

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 27th January 2015

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Title: Draft Housing Strategy 2015-18

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Item for information

Summary

1. The draft Housing Strategy 2015-18 sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the district for the next three 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 initial draft Housing Strategy 2015-18 and provides comments by 10 March to the Planning and Housing Policy Manager.

Financial Implications

3. Financial implications of the Housing Strategy have been included in the Housing Business Plan

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

5. None

Communication/Consultation	A consultation event was held in October to set priorities. The strategy will be published on the website after this meeting and sent to partners. Consultation will run for 4 weeks and all comments will be considered.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment completed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal	None

Implications	
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 to scope future priorities for the next 3 years. This was well attended by Councillors, tenant forum members, key partners and organisations.
8. The new housing strategy for 2015-2018 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 for the new Housing Strategy 2015-20 will be:

- a. Increasing housing supply across all tenures
 - b. Helping people to live independently
 - c. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
9. 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.

10. The consultation on the housing strategy will run from 27 January 2015. The draft document will be published for a 6 week consultation period on the Council's website, emailed to key partners, members of the Housing Board and Tenant Forum and to those who attended the Conference. Comments will then be analysed and additions and changes made where appropriate. The document will then be brought back to the housing Board for final approval.

11. The new Housing Strategy provides a robust document which will provide a coherent plan for housing policy within the District. It will provide a sound evidence base and 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

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Document is not approved	1 – little risk, partners and members will be involved in scoping the document	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.