

COMMITTEE: COUNCIL **REF NO:** C/19/03
DATE: 24 JULY 2019
SUBJECT: IPSWICH BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR NEIL MACDONALD
HEAD OF SERVICE: IAN BLOFIELD

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

The Ipswich Borough Council Housing Strategy has been updated to reflect:

- The removal of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping into a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024
- A new strategic approach to the Private Rented Sector
- A new strategic approach to older persons housing

This report outlines the proposal for an updated Housing Strategy 2019-24.

Council is asked for any comments it wishes to make on the updated Housing Strategy prior to it going to Executive for adoption.

Ward(s) affected:

All

List of Appendices included in this report:

- a) Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy 2019-2024
- b) Appendix 1a – Housing Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2024

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

Internal consultees

Councillor Neil Macdonald

Corporate Management Team

Chief Executive – Russell Williams

Chief Operating Officer – Helen Pluck

Housing Advice Operations Manager – Peter Whittall

External consultees

N/A

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

Building a Better Ipswich: The Council's Corporate Plan

Economic Development Strategy 2013-26

Gateway to Homechoice Allocation Policy 2018

Empty Homes Policy 2019

Local Plan 2011 - 2031

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024

Asset Management Strategy 2018 - 2023

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

- 1) Housing Strategy Action Plan**
- 2) Ipswich Housing Report 2019**
- 3) The National Context**
- 4) The Local Context**
- 5) Links to other Strategies**
- 6) Housing Strategy Stakeholder Event**
- 7) Older Persons Housing Review – IBC Tenants**
- 8) Annual Housing Strategy Review Report 2018**

OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

- 1. Building a better Ipswich' – Corporate Plan**
- 2. Economic Development Strategy 2013-26**
- 3. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013-42**
- 4. Gateway to Homechoice Allocation Policy 2018**
- 5. Empty Homes Policy 2019**
- 6. Local Plan 2011 - 2031**
- 7. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – updated Nov 2013**
- 8. Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (ANA) for Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. May 2017**
- 9. Suffolk Housing Survey 2014**
- 10. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2017**
- 11. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan**
- 12. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Suffolk**
- 13. A Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Suffolk refresh 2016-19**
- 14. A Housing & Health Charter for Suffolk**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2017 the Council adopted the Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022. The Strategy detailed the Council’s vision for housing in Ipswich over the next 5 years and what the Council would be doing to try to achieve it. The Strategy incorporated Housing and Homelessness within the same strategy.
- 1.2 In the 18 months since the Housing Strategy was adopted Housing has been, and continues to be, a key government priority with significant changes to date. The most significant being the requirement for Local Authorities to have a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 1.3 Coupled with demographic trends (particularly an ageing population) and an appetite for a new strategic approach to the private rented sector; there is a need to refresh and update the Housing Strategy to ensure it is up to date and able to respond to these changes.
- 1.4 The current environment calls for greater partnership working in order to achieve more holistic priorities. The Housing Strategy provides a clear vision and direction to guide the Council’s housing activity. The adoption of the Housing Strategy 2019-2024 will aid the Council in delivering an effective future housing service.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Strategy is to cover what the Council can either directly do or influence, with an emphasis on affordable housing and increasing standards.
- 1.6 The Strategy compliments the Local Plan and other key policies, which address areas out of scope for the strategy including housing demand and the infrastructure required to support housing growth.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 required all Local Authorities to have a Housing Strategy setting out its vision for housing in its area. However, the Deregulation Act 2015 removed the requirement for Local Authorities to have a Housing Strategy.
- 2.2 There are benefits in maintaining a clear housing strategy. The Council as the Strategic Housing Authority decided that it would consult on and adopt a Housing Strategy for the period of 2017-2022 and will follow the same process for the updated Housing Strategy 2019-2024.
- 2.3 The Housing Strategy has been revised and updated to reflect national change; the requirement for all local authorities to have a separate Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and to reflect the new

strategic approach to the Private Rented Sector and to older persons housing.

2.4 The main changes are:

- Priority 2 'Improving Access to and the Quality of Existing Housing' now includes further details of the Council's ambitions to work more effectively with the private rented sector (page 19)
- Priority 3 'Meeting the Needs of all Communities and the Challenges of an ageing population' now includes details of the Council's approach to Supporting Older IBC Tenants (page 22)
- Priority 4 'Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping' includes a link to the new stand-alone Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (page 24)

2.5 The updated Housing Strategy 2019-2024 continues to have 2 elements. These are the Strategy and an Action Plan. All the key priority areas, identified in the Action Plan, will be addressed within the 5 year period of the Strategy.

