

# Approval of the updated Leeds Housing Strategy

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022

Report of: The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## What is this report about?

### Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report seeks approval from Executive Board of a new strategy for Leeds Housing for the period 2022 to 2027. The new Strategy builds on our previous housing strategy and sets out the city's ambition for housing, as well as detailing how the city will work together to meet these ambitions over the next five years. Ultimately, the Strategy will play a key role in improving outcomes for the city's residents.
- The Housing Strategy has been developed to support the 'Three Pillars' that define the Council's overarching strategic priorities and a focus for improved outcomes:
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Inclusive Growth
  - Zero carbon
- More information can be found in the [Best City Ambition](#), which examines in detail the Three Pillars and the city's overall mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home.
- The city's housing sector has a significant role in delivering improved outcomes for each of the pillars. The Best City Ambitions have underpinned our approach to develop our new Housing Strategy.
- The Strategy is built around our 'Team Leeds' approach. The city's housing sector is comprised of a wide range of partners and stakeholders, and the successful delivery of the housing priorities is dependent on strong, effective partnership working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders including, for example, charities, housing associations, private sector landlords, the health and social care sector and developers, and, importantly, residents and tenants.
- The new Housing Strategy vision is proposed as follows:

*"Meeting the city's housing needs and providing high quality affordable homes in thriving and inclusive communities, with appropriate support for those who need it."*

- The Strategy is built around six key themes. These themes, and the priorities they contain, have been developed to reflect the priorities in the city where the housing sector is integral to improving outcomes. The six themes are:
  - **Meeting Affordable Housing Need** – the intention of this theme is to maximise the number of affordable homes available to rent or buy, effectively meeting demand for affordable housing in the social and private rented sectors and reducing the number of empty homes in the city.
  - **Improving Housing Quality** – this theme is concerned with improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes in Leeds and improving housing quality in the private rented sector.
  - **Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping** – this theme will focus on improving our service offer for those affected by repeat or hidden homelessness, further developing our collaborative ways of working, ensuring availability of the right housing types, and ensuring that the health needs of people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping are met as part of a wider approach.
  - **Thriving and Inclusive Communities** – this theme outlines the role the housing sector has to play in helping to maintain community safety and create confident, inclusive communities in pleasant neighbourhoods.
  - **Improving Health through Housing** – the housing sector has an important role to play in helping to reducing health inequalities and supporting people to meet their health needs. This theme is concerned with how the housing sector can work more effectively as part of the health and social care system to meet health and housing needs.
  - **Child and Age Friendly Housing** – this theme seeks to ensure that the housing needs of the youngest and oldest are effectively met through support for care leavers, sustainable tenancies for families, and making sure the right housing options are available to allow older people to remain active and independent.
  
- The new Strategy has evolved from the previous 2016-21 Housing Strategy. The city still faces similar issues that informed the previous Strategy, but the priorities have evolved, as has the wider strategic context. The updated Strategy has also been developed to reflect changes in legislation, along with local, regional, and national priorities.
  
- The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the inequalities that are present in Leeds. It has, for example, shown up the amount of ‘hidden homelessness’ who live in the city – people who were living precariously without permanent accommodation, but who hadn’t come to the attention of service providers who could help. As the city recovers from the pandemic the Strategy will provide guidance for partners to help mitigate the inequalities that exist across the city through the provision of affordable housing, and the delivery of efficient services that help to reduce inequalities in the many areas the housing sector impacts upon.
  
- The housing sector also has a role to play in helping to mitigate the cost-of-living crisis that the UK is currently experiencing. The twin impacts of Brexit and Covid on supply chains, availability, labour shortages and now the Russian invasion of Ukraine, are seeing prices rise sharply. Inflation is currently at 9%, outstripping wage growth. In April Ofgem raised the price cap of energy bills by 54% and it is expected to rise further in October to approximately £2,800, affecting millions of households across the country and pushing people into fuel poverty. The Strategy will help those in most need to be able to access affordable, energy efficient, housing.

- The Strategy has been reviewed in the context of a wide range of Council strategies and plans, ensuring that the housing priorities are closely aligned to wider Council priorities.
- A significant change that has occurred since the previous Strategy was developed has been the declaration, in March 2019, by the Council of a Climate Emergency.
- This declaration recognised the importance of working as a city to mitigate the impact of climate change, and committed the Council to work to make Leeds carbon neutral by 2030, with the aim of working with other organisations and governments of achieving the aim of the Paris Agreement and limiting the global temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C.
- The city's Housing Sector has a significant role to play in helping to reach this ambitious target; a 2019 report from the Leeds Climate Change Commission found that housing is responsible for 26% of the city's carbon emissions.
- To achieve this there will need to be a lot of work carried out across all the city's housing tenures – privately owned, the Private Rented Sector and social housing. The city's social housing stock has seen, and will continue to see, significant investment to improve energy efficiency and to help to reduce the cost-of-living crisis. However, it is currently unclear how homeowners and private landlords will be helped to meet the cost of improving the carbon efficiency of their properties.
- The delivery of the updated Strategy will be overseen by the Leeds Strategic Housing Board (LSHB), a board of Elected Members and senior housing officers, with representation from the wider housing sector and tenants, chaired by the Executive Member for Environment and Housing. The wider Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership, a partnership made up of the housing and related partners will provide a collaborative approach to delivering on the strategy's priorities.
- Governance on some specific issues contained within the Strategy will also be picked up, as appropriate, by other existing Boards e.g. affordable housing and housing growth via the Housing Growth and Choice Board and health and housing priorities by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **Recommendations**

- a) Executive Board is requested to approve the new Leeds Housing Strategy 2022-2027, as detailed at appendix 1.
- b) To note that the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment and Chief Housing Officer will be accountable for implementing the new Strategy and overseeing its delivery.

