

Report of: Environment and Housing

Report to: Housing Advisory Board

Date: 3 February 2015

Subject: Draft Leeds 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

1.0 Summary of main issues

- 1.1 The draft Housing Strategy has been framed around five themes: Affordable Housing Growth, Improving Housing Quality, Promoting Independent Living, Improving Health through Housing and Creating Sustainable Communities. Each theme has a number of priority areas with the Strategy content for each priority being limited to one page. Key challenges, actions, targets and case studies are set out in each priority page.
- 1.2 The intention is that the actions/targets included in the draft Strategy are extracted to form a Strategy Action Plan with named officers asked to report progress to the Housing Advisory Board and Housing Forum on a periodical basis.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 For Housing Advisory Board members to comment on the draft Leeds Housing Strategy and, if appropriate, to approve the Strategy subject to any changes required.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 For Housing Advisory Board members to comment on the draft Leeds Housing Strategy and, if appropriate, to approve the Strategy subject to any changes required.

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 The draft Leeds Housing Strategy is framed around five key themes: Affordable Housing Growth, Improving Housing Quality, Promoting Independent Living, Improving Health through Housing and Creating Sustainable Communities.
- 2.3 Each theme contains a number of priorities reflecting the key housing related priority areas for the city. The draft Strategy is deliberately short in length and the content relating to each priority is limited to one page. There is a commonality in style with each priority page summarising the key challenges relating to each priority area, actions and targets and, where applicable, a case study setting out an example of good practice.
- 2.4 Each theme has a lead Council officer who has been responsible for setting the priorities for the theme, writing the text and carrying out the consultation with relevant stakeholders:
- Affordable Housing Growth : Maggie Gjessing (City Development)
 - Housing Quality: John Statham (Strategic Housing)
 - Independent Living: Rob McCartney (Strategic Housing)
 - Health and Housing: Tim Taylor (Public Health)
 - Sustainable Communities: Rob McCartney (Strategic Housing)
- 2.5 The term of the draft Housing Strategy is three years: April 2015 to March 2018. The actions and targets included within the Strategy will be extracted into an overall action plan with theme lead officers expected to report progress against these on as required periodical basis to the Housing Advisory Board and Housing Forum.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 **Affordable Housing Growth:** a considered decision was taken that the draft Housing Strategy should focus on affordable housing growth rather than overall housing growth. The reasoning being that the overall housing growth ambition is set out in the Leeds Core Strategy and that the Housing Strategy should be aligned to it by focusing on the affordable element of housing growth including social rented housing and shared ownership. The Affordable Housing Growth theme has therefore been developed within the context of the Core Strategy ambition to deliver 70,000 new homes by 2028, with an initial annual target of 3,600 of which 1,100 to be affordable.
- 3.2 The draft Housing Strategy sets out a target to deliver just over 5,000 affordable housing units by 2018. A key element of the affordable housing ambition is the delivery of the largest programme of new council housing development that has occurred in the city for a number of decades. The programme includes the building of new homes on cleared brown field land and, where appropriate, the purchase of existing empty properties that are blighting the localities in which they are situated. All new council housing will be developed to the agreed 'Leeds Standard' of design, space standards and environmental sustainability.
- 3.3 The delivery of affordable housing through Registered Providers (RPs) is another key strand of the Affordable Housing Growth theme. It is envisaged that 600 new affordable homes can be delivered in the next (2015-2020) HCA funding programme. The Council is supporting the work of RPs through the release of available Council owned land and the use of 'Right to Buy' receipts as grant funding.
- 3.4 Assisting people to access home-ownership is also a key part of the Affordable Housing Growth theme. The theme sets out the importance of national schemes, such as 'Help to Buy', and local initiatives, such as the Leeds Local Authority Mortgage Scheme – a partnership between the Council and Leeds Building Society, in relation to helping people get on the home-ownership ladder.
- 3.5 The Affordable Housing Growth themes forecasts up to 2018 are as follows:
- Registered Providers: 640 units
 - Council Housing: 400 units
 - Generated through 'Right to Buy' receipts: 300 units
 - Bringing Empty Homes back into use: 1300 units
 - Generated through Section 106 agreements: 874 units
 - 'Help To Buy': 1100 units
 - PFI: 388 units
 - Total: 5002 units
- 3.6 **Housing Quality:** The Housing Quality theme is rooted in the expectation that approximately 66% of existing housing stock will still be in use in 2050. It is

therefore vital that this housing stock meets the long-term housing needs of the people of Leeds. The draft Strategy sets out the intention to invest £67m on council housing improvements by 2018. The scale of poor housing in the private sector, estimated in 2007 that 44% (18,000 properties) of private rented houses were non-decent, is such that tackling this position is a key strategic priority. A targeted approach, Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA), is an important method of working with property owners to improve standards and to bring long-term empty homes back into use. The rolling out of LNA across the city will help to build on the success that has been achieved in reducing the number of long-term empty properties in the city.

