160,000.00		3
Allington Terrace, Morchard Road (1 new)				£64,000.00		1
2024/25 Total						6
Location in Tiverton (14 Pods) - see Note 2					£880,033.82	14
Bowley Meadow, Bradninch (2 new)					£65,000.00	2
3 Buy Backs at Average Cost					£160,000.00	3
2025/26 Total						19
						60
Total	£1,100,000.00	£416,000.00	£516,000.00	£332,000.00	£1,105,033.82	£3,469,033.82

Note 1 – locations subject to pre-planning and public/resident scheme specific consultation in July 2021 and therefore locations are not specified within this report however will be made public when the formal consultation is live

Note 2 – location will be subject to future public/resident consultations and therefore is not specified at this stage within this report

Objective 6 of the Strategy seeks to grow the Mid Devon Council Housing stock beyond baseline through additional, non 1-4-1 mechanisms, for example s106 or Homes England Affordable Homes programme.

Target - Deliver 70 new Council homes between 21 – 23 and additional 15 homes per annum thereafter to 2025
How measured – Monitor the number of social rent and affordable homes delivered for the Mid Devon Housing Revenue Account/Council Housing stock

The initial target to 2023 will be met through the delivery of 70 affordable homes (including 8 for social rent) at Post Hill, Tiverton. The remainder will be met through additional sites at the latter end of the strategy period, split nominally 15 units each year through the Affordable Homes Programme or related schemes.