

Report of Chief Officer Housing Management

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 21 November 2017

Subject: Proposals to Establish a Strategic Housing Partnership and Board

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

1. In October 2017, Housing Advisory Board supported proposals to change the focus of the Board to become a Strategic Housing Board which co-ordinates a collaborative approach to the delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy.
2. In 2015, an updated Housing Strategy was developed which was supported by Housing Advisory Board. In September 2016 the Housing Strategy was refreshed, and progress in delivering the Housing Strategy priorities has been regularly reported to Housing Advisory Board.
3. It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Partnership is established, with representation from organisations and individuals, to co-ordinate a more collaborative approach to the delivery of the six themes of the Housing Strategy. A small Board would be established to provide leadership to the Partnership.
4. An engagement plan will be developed for each theme of the Housing Strategy which is tailored to the particular priorities of that theme of the strategy. This will place a focus on broadening collaboration with key partners and strengthening ongoing customer engagement in the delivery of the strategy.
5. Proposals will continue to be developed with the wider housing sector with a view to establishing the Strategic Housing Partnership and Board during early 2018.

Recommendations

Housing Advisory Board is invited to comment on proposals to develop a Strategic Housing Partnership, led by a Strategic Housing Board.

3 Purpose of the Report

- 3.1 To share proposals with Housing Advisory Board for the establishment of a Strategic Housing Partnership, led by a Strategic Housing Board, with responsibility for providing leadership to the Housing Strategy and providing greater accountability in delivering the strategy across the wider housing and related sectors.

4 Background information

- 4.1 All local authorities are required to periodically review housing needs within their area and publish a housing strategy which sets out their plans to meet housing need, demand and investment in housing and related services. A Housing Strategy was developed during early 2015, which was supported by Housing Advisory Board in May 2015, with a refreshed Housing Strategy supported in September 2016. The strategy includes 6 themes - affordable housing growth, improving housing quality, promoting independent living, creating sustainable communities, improving health through housing and meeting the needs of older residents.
- 4.2 The strategy emphasises the importance of Leeds City Council working with its key partners to support the delivery of priorities and targets, outlining how a number of forums will be used to provide leadership to and co-ordinate the delivery of the themes. It was also agreed that progress would be reported to Housing Advisory Board every six months, in June and February of each year.
- 4.3 While there have been a number of forums in place to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy themes, e.g. the Housing Forum, the Private Rented Sector Forum and Homelessness Forum, their impact at a strategic level has been limited. Where forums are held on a regular frequency there is an increased risk of them losing their focus and most have become ways of sharing information rather than collaborative working.
- 4.4 It has become evident over the last year that the governance arrangements of the current Housing Advisory Board and associated forums are not aligned as well as they could be to achieving a true partnership approach to owning and delivering the Housing Strategy.
- 4.5 A review was undertaken of the Housing Advisory Board during summer 2017. The review supported proposals to change the focus of the Board as follows:
- Develop the Board as a Strategic Housing Board to provide leadership to a collaborative approach in developing and delivering the Housing Strategy priorities.

- Assign responsibility for monitoring of Council Housing activity to existing bodies in the Council's governance framework.

4.6 This paper sets out proposals for the development of a Strategic Housing Partnership, led by a Strategic Housing Board. A separate paper on this agenda will consider proposals for the governance of Council Housing and other housing activity.

5 Main issues

5.1 As outlined in the Housing Strategy, Council Housing now only represents 17% of housing in Leeds. In order to successfully deliver Housing Strategy priorities the Council must develop its strategic housing role, developing strong partnerships with other housing and related sectors to work collaboratively to further develop and deliver the Housing Strategy priorities.

5.2 A number of other local authorities have established partnerships which facilitate collaboration in the delivery of the Housing Strategy. This includes Nottingham's Strategic Housing Network, Manchester Strategic Housing Partnership and North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Network. A key principle of the approach is on collaborative ownership and delivery of the Housing Strategy priorities.

