

CABINET

Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan 2012 - 2017

Report of Head of Regeneration and Planning

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To provide members with a summary of the content and purpose of the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan 2012 – 2017 along with the final version of the document for approval by Cabinet.			
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	11 February 2013		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLORS JANICE HANSON AND KAREN LEYTHAM

- (1) That Cabinet recommend the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan 2012 – 2017 to Council for approval.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Lancaster City Council's last Housing Strategy was produced in 2004; setting out the district's housing priorities over the five year period up until 2009. Following the Council's organisational restructuring in 2009, which transferred the housing strategy function into the Regeneration and Planning Service, one of the key priorities was to produce a new Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan for the district.

1.2 In order to effectively prepare the new Housing Strategy, it was necessary to commission a new Housing Needs Survey, to provide a wide range of up to date information and robust evidence base to underpin this work. As a result of this, David Couttie Associates completed the Housing Needs Survey in 2011. The Survey findings have influenced and priorities and actions contained within the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan.

2.0 The Structure and themes of the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan

2.1 The Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan contains a detailed contextual statement which describes the district's current housing provision, sets out how the Housing Strategy relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities,

Service Priorities, existing policies and the current regulatory framework around housing provision, and will act as a pre-cursor to a number of other themed strategy documents, that feed into the Local Plan. Of particular importance is the raft of changes being brought about through the Localism Act, and how we can respond to these over the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan period. The detailed Action Plan then follows, which sets out the actions and priorities identified, how and when these will be implemented within the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan period with milestones and targets being identified.

- 2.2 The Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan covers a five year period and contains three main themes: - **quantity, quality and people**:-
- 2.3 The **Quantity** section of the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan sets out the district's housing requirements, which takes account of the Core Strategy adopted in 2008, and re-affirms that these targets are supported by the Housing Needs Survey findings, and in the Local Plan. The Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan describes how we can achieve future housing delivery, the appropriate type and tenure mix of future housing, responding to demographic change and the ageing population, addressing under-occupation of existing housing, the delivery of affordable housing, development in rural areas and the existing key village policy. Key actions will be meeting the targets set for housing completions, reviewing policies in the light of any changing circumstances, completing and adopting the Supplementary Planning Document – Meeting Housing Needs, and provide the necessary support and opportunities to bring forward affordable housing.
- 2.4 The **Quality** section sets out the Council's current Regeneration Priorities within the district, which include Morecambe's West End, Luneside and Lancaster Moor North, and also provides a profile of the existing housing stock within the district. It acknowledges the quality of existing social housing stock, and previous/current initiatives to improve the private sector housing stock as well as future housing provision, and how the district can tackle empty properties, along with options and opportunities that exist. Key actions in this section include exploring funding opportunities to complete the three identified regeneration priorities, pursuing other funding opportunities to improve the existing housing stock, both social and private sector, tackling empty homes through an Empty Homes Strategy and to increase new housing supply that meets lifetime homes standards or is purpose built special needs housing.
- 2.5 The **People** section outlines how the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan will meet the needs of all parts of the community. The document refers to a number of vulnerable groups such as older people and the ageing population, homeless households, troubled families, young people, people with mental illness and learning disabilities, those experiencing domestic violence, people with substance and alcohol abuse issues, the needs of gypsies and travellers, BME communities, former armed forces personnel, students, and those living in rural communities and considers the existing services and housing available, and the actions required over the next five years and beyond. Key actions within this section of the document specifically relate to meeting the housing needs of people with learning disabilities, mental illness, older people, rough sleepers, young people, offenders, gypsies and travellers, the BME communities, people with physical disabilities and other actions relate to improved access to housing within the district. Meeting many of these actions will require collaborative working with both Health and Lancashire County Council with jointly agreed strategies.

3.0 Details of Consultation

Key stakeholders have been consulted on the draft document as many other organisations will be critical to delivering the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan. These include the Homelessness Forum (representatives from Health, Adult Social Care, Probation Service, Supporting People Team, Registered Providers of Social Housing – general needs and supported housing providers, Help Direct, Lancaster District Homeless Action Service, Lancaster and District Women’s Aid, YMCA and Citizens Advice Bureau), and Council officers from both the Regeneration and Planning Service, Health and Housing Service and Housing Benefits. The document has also been cascaded to the Affordable Warmth Steering Group, the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, the Mental Health and Housing Forum and the Lancashire Drug and Alcohol Team’s Joint Commissioning Group.

- 3.1 A consultation event took place on the 3rd July at the Storey Institute, with 33 delegates from the Homelessness Forum attending. The format of the event comprised of a detailed presentation, covering the content of the document as well as a housing strategy monopoly game, whereby delegates were asked to allocate houses and hotels against a number of themes statements for each section of the Draft Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan. The consultation results are contained within the document.
- 3.2 The Draft Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan has been regularly reported to both Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group and the Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group.
- 3.3 Following the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment on the Draft Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan in November 2012, there was a final period of consultation carried out with no further comments received.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Recommend the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan to Council in its current form	Option 2: Recommend the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan to Council with amendments
Advantages	The local authority will have an up to date housing strategy in place.	None.
Disadvantages	None.	Any further amendments would necessitate further consultation and another EqIA.
Risks	None.	Loss of reputation if the process is delayed given that there has been a three year period with no housing strategy in place.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 The officer preferred option is option 1 to recommend the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan to Council in its current form. There has been considerable work carried out on the preparation of the document to date, which has taken nearly a year to complete, with extensive consultation already carried out. Should members approve the document, officers can continue to progress work on the key actions and priorities identified in the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan within the

suggested timescales.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan provides a detailed profile of the current housing provision and housing markets as well as the district's future housing needs and requirements and defines the actions required to ensure that the district can respond to current and future housing needs over the five year action plan period and beyond. The Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan will be reviewed annually, with a formal mid-term review planned, which will be reported to members and stakeholders.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council's Constitution (Article 4.01) includes the Housing Strategy as part of the policy framework.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 15 Continuing work to improve the quality and availability of housing, and enhanced quality of life of local residents through access to good quality housing, increasing the number of affordable homes, a reduction in the number of homeless people and a reduction in the number of people sleeping rough.

Regeneration and Planning Service Business Plan 2010/11 – To maintain an up-to-date Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan.

Core Strategy 2008 SC4 – To meet the district's housing requirements by achieving 400 dwelling completions annually and providing a sufficient supply of affordable housing.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan, and following consultation with key stakeholders, no comments have been received.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Action Plan has been amended to identify what can be achieved over the five year period within existing resources and any aspects of the plan that may have current/future budget implications.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

There could be in the future if the any future affordable housing proposals involve the use of council owned land.

Open Spaces:

There could be in the future if any future affordable housing proposals involve the use of designated open space.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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