

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-25
DATE: 14 JULY 2016
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

The updated Southampton City Council Housing Strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 19th July 2016.

The Housing Strategy 2016-2025 provides an updated housing vision for the city, following the expiration of the previous Housing Strategy 2011-2015. The strategy sets out a single strategic vision for the various service areas that contribute to housing outcomes in the city, including Housing Services, Planning, Regulatory Services and Growth.

The strategy provides a high level overview of the key actions and measures, and will be supported by a more detailed action plan.

The purpose of this report is to

- Provide information to the Committee on the draft Housing Strategy 2016-25
- Support the Committee's discussion on the draft strategy (Appendix 1).

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

Background and context

1. The Housing Strategy is a key 'Level 1' strategy for the Council, and sets out the high level vision and key outcomes for housing in the city. The strategy provides a single vision for the various service areas that contribute to housing outcomes in the city, including Housing Services, Planning, Regulatory Services and Growth.
2. The new strategy covers a period 2016-2025, which aligns with the timeframe of City Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (currently in development). The previous strategy covered period of only 4 years (2011-2015). The extended timeframe of the new strategy (2016-25) will allow the Council to take a longer term view of the housing vision for the city, throughout this period of change. The intention is to periodically review and update the Housing Strategy over its lifespan, to monitor progress and take account of any challenges and opportunities as they arise.
3. The previous Southampton City Council Housing Strategy 2011-2015 was subtitled "Homes for Growth", and focused on three key priorities:
 - Maximising homes for the city – including promoting homes ownership, managing demand for affordable housing, and lettings policies.
 - Improving homes and transforming neighbourhoods – including estate regeneration and improving the condition of housing stock.
 - Extra support for those who need it – including promoting independent living and preventing homelessness.

BRIEFING PAPER

4. Since 2011 the Council has:
- Delivered over 2,600 new homes, and agreed planning permission for an additional 4,133 dwellings
 - Delivered 1475 new affordable and sustainable homes
 - Delivered estate regeneration projects including Hinkler Road, Laxton Close, Exford Avenue, and Cumbrian Way, with more citywide programmes to follow.
 - Delivered energy efficiency improvements using 'Eco funding' at International Way, with additional improvements being undertaken across the city.
 - Delivered 73 wheelchair liveable properties as affordable homes.
 - Introduced licencing for Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) to raise standards and mitigate the impacts of HMOs on the city.
 - Continued to reduce homelessness numbers through homelessness prevention measures.
 - Delivered new 'housing with care' properties at Erskine Court and Weston Court.
 - Increased the provision of good quality accommodation available for teenage parents and families through the development of 2-bed flats in Bellevue Road.
 - Helped more people stay in their own homes for longer, with over 5,600 adaptations to homes delivered since 2011.
 - And, over the last 20 years, brought more than 2000 empty homes back into use.
5. Although the Council has achieved significant successes, there remain a number of challenges. Over the coming years there will be significant changes, challenges, and opportunities in relation to housing, including the implementation of the Housing and Planning Act, the continuing increase in demand for new homes, and the changing demographics of and city. Particular challenges include:
- **Increasing demand** – The city's population is increasing and more housing will need to be developed to meet demand, with a diverse mix of homes to meet the changing needs of the population. In particular, the 65+ population is expected to increase more rapidly than the overall population in the next 5 years, and the numbers of students in the city is also expected to increase as the universities and colleges continue to expand.
 - **High numbers of renters** - Southampton has a low proportion of owner occupiers and a high proportion of people living in the private rented sector in comparison to other similar cities. People living in rental accommodation can sometimes face high rental costs or lower quality accommodation.
 - **Deprivation levels** – Poor housing quality has a significant impact on residents' health and wellbeing. A significant number of households in the city are impacted by fuel poverty, and there continues to be high demand for good quality, affordable housing, with over 8,000 households on the Council's Housing Register.

Priorities and outcomes

6. The Housing Strategy has been developed based on data and evidence relating to housing needs. A review was also undertaken of the Council's progress and

BRIEFING PAPER

achievements against the previous strategy's aims, together with an analysis of existing and projected challenges.

7. The following priorities were developed by a working group consisting of representatives from Housing Services, Planning Services, Adult Social Care, Integrated Commissioning Unit, Planning, Licencing, Growth and Legal Services.
- Supporting Economic Growth – The population of the city is increasing. More housing will need to be available to meet demand, with a diverse mix of homes to meet the changing needs of our growing population. Southampton needs to have a range of housing types including family homes, 'executive' homes, starter homes for first time buyers, affordable homes and purpose built student homes, and an environment and infrastructure that supports housing growth.
 - Good Quality Housing – Poor quality housing has a significant impact on residents' health and wellbeing. It is also linked to children's quality of life and educational attainment, due to higher rates of sickness and absence from school. Southampton City Council is a major landlord with around 18,000 council properties, and has a responsibility to ensure that its tenants and leaseholders live in decent homes. We also want to make sure that residents living in privately rented homes, or as owner occupiers, live in good quality homes that support their health and wellbeing.
 - Housing Options and Support – We want to support more people to live independently for longer by offering the right housing options to meet their needs, as well as high quality information and advice to help residents to make informed housing decisions.

8. The outcomes in the strategy outline the areas that the Council will focus on to achieve the agreed priorities, with high level actions and measures against each outcome:

Priority	Outcome
Supporting Economic Growth	Southampton develops new housing to support the economic growth of the city.
	Southampton is a city with a mix of homes that meet the needs of its residents.
	Residents have access to information and advice to help them towards home ownership.
Good Quality Housing	Homes in Southampton are green and sustainable.
	People in Southampton live in good quality, safe and healthy homes.
	Residents and communities are engaged and work together to improve neighbourhoods.
Housing Options and Support	Southampton is a city with a range of housing options and support for people with additional needs.
	Southampton is a city which prevents homelessness and provides support for rough sleepers.
	Residents have access to the right information, advice and guidance about their housing options.

BRIEFING PAPER

9. The Housing Strategy is a high level strategy setting out the vision for housing in the city, and will be supported by a more detailed action plan. The strategy will be also supported by a number of additional strategies, policies and plans, including the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, the Housing Allocations Policy, the Tenant Involvement Strategy, the Fuel Poverty Action Plan, the Local Plan and the Asset Management Strategy.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

10. The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness and reviewing housing conditions. This Strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.
11. There are no additional financial or resource requirements arising from the approval of the strategy. All immediate activity summarised in the strategy is already accounted for in existing budgets (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account). Any additional activity identified as part of the action plan will be considered for feasibility within normal yearly budgeting activity.
12. There are no immediate property impacts. The strategy highlights a requirement for and commitment to develop a new Asset Management Strategy for the Council. Any direct impacts on the Council's property and other assets will be considered as part of this more detailed and linked strategy.

OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:

13. The strategy will be submitted for consideration at the Cabinet meeting 19th July 2016.
14. An alternative option considered is not to publish a strategy – this is not recommended as it is important for the Council to provide a clear and accessible statement of intent to its staff, residents and stakeholders.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

Appendix 1: Draft Southampton City Council Housing Strategy 2016-2025

Further Information Available from:

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