5.3 Proposals have been developed for providing leadership to the Leeds Housing Strategy, taking into account good practice from other local authorities, as outlined below.

Strategic Housing Partnership

5.4 It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Partnership is established which coordinates the collaborative approach to the delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy. All organisations which have a role in supporting the delivery of the Housing Strategy, including housing associations, private landlords, voluntary agencies and tenant groups will be invited to be part of the partnership and contribute towards the delivery of relevant priorities within the strategy.

Strategic Housing Board

5.5 It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Board is established to provide leadership to the Strategic Housing Partnership. The Board's role would be to finalise the Housing Strategy priorities and collaborative approach, and where appropriate agree a citywide response to emerging housing issues and Central Government policy, encouraging greater joint approaches and shared innovation. In undertaking this leadership role, the Board will encourage and consider feedback from the wider Partnership.

5.6 The Strategic Housing Partnership will be made up of fully independent organisations which have their own organisational priorities and commitments. It is fully understood that the Board cannot make decisions on behalf of such organisations. However, it is also recognised that organisations also have a strategic responsibility to ensure that housing need is effectively met through the effective delivery of Housing Strategy priorities, and so the Board will seek the

Partnership's support to achieve a more collaborative approach on specific issues.

- 5.7 Board membership would include senior representation from the Council, independent representation and tenant representation. Proposed membership of the Board is as follows:
- 6 Leeds City Council Elected Members
 - 1 Independent
 - 2 Tenants / Residents – initially it is proposed that 2 members of VITAL are nominated to the Board
- 5.8 The six Elected Members will be made up of four from the administration and two from the opposition.
- 5.9 It is intended that the one independent member of the Board is a senior housing practitioner in the city who supports the Council's vision for collaborative ownership of the Housing Strategy and are in a position to influence the wider ownership of the strategy across wider housing sectors.
- 5.10 In the first instance it is proposed that the two tenant members of the Board are nominated by VITAL. However, as VITAL currently mainly represents the views of only Council tenants in the longer term tenant membership will be reviewed to ensure that it maximises opportunity for involvement of tenants from across the wider sectors.
- 5.11 It is proposed that the Board will not be a formal Board within the Council's governance structure and instead will operate as a partnership board outside the Council's formal governance structure.

Strategic Housing Board Meetings

- 5.12 Board meetings will be held quarterly, and will usually be themed on each of the themes of the Housing Strategy.
- 5.13 The first meeting will be held in spring 2018 and will launch the Strategic Housing Board. Items for discussion will include the role of the Board, signing off Terms of Reference, agreeing a forward plan for future meetings, and a broader discussion around the current priorities in the Housing Strategy. As this meeting will formalise the launch of the Board and the Housing Strategy, it is proposed that wider invitations are made to organisations which have a significant role in supporting the delivery of the strategy.
- 5.14 Future meetings will then be based on the main themes of the Housing Strategy. Meetings will follow a workshop style, with less emphasis on formal reports and greater emphasis on presentations and discussion. The proposed format of the first of each themed meeting will be to consider and agree the following:
- Based on evidence available reviewing the biggest issues relating to the theme

- Consideration of any equality and inclusion priorities relating to the theme
- What improvements are already being delivered across the sectors
- Learning from other cities – Core Cities comparison, examples of innovation
- What more can we do – across the sectors, opportunities for collaboration
- Are there current or emerging risks which require collaborative consideration, such as government policy
- Review strategy targets
- Agree a theme based Engagement Plan, which will define how we engage with other organisations to deliver the identified priorities.

5.15 There are overlaps in some strategy themes and so for some themes e.g. promoting independent living and improving health through housing some elements of both themes may be considered at one Board meeting.

5.16 Additional attendees including tenant representatives would be invited to contribute towards the workshop theme. Consideration has been given to which sectors could be invited to contribute to each of the different housing strategy themes, as follows:

Affordable Housing Growth - Housing Associations, Housing Leeds, Private Developers, City Development, Third Sector Organisations.

Improving Housing Quality – Housing Associations, Housing Leeds, Private Landlords, Third Sector Organisations.