3.7 Tackling fuel poverty, within the context of the updated definition relating to use and residual income after cost incurred, is another key priority. The Council, and housing partners, has limited capacity to control energy prices and household income. Nevertheless, much can be done in relation to eliminating housing hazards such as excess cold, encouraging people to take up energy advice and improvements through agencies such as Care and Repair and the development of 'district heating' systems such as that linked to the Veolia Incinerator.

3.8 The Housing Quality theme targets are as follows:

- Invest £67m on council housing improvements
- Double the number of landlords in the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Establish 4 local private landlord forums
- Develop a private rented tenant involvement strategy for the city
- All housing in the city to meet a minimum SAP rating of 65 by 2016
- Return 3200 empty homes back into use per year
- Achieve a net reduction of 400 long term empty homes per year
- Bring 100 empty homes into use through the Council Housing Growth programme
- Roll out the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach to a new area each quarter
- Carry out a rolling programme of 500 HMO licensing inspections per year

3.9 **Enabling Independent Living:** the theme is concerned with helping vulnerable people to maintain or achieve an independent living situation; generally as an alternative to some form of residential or institutional living arrangement. The theme is therefore concerned with maximising preventative options on the basis that these will invariably represent an 'invest to save' opportunity in comparison to the residential/institutional options.

3.10 Continuing to reduce the level of homelessness in the city is a key priority; with a particular focus on helping the most entrenched rough sleepers to come off the streets. Making the best use of available for housing related support is another key priority with a particular focus on how services can complement housing advice, housing management and social services. Better meeting the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers, including through the provision of additional temporary and permanent provision, is also set out in the Strategy.

- 3.11 The Independent Living theme includes priorities relating to improving the housing outcomes of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The actions are framed around the principle that improved housing interventions/outcomes can have wider benefits in relation to maintaining people in an independent living situation rather than an expensive care placement. The draft Strategy sets out a commitment for housing services to foster better dialogue and partnership with social care partners to achieve the joint outcomes.
- 3.12 The Independent Living theme targets are as follows:
- No families placed in bed and breakfast temporary accommodation
 - Minimum 3500 homeless preventions achieved per year
 - All homeless assessment decisions made within 20 working days
 - No more than 180 households placed in temporary accommodation
 - No rough sleeper needing to sleep out more than one night
 - All people receiving a housing related support service have an up to date support plan including outcome targets
 - Work towards the 2028 target of delivering an additional 62 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers (28 private/25 public/9 temporary stopping)
 - No young placed in bed and breakfast or 'adult' hostel accommodation
 - Minimum 400 young people helped to return home through parental mediation
 - All homeless and 'vulnerably housed' young people are offered a housing support service
 - All housing adaptations for children are fully funded
 - Minimum 400 households experiencing domestic violence/abuse helped to remain 'safely' at home through a Sanctuary installation
 - All major adaptations cases completed within target timescale
 - No housing related delayed hospital discharges
- 3.13 **Improving Health through Housing:** the theme is predicated on the principle that improved housing and health outcomes can be achieved through improved dialogue and partnership working between housing and health services. Improving the pathways of dialogue and service delivery can help prevent people hospital admission or facilitate a smooth transition from hospital into an independent living situation. Minimising housing-related hospital discharges, through proactive joint work on specific cases, is a key theme priority. There is also recognition that some housing-related challenges, such as entrenched rough sleeping, may principally require a health or social care intervention.
- 3.14 Tackling the incidence and effects of domestic violence and abuse is a priority within the Health and Housing theme. The scale of domestic violence and abuse, both in terms of incidents reported to the police and the number of domestic homicides, is set out in the Strategy. The need to improve agency dialogue and partnership working are recurring themes that emerge from the Domestic Homicide Reviews. The city's response centres around the imminent launch of the Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Breakthrough Project with housing services playing a key role in making swift decisions around finding and sustaining 'safe' housing options.

