

Policy Scrutiny Committee

11th June 2013

Development of Draft Housing Strategy

For Decision

Member Champion(s):

Cllr T Farmer, Housing
Choose an item.

Director: K Hindson, Director of Communities

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To get member endorsement to the approach for drafting the Housing Strategy.

2. Officer Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the identified key issues and the proposed approaches set out in the attached illustrative draft delivery plans.
- 2.2 To delegate responsibility for the development of the detailed draft strategy to the Sounding Board
- 2.3 To agree to the key issues and approaches going to public consultation and the final draft of the Housing Strategy to come back to Policy Scrutiny Committee for approval.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To enable the officers to progress the development of the draft housing strategy and to take the key issues and approaches to wider consultation with key partners and to public consultation.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 The process of developing the joint Housing Strategy has been reported to Policy Scrutiny Committee on several occasions since it commenced in October 2012.
- 4.2 The last report in March 2013 outlined the consultation that had taken place through the Theme Group meetings and members agreed the key outcomes that the Housing Strategy would be geared to deliver.

5. Report

- 5.1 This report sets out the framework, priorities, key issues and illustrative delivery plan. Members are asked to endorse this approach to enable further consultation to take place with partners and the public.
- 5.2 These details contained in this report have also been presented for comment to the Sounding Board, which is a small group made up of nominated members of both councils and key partner practitioners.
- 5.3 The views expressed by the Sounding Board are contained in Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The Housing Strategy is one of the corporate documents of both councils aimed at delivering the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. The schedule set out in Appendix 2 outlines how this will be achieved.
- 5.5 The key overarching priorities for the Strategy will be as follows:
- To Provide the maximum opportunity to access affordable homes
 - To Prevent homelessness
 - To Work closer with the private rented sector in maintaining standards and extending housing opportunities
 - To Improve energy efficiency and address fuel poverty
 - To Provide housing and support for younger and older people and other vulnerable groups
 - To Provide effective and efficient housing services appropriate to users' needs
- 5.6 The key issues to be addressed through the strategic delivery are:
- Supply v demand issues:
 - Concern over reducing new build – particularly 2015 onwards
 - Lower numbers of relets
 - Uncertain future of homelessness demand
 - Reductions in funding for services to supported housing
 - Rationalisation of floating support
 - Impact of reducing financial settlements
 - Future of Homeless Prevention Grant
 - Reducing Supporting People funding
 - Benefits reforms
 - Future of Social Housing Grant post 2015
 - Loss of Private Sector Renewal Grant
 - Partnership issues with:
 - Health – both DCC & NHS
 - DCC – children's and adult services

Supporting People Partnership – Ensuring local perspectives are reflected in strategies and funding
Budget pooling and alignment – potential for redesigning service delivery

5.7 Major areas of *work in progress* will focus on:

- Developing further links with the private rented sector (PRS) – particularly WPBC
- Refining and focusing sustainable communities model
- Delivering new affordable homes – evaluation of different approaches
- Preparing for the impact of benefits reform
- Improving standards and energy efficiency in PRS

5.8 The outcomes aimed to be delivered over the life of the Strategy are detailed in Appendix 3.

5.9 Illustrative Delivery Plans are included in Appendix 4. These give an indication of how we plan to tackle each of the projected outcomes. These plans will be further developed in consultation with partners.

5.10 Examples of initiatives in each of the key outcome areas are:

- Reducing homelessness
 - Review Use of temporary accommodation
 - End the use of B&B for 16/17 year olds
 - Develop extended links with PRS
 - Introduce a *Tenant Ready Scheme*
 - Maintain effective prevention measures through deposits, rent-in-advance, etc
 - Achieve the Gold Standard for the Homeless Service
- Extended Housing Choice
 - Examine viability of a Social Lettings Agency
 - Develop extended services for PRS
 - Support Community Land Trusts
 - Reflect Local Plan targets
 - Examine ways of extending Housing Enabling approaches
 - Deliver the Empty Property Strategy
- Improved Inclusion
 - Support the Neighbourhood development work of RPs
 - Commission accessible debt advice in both WDDC/WPBC
 - Continue Rough Sleeper Contract
 - Provide Homelessness Prevention Grant to First Dorset Credit Union
 - Review the impact of Benefit Reforms
- Supporting Diversity
 - Review the structure of Home Improvement Agencies
 - Create and enhance strong partnership links with the voluntary sector

- Endorse the principles of Lifetime Neighbourhoods
- Innovation and Sustainability
 - Review our `offer' for the PRS
 - Promote the take up of loans to improve and let dwellings
 - Invest in developing solutions rather than solely addressing symptoms
 - Support and partner with key providers

5.11 The proposal for the next stage in the development process is to invite partner input into the delivery plan and input to the development of the narrative. It is an intention to request that our key partners physically sign up to endorse the strategy and commit to play their part in its delivery.

5.12 The key principles as outlined in this report will then be put out to public consultation. This will be progressed through a series of outreach events in specific localities.

5.13 In order to enable the text of the Housing Strategy to be developed in an efficient manner, it is recommended that the production process for the draft strategy is routed through the Sounding Board. This will include nominated elected members from Policy Development Committee, Policy Scrutiny Committee (WDDC) and key partners.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 None

Other Considerations:

7. Legal/Statutory Power

7.1 The production of a Housing Strategy is a requirement under s87 Local Government Act 2003

8. Human Resources (including Health & Safety)

8.1 None

9. Risk Management

9.1 None

10. Consultation

10.1 The draft housing strategy will be the subject of a detailed public consultation later in the development process. The operation of the theme groups has facilitated a wide range of consultation with over 130 people attending the meetings representing over 30 different organisations.

11. Equalities

11.1 The proposed Housing Strategy outcomes fully accommodate and promote the Council's statutory and strategic obligations in the area.

12. Crime and Disorder

12.1 The proposed Housing Strategy outcomes fully accommodate and promote the Council's statutory and strategic obligations in the area.

13. Environmental Considerations

13.1 The proposed Housing Strategy outcomes fully accommodate and promote the Council's statutory and strategic obligations in the area.

14. Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1 Sounding Board Notes

16.2 Appendix 2 Corporate Plan Delivery

16.3 Appendix 3 Housing Outcomes

16.4 Appendix 4 Illustrative Delivery Plans

15. Background Documents

15.1 None

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