

Report of: Environment and Housing

Report to: Housing Advisory Board

Date: 20 May 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 content for each priority being limited to generally one page. Key challenges, actions, performance and case studies are set out in each priority page.
- 1.2 Following feedback from the February Housing Advisory Board, the priority area design has been changed. Priority actions are now better aligned with performance measures. The current baseline position for each performance measure is now included.
- 1.3 An action plan for each strategic theme/theme priority has been drawn up setting out actions, progress to date, performance measures, performance baseline and traffic light status. It is proposed that the action plans will be updated for each HAB meeting and included in the meeting packs for information. An exceptions report, comprising details of actions that are behind schedule/not meeting performance targets, will be submitted to each HAB for discussion.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is requested that Housing Advisory Board approve the updated Leeds Housing Strategy, accompanying Action Plans and the proposed progress reporting arrangements.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 It is requested that Housing Advisory Board approve the updated Leeds Housing Strategy, accompanying Action Plans and the proposed progress reporting arrangements.

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:
 - 2.4.1 **Affordable Housing Growth (Maggie Gjessing):** the Affordable Housing Growth theme is set within the context of the Council's Core Strategy ambition to deliver 70,000 new homes by 2028. The Housing Strategy focuses on the delivery of the affordable housing element of this ambition in relation to new social (including council) housing delivery and shared ownership.
 - 2.4.2 **Housing Quality: John Statham (Environment and Housing):** the theme is rooted in the forecast that two thirds of existing housing stock will still be in use in 2050. The theme covers the Council's investment plans for council housing. The theme also seeks to tackle the challenge of poor quality housing in the private sector. A key element of this commitment is the engagement with property owners to encourage and enforce improvements.
 - 2.4.3 **Independent Living: Rob McCartney (Environment and Housing):** 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.

2.4.4 **Health and Housing: Tim Taylor (Public Health):** 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.

2.4.5 **Sustainable Communities: Rob McCartney (Environment and Housing):** 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.

2.5 The term of the draft Housing Strategy is three years: April 2015 to March 2018.

2.6 The key content for each theme was set out in the February 2015 report to the Housing Advisory Board and is appended to this report.

3 Main issues

3.1 A recommendation has been made to omit the 'Improving Health through Housing' theme of the strategy on the basis that there is an opportunity to engage with Adult Social Care, and the different health services, to identify how housing and housing services can best contribute to health and well-being priorities. The Environment and Housing Directorate/Housing Leeds will engage with the new Director of Adult Social Care to determine how this can be achieved. The actions that flow from this engagement can form the basis of a future Improving Health and Housing theme within the Housing Strategy.

3.2 The Housing Quality theme now includes a separate priority area for council housing investment to reflect the importance of this work.

3.3 Following feedback from the February 2015 Housing Advisory Board meeting, the design of the strategy has been changed; albeit that the strategy structure, comprising themes and priorities with a priority statement, actions, performance and case study for each priority area, has been maintained.

- 3.4 The lay-out of each priority area has been changed with the actions now better aligned to relevant performance targets. The baseline position for each performance target has been included on each priority area.
- 3.5 Officers have noted the feedback from the February 2015 Housing Advisory Board meeting regarding which groups of stakeholders that the Housing Strategy is targeted at. The view is that the Housing Strategy is primarily targeted at housing and other related professionals. The Council is committed to making sure that the Housing Strategy is also accessible to tenants, and other Leeds citizens, and therefore the Tenant and Community Involvement service within Housing Leeds will be asked to develop an 'Easy Read' version of the strategy.
- 3.6 Action Plans for each theme have been developed. Each theme plan mirrors the priority areas in the strategy and includes the actions, performance targets and baseline positions. The action plans include a progress section and a traffic light status.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the Action Plans will be updated for each meeting of the Housing Advisory Board. This work will be carried out by the theme lead officers. It is proposed that the updated plans will be included in the papers, as background information, for Housing Advisory Board members. The volume of information means that it would not be practical to discuss each plan update in depth at each Housing Advisory Board meeting. Some of the information included within the plans will also replicate other agenda items discussed at the Board.
- 3.8 It is proposed that an exceptions report, setting out actions that are behind schedule or performance targets that are significantly below target and actions/performance measures that are significantly ahead of schedule/above target, will be submitted to the Board for discussion.
- 3.9 A more detailed assessment of strategy progress could be scheduled on an annual basis. The theme lead officers can meet with relevant Housing Advisory Board members to give a detailed account of progress for each theme.

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. Following feedback from the February 2015 Housing Advisory Board meeting, meetings have been held with individual or groups of HAB members. If it has not been possible to meet then detail has been relayed via email. The communication with HAB members has helped shape the updated strategy and action plans.
- 4.1.2 The Housing Strategy has been developed on the basis that the principal audience will be housing and other professionals. The Council is committed to making the Housing Strategy to all potential readers and therefore the Tenant and Community Involvement service within Housing Leeds will be asked to develop an 'Easy Read' version of the strategy.

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 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 content for each priority being limited to generally one page. Key challenges, actions, performance and case studies are set out in each priority page.

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