Promoting Independent Living – Housing Associations, Housing Leeds – Housing Options and Health and Housing Service, Adults and Health Commissioning, Housing Related Support Providers, Third Sector Organisations, Adults and Health.

Creating Sustainable Communities – Safer Leeds, Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Police, Housing Associations, Housing Leeds, Private Landlords, Third Sector Organisations.

Improving Health Through Housing – Housing Associations, Housing Leeds, Private Landlords, Third Sector Organisations, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services, Adults and Health.

Meeting Housing Needs of Older Residents – Housing Associations, Housing Leeds, Third Sector Organisations, Adults and Health.

5.17 Wider tenant and customer engagement in the themed workshops will be encouraged via existing customer engagement groups which are in place across organisations which are part of the Strategic Housing Partnership. Invitations will seek to achieve a balanced perspective from tenants and residents from across the different housing sectors.

Wider Communication and Engagement

- 5.18 Wider engagement and ownership is critical to the Strategic Housing Partnership's success, as the Housing Strategy cannot be delivered by the Board alone. In launching the Strategic Housing Partnership and Board, a Strategy Engagement Plan will be developed which will promote the collaborative approach and invite organisations to make a pledge to support the strategy. Many Council teams already have strong connections with these organisations and so we will seek support through these established relationships.
- 5.19 Up to date communications is critical. It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Partnership webpage is developed on the Leeds City Council website, which includes the following:
- The Housing Strategy and sub strategies
 - Details of members of the Strategic Housing Partnership
 - Details of the Strategic Housing Board, including membership, minutes etc.
 - Up to date communications in relation to each strategy theme.

Social media will be established to support the communications plan and to enable more instant and interactive communication in relation to strategy themes.

- 5.20 There were previously a series of sub-groups which were established to support the delivery of the delivery of the Housing Strategy – the Housing Forum supporting the delivery of affordable housing theme, the Private Rented Sector Forum supporting the improvement of housing quality theme in the private rented sector, the Homelessness Forum supporting the promotion of independent living theme and the Housing Management Forum supporting various themes across the Council and Housing Association sectors. While these forums have had an important role in sharing information they have had mixed success in terms of achieving collaborative strategic development across Leeds.
- 5.21 While the Strategic Housing Board will facilitate collaborative strategic development, meetings will only be held quarterly and there are six themes of the Housing Strategy for consideration at a themed Board meeting. At the first of each themed Board meeting a themed engagement plan will be agreed which will support ongoing engagement to progress the collaborative approach agreed by the Board.
- 5.22 A review of the current Forums will be undertaken to identify the most effective way of embedding a collaborative approach, determining whether there is a need for a regular forum or less frequent task and finish workshops. This review will be undertaken jointly with organisations which currently attend the forum meetings.

Tenant / Customer Engagement

- 5.23 Customers have a critical role in influencing the priorities of the Housing Strategy and their delivery. In developing each theme specific engagement plan,

consideration will be given as to how customers will be able to give their views on the priorities and issues, and influence what is done. Restorative practice, Outcome Based Accountability and Asset Based Community Development principles will be adopted as part of the engagement to ensure that we are working 'with' customers, are outcome focused and consider how we can make best use of community assets to make a difference.

- 5.24 VITAL will have an important role in providing the tenant perspective into the Strategic Housing Board. As VITAL's current role is to predominantly to support the delivery of Council Housing Services this will require VITAL to develop its connections with other tenant groups, to ensure that they are in a position to represent the wider views of tenants living in other sectors, and to ensure that the wider tenant voice is heard in themed Board meetings.
- 5.25 At the November VITAL meeting tenants decided that over the coming months it will review VITAL's role to consider whether it should more formally consider the views of tenants of other sectors as part of its role.

