

Report of Chief Officer Housing Management

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 13 September 2016

Subject: Draft Housing Strategy 2016-2021

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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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

A Housing Strategy was approved by Housing Advisory Board in May 2015. The strategy included 5 key themes of affordable housing growth, improving housing quality, promoting independent living, creating sustainable communities and improving health through housing.

A refresh has recently been undertaken of the Housing Strategy, to incorporate updates on priorities, to reflect changes in Government Policy and to include more recent examples of how we are supporting the delivery of priorities. A sixth priority has also been added to the plan – meeting the needs of older residents. It is a 5 year strategy which will run up to 2021.

Consultation is currently underway on the content of the strategy, which is due to close on 16 September. Following consultation, comments will be used to inform the final Housing Strategy which will be published during October.

Recommendations

Housing Advisory Board is invited to note progress in developing the draft Housing Strategy and arrangements for monitoring delivery of the strategy targets.

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report provides Housing Advisory Board with an updated draft Housing Strategy and proposed arrangements for monitoring the strategy.

2 Background information

- 2.1 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 housing challenges and identify innovative solutions to meet the needs and aspirations of communities.
- 2.2 The current Housing Strategy was approved by Housing Advisory Board in May 2015, as a 3 year strategy to March 2018. The strategy included 5 key themes of affordable housing growth, improving housing quality, promoting independent living, creating sustainable communities and improving health through housing.
- 2.3 A refresh has recently been undertaken of the Housing Strategy, to incorporate updates on each of the priorities, to reflect changes of approach, changes in Government Policy and to include more recent examples of how we are supporting the delivery of priorities.
- 2.4 A sixth theme has also been added to the refreshed strategy – meeting the needs of older residents. As there is a projected increase in the older population in Leeds, the importance of having a strategic approach to meeting their housing and support need is recognised.
- 2.5 The Housing Strategy is a 5 year strategy, for the period 2016 – 2021.

3 Main issues

Strategy Themes

- 3.1 The refreshed draft Housing Strategy, attached in Appendix 1, is made up of six key themes, as follows:

3.1.1 Affordable Housing Growth

This theme is set within the Council's Core Strategy ambition to deliver 70,000 new homes by 2028. The Housing Strategy focuses on increasing the amount of affordable housing available across all sectors - increasing affordable home ownership, affordable housing for rent, new Council Housing and reducing the number of empty private sector homes.

3.1.2 Housing Quality

This theme focuses on continued improvements to the quality and energy efficiency of social housing, and taking a targeted approach to improving the quality of housing in the private sector. This includes working closely with landlords to encourage and enforce improvements, and targeting resources on neighbourhoods with the poorest housing conditions.

3.1.3 **Promoting Independent Living**

There are 3 main priorities within this theme. Firstly, minimising homelessness through greater focus on homeless prevention, secondly, delivering more flexible and streamlined pathways for supporting vulnerable residents to live independently, and thirdly, providing adaptations to enable residents to remain independent.

3.1.4 **Creating Sustainable Communities**

This theme focuses on supporting communities to take ownership of and manage their neighbourhood by working collaboratively to challenge anti-social and criminal behaviour, and building capacity in communities to develop and own solutions.

3.1.5 **Improving Health through Housing**

This theme supports priorities identified in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21, reinforcing the important role that housing has on improving the health of residents. The theme particularly recognises the importance of improving housing conditions and financial inclusion of residents in neighbourhoods with poor health issues, and ensuring that suitable housing and support options are available to residents with health issues.

3.1.6 **Meeting Housing Needs of Older Residents**

This theme supports the Council's Breakthrough project to make Leeds the best city to grow old in. Key priorities are around increasing the supply of specialist housing provision, improving housing quality, particularly around affordable warmth and promoting independence and social inclusion.

Common Approaches

3.2 There are a number of common approaches which will underpin how the six Housing Strategy themes will be delivered, as follows:

3.2.1 ***Collaborative Working*** – The Housing Strategy cannot be delivered by the Council alone, and so a key principle of the strategy is how the Council will work with its partners to deliver the priorities, both at a strategic and operational level, ranging from multi agency boards co-ordinating the strategic approach, to more operational case conferencing to co-ordinate responses to particular cases.

3.2.2 ***Focus on Prevention*** – Leeds has achieved a number of successes through greater focus on working with residents proactively at an early stage in order to minimise crisis intervention at a later stage. This approach is central to how we intend to deliver the strategy themes of promoting independent living, creating sustainable communities, improving health through housing and meeting the needs of older residents.

3.2.3 ***Building Community Resilience*** – a key principle of the strategy is to work with community groups and third sector organisations to give them the tools to

confidently support their communities and neighbourhoods in meeting local needs and responding to local issues.

Strategy Targets and Action Planning

3.3 Targets are identified for each of the Housing Strategy themes and a Housing Strategy Action Plan will be developed which will identify what actions will be taken to deliver each of the strategy targets. A number of forums will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of the strategy targets, including the Housing Forum, Private Rented Sector Forum, Homelessness Forum and Housing Advisory Board.

