

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Joint Overview and Scrutiny Babergh and Mid Suffolk	REPORT NUMBER: JOS/18/7
FROM: Jan Osborne and Jill Wilshaw; Cabinet Members for Housing	DATE OF MEETING: 23.07.2018
OFFICER: Robert Hobbs – Corporate Manager, Strategic Planning Gill Cook – Housing Strategy Officer, Strategic Planning	KEY DECISION REF NO. Item No.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE JOINT HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2036

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide details of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's (BMSDC) Housing Strategy 2018 – 2036 framework background and development process. This will include the co-production of an updated Homelessness Reduction Strategy to ensure compliance with the new Duties as detailed under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To not develop or publish a comprehensive Housing Strategy as currently there is no legal requirement to do so (Appendix a). However, it is a legal requirement to have in place a jointly produced and published Homelessness Reduction Strategy.
- 2.2 To create a Housing Strategy with a single focus on increasing new homes delivery, plus a jointly produced and published Homelessness Reduction Strategy. This approach to a Housing Strategy was discounted because it ignores the wider spectrum of housing issues, for example making best use of current housing stock of approximately 80,000 homes, the Councils' approach as a social landlord to approximately 7,000 households, the Councils' new build programme supported by the Housing Revenue Account, the positive impact high quality designed homes which are warm, safe, and connected to communities has on households' health and well-being.
- 2.3 The *BMSDC Annual Report Summary 2017/18* (p.8) makes it clear the Councils expect to develop, adopt, and publish a Housing Strategy by Winter 2018/19. As conversations with the Leaders and Cabinet Members for Housing have progressed it has become clear the preferred option is to develop a comprehensive Housing Strategy which addresses all key housing related challenges alongside a revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy, compliant with newly introduced Duties (Appendix b).

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 That the comprehensive BMSDC Housing Strategy context and development process detailed in this report be endorsed, which includes a revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy.</p>	
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>To ensure that BMSDC have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • met the legal duty to have in place a revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy • systematically reviewed housing related issues in both districts • set out key housing challenges to stimulate the housing market • set out housing objectives (vision) • established priorities for action both by BMSDC and other services providers and stakeholders • created a clear set of Action Plans in collaboration with relevant technical stakeholders, partners, and Members. • taken into account the views of parish and town councils as well as technical stakeholders through a six-week period of consultation before requesting the Housing Strategy and Action Plans are adopted by both Councils in December 2018. <p>Having a published, stakeholder agreed Housing Strategy based on evidence of housing and health needs will enable BMSDC to be ready to access any additional funding streams to enhance the local housing market, in turn to support sustainable growth to the benefit of all residents.</p>	

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Both Councils have a strong ambition to create jobs-led economic growth and housing is essential to support this continuous growth as well as supporting better health and well-being and enhancing quality of life.
- 4.2 The emerging BMSDC Housing Strategy contributes to a wider portfolio of strategies which will work together to support the jobs-led economic growth agenda. These strategies include amongst others; *BMSDC Open for Business Strategy* (complete 2018); *BMSDC Infrastructure Strategy* (indicative adoption 2018 / 19); *BMSDC Communities Strategy* (indicative adoption Winter 2018/19); and *Assets Strategy* (indicative adoption Summer 2018).
- 4.3 Furthermore, the BMSDC Housing Strategy will relate to many Suffolk-wide strategies, policies, evidence, and procedures, such as those from Public Health (Appendix c and, Appendix d), Adult Services, Children Services, NHS Trust Commissioning, Community Safety, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the

Greenest County Partnership. Together these focus on creating an enhanced quality of life for individuals, families, the communities in which they live and work, and the wider geographical areas of Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

- 4.4 Being aware of these interdependencies will be important in maintaining sensitivity to any environmental or social issues from new developments, and we will continue working to mitigate these in consultation with existing local communities and relevant partners.
- 4.5 Sustainable growth is being shaped and informed by the development of the new BMSDC Joint Local Plan through to 2036. By developing a Housing Strategy and agreed Action Plans with partners, their skills and expertise will be incorporated to ensure housing makes a key contribution to the delivery of sustainable growth, whilst protecting and enhancing quality of place. The Joint Local Plan consultation document (August 2017) set out a housing requirement for the two districts based upon evidence (Appendix e) from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2017). This housing requirement continues to evolve with the publication of a proposed standard methodology for calculating housing need by the Government in September 2017 as part of the Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places consultation. The draft revised National Planning Policy Framework proposes to update this standard methodology for calculating housing need and to introduce a Housing Delivery Test requirement.
- 4.6 The BMSDC housing vision is for all residents to be able to access affordable, appropriate, and decent accommodation. Therefore, work will be undertaken to improve the quality, choice, and supply of homes for current and future households. With a total estimated population increase of 21,000 over the next 20 years, many of whom will be over 65 years old, housing of the right type and in the right place is an important part of supporting sustainable growth.
- 4.7 We know that ensuring the delivery of the right number of new homes, of the right type, in the right places and offering more choice in the housing market is vital to supporting the continued resilience of our rural communities and market towns alike.
- 4.8 However, the Housing Strategy will be about more than simply increasing the supply of new homes to meet identified housing need, maintaining and regenerating BMSDCs existing social existing housing stock, or ensuring decent homes are available to all in each part of the Private Sector Housing stock.
- 4.9 Housing plays a significant role in supporting quality of life, health and well-being, access to work, training or education, and much needed leisure time. The quality of housing, its availability, cost, and location are of primary importance to enable everyone to settle and fully participate in their community to enhance quality of place and quality of well-being.
- 4.10 Therefore, we will signal a strong emphasis on the leadership role of each Local Housing Authority, separately and jointly with others, as well as promoting and fostering successful new working partnerships with all parts of the housing market. We will further develop existing working partnerships, for example with other registered providers of social housing, specialist providers of market homes for older households, estate agents and businesses.