Next Steps

- 5.26 Over the next few months work will progress to develop the both the Strategic Housing Partnership and Board, as follows:
- Formalise membership of the new Board
 - Engage with key housing organisations to develop the Strategic Housing Partnership – seeking views on priorities for collaboration and methods of engagement
 - Develop the new Strategic Housing Partnership web pages / social media
 - Plan the launch the new Strategic Housing Partnership – attract membership, marketing, communication
 - Plan the first Strategic Housing Board meeting alongside the formal launch of the Partnership.
- 5.27 Progress will be reported on a monthly basis to the new Board leading up to the first Board meeting in Spring 2018.

Council and Housing Association Partnerships

- 5.28 The Council recognises the need for a stronger working relationship with housing associations which manage homes in Leeds, in order to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy. As partner social housing providers it is important that we work together in a number of areas – meeting affordable housing need, housing homeless people and preventing homelessness, allocation of homes, management of neighbourhoods, regeneration of areas and responding to welfare reforms.

5.29 A Key Account Management arrangement has recently been introduced so that each local housing association has a lead contact who will work with them to support affordable housing development. As part of the Strategic Housing Partnership proposals we intend to discuss further with housing associations about how we can further develop working relationships to maximise collaboration on wider strategic and cross cutting issues and ensure that high quality housing is provided across the city and sector.

6 Corporate considerations

6.1 Consultation and engagement

6.2 The Housing Strategy was developed collaboratively with involvement from key internal partners. Consultation on the Strategy then took place during autumn 2016 with key external partners consulted alongside tenants and residents of Leeds. Feedback was used to update the final version of the strategy.

6.3 Following the November HAB meeting, engagement on proposals for the development of a Strategic Housing Partnership and Board will take place with organisations which have been identified as having a role in supporting delivery of the Housing Strategy.

7 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

7.1 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.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment of the draft Housing Strategy was undertaken during September 2016 and outcomes were used to inform the final strategy.

7.3 Whilst planning Strategic Housing Board meetings, consideration will be given to ensuring that attendance and input is representative of the wider Leeds

population, and that the views of minority groups and communities are identified and given appropriate consideration.

8 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 8.1 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. The strategy also supports the delivery of the Council's eight Breakthrough projects and associated action plans.
- 8.2 There are also a number of strategies which support the delivery of the Housing Strategy such as the Homelessness Strategy and Empty Homes Strategy.

9 Resources and value for money

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 However, it is recognised that Leeds City Council cannot deliver the Housing Strategy priorities alone and that through a Strategic Housing Partnership this would support the use of wider resources across the city to achieve the identified priorities.
- 9.3 There are also opportunities through greater collaboration to achieve greater value for money by key partners working more closely together to share innovation and good practice which will be encouraged through the Strategic Housing Partnership.

10 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 10.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

11 Risk management

- 11.2 The management of risks associated with the Housing Strategy will be monitored and managed by the Strategic Housing Board, and actions to manage risks considered as part of each strategy theme. This will ensure that there is a more collaborative approach across key partners in the city to the management of strategy risks.

12 Conclusions

- 12.1 It is important that Leeds City Council maximises the opportunity to deliver on Housing Strategy priorities by taking full advantage of key partnerships in the city. While there are a number of forums already in place, these are not as effective as they could be in providing leadership to the Housing Strategy.
- 12.2 It is proposed that a Strategic Housing Partnership is established, with representation from organisations which have an interest in supporting the delivery of the Housing Strategy, to co-ordinate a more collaborative approach to

the delivery of the six themes of the Housing Strategy. A small Board would be established to provide leadership to the Partnership.

- 12.3 An engagement plan will be developed for each theme of the Housing Strategy which is tailored to the particular priorities of that theme of the strategy. This will place a focus on broadening collaboration with key partners and strengthening ongoing customer engagement in the delivery of the strategy.
- 12.4 Proposals will continue to be developed with the wider housing sector with a view to establishing the Strategic Housing Partnership and Board during early 2018.

13 Recommendations

- 13.1 Housing Advisory Board is invited to comment on proposals to develop a Strategic Housing Partnership, led by a Strategic Housing Board.

14 Background documents¹

- 14.1 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.