

Report of: Environment and Housing
Report to: Housing Advisory Board
Date: April 2014
Subject: Towards a new Housing Strategy

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report sets out the proposed process for producing the Local Authority's revised Housing Strategy including the review, research, production and implementation of the Strategy.

Recommendations

- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees the process, timescales and priorities as outlined in this report.
- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees to act as a Project Board to oversee the production and future monitoring of the Housing Strategy

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the review, production and implementation of the Local Authority's revised Housing Strategy.
- 1.2 This report sets out the timeframe, resources, challenges and actions required to revise and develop a new strategy to enable the authority to fulfill its ambition of being the best city and council in the UK.

2 Background information

- 2.1 All Local Authorities are charged with periodically reviewing the housing needs of their area and formulating and publishing a housing strategy to set out their plans to meet housing need, demand and investment in housing and related services. The Housing Strategy is one of Leeds' key strategic plans, enabling the Council and its partners to form a clear understanding of the city's significant housing challenges and identify innovative solutions to meet the needs and aspirations of its communities.
- 2.2 This report will set out how the Housing Policy Team will deal with revising and producing a new Housing Strategy, covering the period from 2014-19, with an annual review, following expiry of the existing strategy in 2012. A number of sub-strategies are contained within the Housing Strategy, including the Tenure Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy, the Adaptations Strategy, and the Children and Young People's and Vulnerable Adults Housing Plans.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The production of the Strategy will include research, development and implementation stages. Initially it will be necessary to start with relevant research and consultation to identify the key themes and challenges facing the city. This will include acquiring a robust understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of local communities, understanding demographic projections and potential implications in terms of health and wellbeing, social care, community safety and other needs, along with having an awareness of the nature and condition of all housing stock and how that correlates with identified need, aspirations and wider links.
- 3.2 Once research is completed, it will be necessary to identify innovative solutions to address gaps and shortfalls and develop appropriate targets and actions. Finally, the strategy will need to be produced, implemented and launched.
- 3.3 Four priorities have been proposed for the Strategy and these are :

Priority 1: Housing Growth

Ensure Leeds has sufficient housing of appropriate quality, type & flexibility to meet the need, aspirations and changing demands of existing and potential residents, whilst minimising environmental impact

Priority 2: Improving Housing Conditions

Achieve and maintain standards across all sectors, with a focus on energy efficiency, fuel poverty, empty homes, and student homes

Priority 3: Enabling Independent Living

Promote independence for as long as possible to meet different needs at different stages; financial independence; safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; care leavers

Priority 4: Housing and Health

Take action to maximise health improvement and reduce inequalities across the city where poor housing contributes to poor health (linking with Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy).

Priority 5: Creating Sustainable Communities

Housing supply and services will contribute to creating sustainable communities so that every area in the city is a place where people want to live now and in the future. Housing supply and services reflect the diversity of the people and places in Leeds and contributes to environmental sustainability, economic growth and community safety. This priority will cover a range of actions including tackling anti-social behaviour, housing supply and allocation as well as environmental services.

3.4 A Working Group will be established to oversee development, implementation and production of the strategy, with a theme lead for each of its 5 work streams. It will be the role of the Housing Policy Team to co-ordinate and oversee the work streams. The work groups will have cross sector representation.

- **Housing Growth**, (Maggie Gjessing, Housing Regeneration)
- **Improving Housing Conditions** (John Statham, Housing Partnerships)
- **Enabling Independent Living** (Megan Godsell, Housing Support)
- **Housing and Health** (Dawn Bailey, Public Health)
- **Creating Sustainable Communities** (Megan Godsell Housing Support)

3.5 It is proposed that a Project Board oversees the production of the Strategy and that the Housing Advisory Board adopts this role. A series of regular reports and updates will be presented to the Housing Advisory Board.

3.6 The Work Plan

Detailed below is the proposed work plan. It is envisaged that that the planning stage is March 14 and implementation is programmed for October/November 2014.

