
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	12 JANUARY 2016	CATEGORY: OPEN
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
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SUBJECT:	HOUSING STRATEGY 2016 - 2021	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members approve the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021.
- 1.2 That authority is given to the Director of Housing and Environmental Services in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, to agree any minor amendments to the Housing Strategy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To bring before Committee the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021, attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Housing is of critical importance. It not only provides shelter, but promotes stability and a sense of identity. Good quality, well managed housing is inextricably linked with health, and evidence has shown that it improves the quality of life of adults and children.
- 3.2 Since the last Housing Strategy was written in 2009 there have been significant changes to the environment in which housing and related support services are delivered.
- 3.3 The Localism Act 2011 has provided new freedoms for councils in terms of how they manage and develop housing. It has given greater flexibility to use certain revenue streams, such as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Right To Buy receipts for housing development.
- 3.4 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has brought about the biggest overhaul of the benefits system since the 1940s, impacting on local people on low incomes as well as

housing providers. In addition England's care and support system changed in April 2015. The Care Act outlines the importance of housing in the prevention of the need for care and support, and for promoting better integration between housing and health related services.

- 3.5 The Government has also proposed an extension of 'Right to Buy' to cover Housing Association properties in addition to Council properties which could potentially further reduce the number of affordable housing in the district.
- 3.6 All of these factors impact on the demand and supply of housing and housing services and why it is essential that we have an up to date strategy to provide the framework for delivering more affordable homes and better housing services across the district.
- 3.7 In developing the strategy the outcome of other consultation exercises and housing needs research has been considered. A consultation with service providers, members of the public, councillors and other council departments took place during Spring/Summer 2015, following which a final draft was produced.
- 3.8 This strategy sets out how we plan to deliver the identified housing priorities over the next five years and has been developed to support and align with the Corporate Plan and other key strategies and policies.
- 3.9 The next stage in finalising this strategy is to ask Members to approve the Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The Housing Strategy is an over-arching document that reviews housing-related issues in a local authority's area and sets out its housing objectives. It is a key strategy which supports and aligns with the Corporate Plan theme:
 - People, and
 - Place

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The Housing Strategy supports the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:
 - Developing adequate, appropriate, and affordable housing for all, in well-served communities
 - High quality development that minimises the impact on the environment, and
 - Increasing the number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living