

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 21st September 2015

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Title: Housing Strategy 2016-21

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Summary

1. The Housing Strategy 2016-21 sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the District for the next five years. It describes 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 and considers the draft Housing Strategy 2016-21 before a six week consultation period.

Financial Implications

3. It is envisaged that the strategy's Action Plan will be delivered from within existing resources.

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 has now been prepared for Housing Board and will then be sent out for consultation with partners and the wider community.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment has been

	completed on the draft strategy The strategy will again be EIA before it is finalised following the period of public consultation
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	Housing, Planning, Environmental Health

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 totalling £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. A discussion was had about the Strategy at the Housing Board meeting in June and gave new Councillors a chance to influence the future direction of housing.

9. The new housing strategy for 2016-2021 sets out the main changes in the housing market, identifies the key challenges in delivering new homes and housing services locally, and informs on what action will be required to help meet both current and future housing needs and aspirations.

The four key strategic aims suggested for the new Housing Strategy 2016-21 are:

- a. Increasing housing supply across all tenures
 - b. Helping people to live independently
 - c. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
 - d. Creating sustainable communities
10. 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.
 11. Accompanying the Housing Strategy is a Housing Strategy Action Plan which sets out detailed objectives and outcomes for each of the themes above.
 12. Due to the number of policy changes currently being proposed by Government, the Housing Strategy and Action Plan will be kept under review and updated regularly in order to reflect changes in policy, practice or economic conditions.

Risk Analysis

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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	Draft document has already been prepared to go out for public consultation. It will be put before Cabinet for approval in December prior to the expiry of the current document

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.