Planning March /April 2014

Establish Project Board

Establish Project Team

Complete and approve Project Plan

Research April /May 2014

Review existing strategy

Assess current position re: housing market & conditions/land availability/current & projected population growth/equality & diversity

Complete Equality Impact Screening and Assessments

Identify overall timescales and milestones

Consultation (May/June 2014)

Prepare Engagement Communication and Stakeholder Plan

Identify appropriate Stakeholders

Plan and facilitate workshops to identify key priorities and innovative solutions for the Strategy

Consult with wider partners through Talking Point & Challenge Event

Share feedback with service

Development Process (July/August 2014)

Identify theme priorities, wider issues and determine scope

Identify appropriate case studies

Identify key actions and targets

Attend regular progress meetings

Production (August /September 2014)

Collate themes

Draft introduction and full document

Share draft with Housing Advisory Board

Produce and agree a delivery plan to set out actions & responsibilities

Implementation (October 2014)

Launch strategy and share with Housing Advisory Board/partners/stakeholders

Publish on internet/intranet

Post Implementation Monitoring & Review (November 2014)

Monitor delivery through a Partnership Board to encourage wider buy in, ownership and collaborative working (Housing Advisory Board)

Agree monitoring framework and frequency

Feedback on priorities/progress to Stakeholders and consult on changing priorities

Modify/refresh Strategy at mid-point in order to meet changing priorities

3.7 Attached at Appendix A is the outline of the production of the Housing Strategy 2014

4.0 External Dependencies

4.1 Localism Act

4.2 The Localism Act came into effect in October 2011 and has brought specific changes to enable decisions about social housing to be taken by local authorities. This includes local authority control of rental income; the introduction of flexible tenancies for more effective stock management; scope within the allocations policy

to ensure only those in greatest need qualify for social housing waiting lists; the option to discharge homelessness duty through the private rented sector; changes to social housing regulation and the launch of a national home swap scheme.

4.3 Welfare Reform

4.4 Changes to welfare benefits, particularly Housing Benefit, Council Tax and the roll out of Universal Credit, will impact on a number of households and council funding: pro-active measures to minimise the impact on housing and hardship will be necessary.

4.5 Changing Pressures

4.6 Population Growth: Understanding population change is crucial for effective planning of housing and related services. In particular, increasing pressures and demands from a growing elderly and youth population will depend upon focused resources and infrastructure to provide for changing needs.

4.7 Environmental changes: Changes in the housing market, local economy and budgetary pressures will directly impact on housing and affordability across all tenures, not only affecting housing availability and conditions, but having wider social costs affecting local communities

4.8 Corporate Considerations

5.0 Consultation and Engagement

5.1 An Engagement Communication and Stakeholder Plan is being undertaken as part of the planning process and will be completed by April 2014

6.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the research work and will be completed by May 2014

7.0 Council Policies and City Priorities

7.1 The Housing Strategy will link with and deliver the aims and objectives of the Authority's *Vision For Leeds, Business Plan* and *City Priority Plans*, achieving not only housing related priorities but, as poor housing so often contributes to poor health, poor educational attainment and limited employment prospects, also impacting significantly on the wider themes of improving health and wellbeing and enabling children to live in safe, supportive families.

8.0 Resources and value for money

8.1 Work is underway to identify the budget and resources required for the production of the Housing Strategy.

9.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

9.1 The report is open to call in

9.2 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 All Local Authorities are charged with reviewing the housing needs of their area and formulating and publishing a housing strategy. There is a risk that if a Housing Strategy is not produced then the housing challenges facing the city may not be recognised and addressed in a holistic manner.

11.0 Conclusions

11.1 The production of the Housing Strategy will cover the stages of research, development and implementation. It will begin with the relevant research and consultation required to identify the key themes and challenges facing the city. This will include acquiring a robust understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of local communities, understanding demographic projections and potential implications in terms of health and wellbeing, social care, community safety and other needs, along with having an awareness of the nature and condition of all housing stock and how that correlates with identified need, aspirations and wider links.

11.2 Following the research stage, it will be necessary to identify innovative solutions to address gaps and shortfalls and develop appropriate targets and actions. Finally, the strategy will need to be produced, implemented and launched. It is then vital that implementation continues to be relevant, therefore continual monitoring and review will need to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

12.0 Recommendations

- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees the process, timescales and priorities as outlined in this report.
- That the Housing Advisory Board agrees to act as a Project Board to oversee the production and future monitoring of the Housing Strategy.