

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

**8**

**Title: Private Sector Housing Strategy**

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Julie Redfern**

**Key decision: Yes**

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### **Summary**

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval of the council's Private Sector Housing Strategy.
2. The strategy outlines the council's plans to meet peoples housing needs by maintaining and improving the existing private housing stock in the district and has been influenced by feedback from consultation carried out with the partners, interested stakeholders and members.

### **Recommendations**

3. Cabinet is requested to approve the Private Sector Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix A to this report, to be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017.

### **Financial Implications**

4. None currently. The Private Sector Housing Strategy and associated Action Plan will need to take account of existing resources currently made available by the Council and Essex County Council.

### **Background Papers**

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the council's website:
  - UDC's Housing Strategy 2016
  - Uttlesford District Council Housing Assistance Repairs Policy
  - BRE Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database for Uttlesford District Council – 2015
  - BRE A Quantitative Health Impact Assessment: The cost of private sector housing and prospective housing interventions in Uttlesford District Council - 2015
  - UDC's Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021

**Published Papers:**

- The District Council Contribution To Public Health: A Time Of Challenge And Opportunity – The Kings Fund – 2015

**Impact**

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders
Community Safety	There will be a benefit to Community Safety through housing improvements
Equalities	Equality Impact Assessment has been made
Health and Safety	No impact on employee health and safety
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Housing Act 1985 (s.8) requires local housing authorities to consider housing conditions in their area and the needs of their area with respect to the provision of housing accommodation.
Sustainability	The proposal will aim to target those in greatest need, maintain the private sector housing stock & improve energy efficiency.
Ward-specific impacts	No specific impact
Workforce/Workplace	Housing Health and Communities – within existing resources

**Situation**

6. The Private Sector Housing Strategy (PSHS) has been prepared in response to recent housing stock profiling and a need for a strategy that sought to complement the wider strategic housing functions of the Council.
7. The strategy has been influenced by feedback from consultation carried out with the partners, interested stakeholders and members.
8. The PSHS takes into consideration key findings on the condition of the district's private sector housing stock, key objectives of the Council's Housing Strategy adopted by the Council in 2016 and links with the Council's Corporate Plan and Health and Wellbeing agenda.

9. The Strategy sets out a number of key priorities that seek to maintain and improve the condition of private homes across the owner - occupier and the private rented sector. The key priorities are listed under the following headings:
  1. **Raise standards in the private sector by encouragement and support to owner occupiers to maintain safe homes, free from category 1 hazards**
  2. **Encourage, support and regulate private landlords and agents to provide safe and well managed properties, free from category 1 hazards**
  3. **Help older and vulnerable people remain in their own homes**
  4. **Maximise use of the existing private sector housing stock**
  5. **Enable more sustainable homes by increasing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty**
10. The first key priority looks at ways to encourage those owner- occupiers who may be on low income or limited means to invest in their homes, and remove serious hazards. Giving priority to the most vulnerable people in society, we will engage with these members of our community and support them through a range of grants & offers to improve their living conditions.
11. Key priority two looks at strengthening our relationships with private sector landlords, to encourage high standards of management and to deal with the small minority of poor landlords within the district.
12. With more people living longer and linked together with key priority one, the third key priority is designed to improve housing conditions to support independence. The current model to deliver DFGs will be updated to reduce timescales. It is also proposed to increase the scope of the service with approval from Essex County Council.
13. Key priority four requires the Council to take action wherever possible to bring back into use empty dwellings in order to make best use of the existing private sector stock.
14. Finally, key priority five aims to work with our partners to tackle cold homes and fuel poverty, a significant housing problem within the District.
15. Evidence supporting the priority aims of the strategy are based on UDCs Building Research Establishment (BRE) stock modelling report and associated Health Impact Assessment.
16. Accompanying the PSHS is a series of actions set against a timeframe that will lead to a number of outcomes. A key component for delivery will be the council's

engagement with partner agencies on initiatives that will help deliver on the council's health and wellbeing agenda.

17. Commentary on the progress of the action plan given within the strategy will be presented to the council's Housing Board on an annual basis.

### **Risk Analysis**

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
There are no risks associated with this report			

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.