

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 30 June 2015

4

Title: Housing Strategy 2016-21

**Author: Suzanna Wood, Planning and Housing
Policy Manager, Ext 543**

Item for information

Summary

1. The new Housing Strategy 2016-21 will set out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the district for the next five years. It will describe the key issues affecting the local housing market and what the Council intends to do to help overcome these challenges and create the right conditions to support growth and improve housing outcomes for local people.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes the report.

Financial Implications

3. At this time there are no cost implications for the council, however there may be resource implications in implementing any agreed individual actions.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

5. None

Communication/Consultation	A consultation event was held in October 2014 to begin to set priorities. A draft was prepared and submitted to Housing Board before the election but it was decided that it should be put on hold until a new Council was elected. A further draft will be prepared in time for the Housing Board in September and then sent out for consultation with partners and the wider community.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment has been completed on the draft
Health and Safety	N/A

Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	The Council's energy officer has been involved in the drafting of the document
Ward-specific impacts	Whole District
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. The last Housing Strategy was written and published in 2012 and set priorities for a three year period. During that time, many of the key priorities have been achieved. These include the following:
- Delivered 284 affordable homes
 - Landlords forum held once a year
 - Successful Housing Strategy conference held once a year
 - Delivering 1 and 2 bed bungalows on S106 sites
 - Reviewed opportunities for delivery of further regeneration and new build including exploration of alternative delivery models
 - Development of a new Allocations Policy
 - Brought 185 empty properties back into use since October 2013
 - Assisting in the development of the Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme
 - Administered and provided 62 grants costing £455,428 to enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes
7. It was agreed that a new Housing Strategy needed to be written and published in 2015 and a conference was held in October 2014 to scope future priorities for the next 5 years. This was well attended by Councillors, tenant forum members, key partners and organisations.
8. A first draft of the Strategy was provided to Housing Board in January however it was agreed that this should be put on hold until after the elections. This would give new Councillors a chance to influence the future direction of housing. There is now an opportunity for Councillors to discuss the new Strategy and its objectives before a revised draft is prepared for the next Housing Board in September. It will then be put out for public consultation before the final document is put before members for approval. It is anticipated that the new housing strategy will be in place in January 2016.
9. It is proposed that the new housing strategy for 2016-2021 will set out the main changes in the housing market, identify the key challenges in delivering new homes and housing services locally, and inform on what action will be required to help meet both current and future housing needs and aspirations.

The three key strategic aims suggested for the new Housing Strategy are:

- a. Increasing housing supply across all tenures

- b. Helping people to live independently
- c. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes

10. Accompanying the Housing Strategy will be a Housing Strategy Action Plan which will set out detailed objectives and outcomes for each of the themes above. The Action Plan will be kept under review and updated regularly in order to reflect changes in policy, practice or economic conditions. An evidence base will also be published and this will provide the background data to reinforce our priorities.

11. The new Housing Strategy will provide a coherent plan for housing policy, a sound evidence base and seek to inform the new Local Plan for the District. The Strategy is aligned with the Housing Business Plan and will stand alongside the Homelessness Strategy.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Document is delayed/not approved	1 – little risk, partners and members will be involved in scoping the document and tight timescales have been set	3 – a future plan is needed and could cause delays to key projects	Ensure that sufficient time is given to consult with partners and members

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.