3.15 Targets for the Improving Health through Housing theme are as follows:

- Launch the Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Breakthrough project in early 2015
- Ensure housing information is included in the new Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse website
- Assist a minimum of 400 Sanctuary installations to help people experiencing domestic violence and abuse to 'safely' remain living in their homes
- Carry out Sanctuary installations within 72 hours of a referral being received
- Ensure housing need assessments are carried out on the same day that a referral is received to the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership
- Establish the new Drug and Alcohol Support Service by June 2015
- Develop agreed joint working health/housing pathways for people leaving hospital and residential care
- Review health and social care pathways for long term rough sleepers
- All major housing adaptations to be completed within target timescales
- Minimise the number of housing related delayed hospital discharges
- Increase the number of older people assisted to live independently

3.16 **Creating Sustainable Communities:** the theme is built on the principle that sustainable communities are those where people will choose to live, benefit from diversity, offer excellent services, contribute positively to the environment and help people to thrive in what they do. The theme concentrates on the housing contribution to creating sustainable communities. The theme is aligned to the Core Strategy in relation to achieving sustainable affordable housing growth including the use of brownfield land, affordable housing targets and bringing empty homes back into use. Housing related targets are aligned to wider service and infrastructure priorities such as the building of 46 new schools, improved transport services and facilities (such as the trolleybus scheme) and waste management such as the proposals for the Aire Valley.

3.17 The theme also contains the commitment of the Council Housing Management service to ensure that it makes the right lettings decisions and offers the right level of support to sustain tenancies. Tackling the effects of Welfare Reform is a key challenge for the Council in terms of making sure it engages with affected tenants, offers them proactive advice on maximising their income, improving budget planning and accessing employment. Improving the tenant experience of living in multi-storey flats is another key action within the sustainable communities theme. The city's continued commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour, set within the context of recent legislative changes, is also included in the sustainable communities theme with the commitment rooted in the strong partnership between the Council, police and local residents.

3.18 The Creating Sustainable Communities targets are as follows:

- LASBAT respond to 'hate' incidents within 1 working day
- LASBAT respond to all other ASB reports within 2 working days
- LASBAT meet all victims within 10 working days

- LAASBAT carry out vulnerability assessments on both victims and perpetrators
- 60% of new housing on brownfield land
- Up to £10m generated per year from Community Infrastructure Levy
- Up to 35% of new housing delivered to be affordable
- All council housing is well maintained and fit to live in
- Reduce re-let times for council housing to no more than 30 days
- Maximise council housing rent collection
- Ensure all council housing tenants receive an annual tenancy visit

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out with a range of stakeholders including representatives from the Housing Advisory Board. A half-day session was carried out with representatives from Leeds Beckett University and two sessions have been held with representatives from the Equality Hubs.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been appended to this report.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 The Housing Strategy will make a significant contribution to Leeds being a 'Child Friendly' city:

- The continued development of partnership work between Housing Leeds and Children's Service set out in the Children and Young Person's Housing Plan.
- The continued development of the weekly Housing Operations Group, comprising representatives from Children's Services, Housing Management, Housing Options, Strategy and Commissioning and third sector services (including Leeds Federated HA, Connect Housing, Leeds Housing Concern, GIPSIL and Re'new), that discusses and finds housing solutions for care leavers and other young people.
- Strategy and Commissioning and Children's Services jointly commissioning the Flagship Service, consortium of Leeds Housing Concern, GIPSIL and Foundation Housing, delivering trainer flats and floating support for care leavers and young people.

- The Lettings Policy includes provision to make priority awards for re-housing on the basis of child welfare considerations.
- Commitment to the target that no families with children will be placed in bed and breakfast temporary accommodation, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and then for no longer than three nights. The legal position is no longer than 6 weeks.
- Commitment to the target that no 16 and 17 year old will be placed in bed and breakfast temporary accommodation or 'adult' hostel accommodation, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and then for no longer than three nights for bed and breakfast and no longer than one week for hostel accommodation.
- Housing adaptation costs for children to be fully funded by Housing Leeds with an emphasis on innovative design that promotes the capacity of parents/guardians to care for their children and to prevent care placements separating children from their parents/guardians.
- Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds to carry out a joint study on better meeting the housing needs of children with autism.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The draft Strategy has been developed using existing staffing resources within Strategic Housing Services. The cost implications of different actions are, where applicable, set out in the draft Strategy.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The report is open to call in

4.5.2 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information

10.0 Risk Management

4.5.3 All Local Authorities are charged with reviewing the housing needs of their area and formulating and publishing a Housing Strategy.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The draft Housing Strategy is framed around five key themes and has been developed by named Council officers and in consultation with key stakeholders including Housing Advisory Board members.

5.2 If the draft Strategy is approved then it is proposed that the actions/targets included in each theme will form the Strategy Action Plan and the named officers will be responsible for reporting progress to the Housing Advisory Board/Housing Forum on a periodical basis.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 For Housing Advisory Board members to comment on the draft Leeds Housing Strategy and, if appropriate, to approve the Strategy subject to any changes required.