## **Why is the proposal being put forward?**

- 1 The new Leeds Housing Strategy has been developed to ensure it reflects the current demands and priorities that face the city's housing sector and the city's broader strategic aims. The delivery of the Strategy is not the Council's responsibility alone. A key focus of the strategy is to encourage wider collaborative ownership of the strategy and its priorities, with its success dependent on effective partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders from a range of sectors across the city.

## What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards affected: All wards.**

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 2 The impact of implementing the new Strategy will be to provide both the Council and partners with a strategic guide to the housing priorities of the city and give guidance as to how the housing sector can help the city to meet its aims.
- 3 The Council already works collaboratively with a wide range of partners to deliver the city's housing priorities, be that the provision of affordable housing, the reduction of homelessness and rough sleeping, helping to build safe and confident communities or helping people to remain independent in their homes as they age. The Council will continue to provide leadership to the delivery of the Leeds Housing Strategy via the Leeds Strategic Housing Partnership, a collaboration of partners who have a role in delivering housing strategy priorities.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 4 There has been a wide and comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement to capture input and feedback from stakeholders and the city's communities.
- 5 In November 2021, an online workshop was held that saw approximately 80 attendees from partner organisations come together to discuss the new Strategy. They included Elected Members, Council officers, representatives of Registered Providers, charities, universities, the NHS and social care sector, for example.
- 6 The Council's Corporate Leadership Team were all offered briefings on the developing strategy, which led to various meetings with senior officers from across all directorates, helping to inform the new Strategy.
- 7 Each political group was offered a briefing on the proposals, giving elected members the opportunity to comment. The Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) was briefed on the proposed new strategy and subsequently held a workshop where members contributed to the Strategy's development.
- 8 A report went to the Health & Wellbeing Board in December 2021.
- 9 Officers have met with the city's five Equalities Hubs to capture the equality, diversity and inclusion considerations of the Housing Strategy.
- 10 The Older People's Forum was consulted with via a meeting of the Me & My Home group, which considers the housing needs of older people.
- 11 An online survey was carried out via the 'Your Voice Leeds' website that received 168 responses from members of the public.

## What are the resource implications?

- 12 As this is an over-arching strategy there are no immediate resource implications for Leeds City Council, but the implementation of the strategy will involve a large number of individual projects and initiatives which will all have their respective resourcing implications. A key focus of the strategy is on how the wider housing and related sector can work together to respond to housing priorities, maximising the effective use of the wider sector's resources to deliver innovative solutions to the city's housing and wider priorities.

## **What are the legal implications?**

13 The priorities in the new Housing reflect changes in legislation during the previous strategy's life, including the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act and the 2022 Building Safety Act. The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

## **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

14 The main risk is that the updated Strategy fails to meet the housing needs of the city in the coming years in the areas it is considering. The Strategy's themes have a major impact across all the city's communities and all age groups. If the Strategy fails to reflect the needs of the city, then there is the risk that the development of housing in the city doesn't properly reflect the city's needs.

15 That risk is minimised because of the extensive research and consultation undertaken during the strategy's development, ensuring that the updated priorities reflect the views of the wider sector and that the aims are ambitious whilst remaining realistic and deliverable. The risk of not delivering on commitments made in the Strategy will continue to be monitored by the LSHB throughout the life of the new strategy.

## **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

16 The city's Housing Strategy plays a key role in supporting the Council's Three Pillars, as is explained in detail in the Housing Strategy document at appendix 1.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

17 None. It is important that the city's Housing Strategy is updated to reflect the current needs and demands of housing across the city.

### **How will success be measured?**

18 Success will be measured by having a Strategy that is fit for purpose, is agreed by partners and stakeholders, and provides a framework for progress over the coming years. Success will see progress in the areas contained in the Strategy's themes and strategy target outcomes being met. Ongoing progress in meeting the Housing Strategy priorities and targets will be monitored by the Leeds Strategic Housing Board.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

19 Once Executive Board has approved the new Strategy it will be promoted across the Council, with key partners and published on the Council's website, to ensure that it provides a useful, accessible resource for driving delivery of the Strategy's priorities. The LSHB will over the next few months consider a programme of strategy workshops to take place over the coming year, focusing on particular issues which would benefit from a more collaborative approach.

## **Appendices**

20 The new Housing Strategy document is attached at appendix 1.

21 Appendix 2 is the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment that has been carried out as part of the Strategy's development.

## **Background papers**

22 None.