3.4 A copy of the Housing Strategy and action plan will be available on the Council's website, along with regular updates of progress.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.2 The Housing Strategy has been developed collaboratively with involvement from key internal partners, including City Development, Community Safety and Public Health. The strategy supports other key Council Strategies including the Core Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and action plans linked to the delivery of the Council's Breakthrough Projects.

4.3 Consultation is underway on the strategy with views being sought by 16 September. A copy of the strategy has been shared with the following groups:

- Council service providers;
- Key statutory partners, including police and health;
- Key landlords – housing association and private rented sector;
- Voluntary agencies – providing support services;
- Voice of Involved Leeds Tenants (VITAL);
- Forums representing views of under-represented residents;

4.4 A copy of the strategy and an electronic survey have also been made available on the Housing Leeds web pages, and promoted via social media.

4.5 Once conclusion has concluded, feedback will be used to inform the finalised strategy.

5 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.1 Each of the themes of the Housing Strategy have an important role in supporting equality and diversity issues and promoting cohesion and integration of communities as outlined below:

- Affordable housing growth – ensuring a growth in the supply of affordable housing, particularly for residents who are unable to afford to buy their own home or market rents, through mixed tenure developments;

- Improving housing quality – ensuring that social and private rented sector housing is improved and made more energy efficient in order to ensure the safety and security of disadvantaged and vulnerable tenants and reduce fuel costs;
- Promoting independent living – ensuring that residents who are vulnerable due to age, disability or housing situation are supported to live independently with appropriate levels of support;
- Creating sustainable communities – ensuring that minority and disadvantaged groups are enabled to take an active role in their neighbourhood and community;
- Improving health through housing – ensuring that health inequalities across the city are reduced through more targeted support to particular communities;
- Meeting the housing needs of older residents – ensuring that older residents are supported to live independently with appropriate levels of support.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment of the draft Housing Strategy is currently underway, and outcomes will be used to inform the finalised strategy.

6 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

6.1 The Housing Strategy is intended to complement a number of strategic Council documents, including the Best Council Plan, Core Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

6.2 The strategy also supports the delivery of the Council’s eight Breakthrough projects and associated action plans, as follows:

- Tackling domestic violence and abuse;
- Housing growth and high standards in all sectors;
- Making Leeds the best place to grow old in;
- Strong communities benefiting from a strong city;
- Cutting carbon and improving air quality;
- World class events and a vibrant city centre that all can benefit from;
- More jobs, better jobs;
- Early intervention and reducing health inequalities;

7 Resources and value for money

7.1 Resources have been made available to support the delivery of each of the themes of the Housing Strategy, and targets have been set linked to the resources available.

7.2 However, there have been changes made to government resourcing levels and criteria over the last year or so which will impact on our ability to deliver fully on

some of the priorities and targets included in the Housing Strategy. These changes includes the following:

- In the Government's Autumn Statement 2015, further cuts were announced to local authority funding, reducing Leeds City Council's budget by £76m over the next 3 years.
- The 2016 Welfare Reform and Work Act also required all registered providers to reduce social housing rents by 1% for the next 4 years.
- Through the 2016 Housing and Planning Act government funding for affordable housing will be targeted at shared ownership developments and there will be no grant funding available for affordable housing for rent.

7.3 Despite the funding reductions, the Council and its partners remain committed to delivering the priorities and targets included in the Housing Strategy. It has become more important than ever to achieve value for money, and so through the strategy there is an increasing focus on more efficient ways of delivering priorities - working with partners to deliver priorities as efficiently as possible and empowering communities to take ownership of and actively manage their neighbourhoods.

8 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

8.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

9 Risk management

9.2 As resources available to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy reduce there is a risk that the Council and its partners will not be able to fully deliver on the priorities and targets included in the Housing Strategy. This risk is being managed by developing more innovative approaches to delivering its strategy priorities, which place greater emphasis on partnerships, with other statutory agencies, third sector and community agencies, and the community itself.

9.3 A Housing Strategy Action Plan will be developed for each of the six themes to monitor the delivery of each of the priorities and targets in the Housing Strategy. These action plans will be monitored by a number of forums including the Housing Forum, Private Sector Forum, Homelessness Forum and Housing Advisory Board.

10 Conclusions

10.1 The Housing Strategy has been recently refreshed to incorporate updates on priorities, to reflect changes in government policy and to include more recent examples of how we are supporting the delivery of priorities. A sixth priority has also been added to the plan – meeting the needs of older residents.

10.2 An action plan will be developed for each of the themes in the Housing Strategy, in order to monitor the delivery of Housing Strategy priorities.

10.3 Consultation is currently underway and is due to conclude on 16 September. Feedback will be used to inform the final Housing Strategy, which will be published during October.

11 Recommendations

11.1 Housing Advisory Board is invited to note progress in developing the draft Housing Strategy and arrangements for monitoring delivery of the strategy targets.

12 Background documents¹

12.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.