2.6 The Action plan is a robust and responsive document that is reviewed and amended quarterly to ensure it remains focussed and relevant. Updating the Housing Strategy to reflect national change and local appetite for change in terms of working with the Private Rented Sector and renewing focus on housing for older people will ensure that the Housing Strategy and Action Plan continue to direct the work of Housing Services. Officers will continue to develop detailed delivery programmes with associated milestones and target dates to achieve the aims of the updated Housing Strategy.

2.7 It is important that the updated Housing Strategy is firmly based on evidence. The appendices include all the supporting documentation for the Strategy. These documents include:

- An evidence based report 'Ipswich Housing Report 2019'
- The National Context
- The Local Context
- Links to other strategies
- Stakeholder Event (explaining how the four Strategy priorities were agreed at a stakeholder workshop).
- Older Persons Housing Review – IBC tenants
- Annual Housing Strategy Review Report 2018

2.8 The updated Housing Strategy 2019-2024 will now comprise of four identified priorities:

- Enabling building of houses of all tenures
- Improving access to and the quality of existing housing
- Meeting the housing needs of all communities and meeting the challenges of an ageing population.
- Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

3. Relevant Policies

- 3.1 This report contributes to achieving 'Quality Homes for All' in the Council's Corporate Objectives, Building a Better Ipswich, February 2017. Acknowledging the fundamental nature of housing, the Strategy will also contribute to a:
- A Strong Ipswich Economy
 - An Enjoyable Place to Live, Work and Study
 - A Healthy Community
 - Safe Communities

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

- 4.1 The Council has decided to update its Housing Strategy for 2019-2024. The key options considered are:

Option 1

- 4.2 Make comments on the Strategy prior to its adoption by Executive.

Option 2

- 4.3 Decide not to make any comments on the Strategy prior to its adoption by Executive.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Executive agreed at its meeting on the 11 June that the updated Housing Strategy 2019-2024 should go out to Public Consultation from 18th June to 13th August 2019.

6. Risk Management

Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic)	Actions to mitigate risk
1. Not having a Housing Strategy	There is a lack of a clear Strategic direction regarding Housing in the Borough	Decide to have a Housing Strategy	2	2	Adoption of a Housing Strategy

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no direct environmental impacts arising from this report.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

8.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination

8.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.

8.4 An equality screening has identified that there is no requirement to undertake a full assessment as the individual activities to deliver the Strategy will be subject to separate assessment at the appropriate time.

9. Financial Considerations

9.1 There is a budget for the design of the Housing Strategy document and also for the consultation process. The budget for individual activity to deliver the Strategy will either come from existing resources or be sought, in accordance with the Council's Financial Standing Orders, at the appropriate time.

10. Legal Considerations

10.1 The Deregulation Act 2015, (Section 29) removed the power for the Secretary of State to require Local Authorities to have housing strategies and to prepare housing statements

10.2 However, there is no legal bar to a Local Authority to continue to have a Housing Strategy if it wishes.

10.3 Any consultation should follow the Gunning Principles and in order for consultation to be fair a public body must ensure:

- that the consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- that the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;
- that adequate time is given for consideration and response; and
- that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision.

11. Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 The Housing Strategy lasts for five years. The Action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to review progress and the draft updated Housing Strategy and Action Plan will continue to be monitored in this way
- 11.2 Officers will continue to develop a detailed delivery programme with associated milestones and target dates.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 Housing has been, and continues to be, a key priority with significant changes to date. Coupled with demographic trends, particularly an aging population, and an appetite for a new strategic approach to the Private Rented Sector, the Council needs to consider the best way forward.
- 12.2 The Deregulation Act 2015 removed the requirement for Local Authorities to have a Housing Strategy. As the Strategic Housing Authority, there is a need to have a clear Vision and Strategy to guide future housing activity, particularly with the links to economic regeneration and wellbeing.
- 12.3 The conclusion is that an updated Housing Strategy from 2019 to 2024 should be adopted to continue a systematic approach to housing matters.
- 12.4 The Housing Strategy covers what the Council can either directly do or influence, with an emphasis on affordable housing and increasing standards. Areas out of scope for the strategy including housing demand and the infrastructure required to support housing growth are covered by other strategies within the Council, predominantly the Local Plan.

13. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council

- 13.1 Makes any comments on the updated Housing Strategy 2019-2024 that it wishes Executive to take into account prior to adopting the Strategy.**

Reason: To ensure all Councillors are able to influence the Strategy