- 4.11 The attached 'Housing Strategy Communications and Stakeholder Involvement Plan' outlines in more detail BMSDCs key housing challenges, who we will involve, a schedule of stakeholder involvement activity, and what the intended outputs will be. It also shows opportunities for all elected Members to be actively involved in shaping the Housing Strategy, as well through the formal Committee stages key milestones.
- 4.12 Previous reports went to Babergh and Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 20th and 16th November 2017 respectively, which detailed the issues regarding the implementation of the new Homelessness Reduction Act duties.

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 The Councils have re-iterated and highlighted priorities, grouped under five strategic themes, in the BMSDC 'Annual Report Summary 2017/18' which supports the delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan 2016-2020. They are part of the vision for the Councils, centred around Economy and Environment, Housing and, Strong and Healthy Communities.
- 5.2 'Housing' is a vital aspect of the Councils jobs-centred, sustainable economic growth ambition. It will make a significant contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the Joint Strategic Plan as outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.3 A specific outcome 'Housing Strategy to be complete winter 2018-19' forms part of the 'Housing Delivery Priorities' found on page 8 of the Annual Report Summary 2017/18, underlining the continued commitment to better housing outcomes.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue/Capital/ Expenditure/Income Item	Total	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Preparation of a housing strategy.	£5,000	£0	£5,000	£0
Net Effect				

There is a budget for the preparation of a housing strategy during the 2018/19 financial year within the Strategic Planning budget. It is anticipated that approximately £2,500 would be required to enable effective stakeholder engagement through the running of events and the production of materials.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 If the Councils fail to accurately assess homeless applications and carry out the Homelessness Reduction Duties, then there is the risk of legal challenge. A court case would lead to significant costs.
- 7.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Appendix f) identifies that the determination of planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material decisions indicate otherwise. The draft revised National Planning Policy Framework proposes to introduce a Housing Delivery Test, which if not met to the level required, would mean a local planning authority's housing policies are considered out-of-date even if the local planning authority could demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land. The Housing Delivery Test is proposed to be calculated at a percentage of the annual housing requirement that has been completed over the previous three-year period.

Producing a housing strategy which identifies how delivery can be maintained and enhanced will contribute to minimising the risk of not meeting the requirements of any Housing Delivery Test.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 1c and 1e – Housing Delivery. 3a – Community Capacity Building and Engagement. 4b – Assets and Investments. 5g – An Enabled and Efficient Organisation.

8.2 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
<p>Without the adoption of a comprehensive BMSDC Housing Strategy, it is unlikely the Councils will focus resources on key priorities associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing new homes delivery • Increasing housing options for older households and those requiring fully accessible homes • Ensuring existing housing stock is fit for 21st century living. • Supporting the most vulnerable households find a sustain a home 	Highly unlikely (1)	Bad (3)	Joint Housing Strategy project plan and officer working group in place to create a comprehensive Housing Strategy and action plans which respond to the four key housing challenges.
Without organised collaboration, it is unlikely the Councils will work most effectively with housing market stakeholders, and we may not address the identified housing market challenges in a timely manner.	Unlikely (2)	Noticeable (2)	A Communications and Stakeholder Involvement Plan, including a timetable for specific stakeholder engagement activity has been created. A workshop was held in April with housing market stakeholders to invite them to shape and inform the housing strategy and action plans from the outset.

Without effective use of BMSDC and public estate assets it is unlikely the Councils will reduce costs to the public purse, and significant opportunities to co-create new and imaginative ways to inform and influence successful housing outcomes may be missed.	Unlikely (2)	Bad (3)	Numerous new opportunities exploited to inform and work with relevant partners in BMSDC areas. E.g. Contributed to the 'Housing & Health' 2017 evidence base, being used by the Suffolk Health & Well-Being Board to deliver its Key Priorities.
Without a revised and adopted Homelessness Reduction Strategy, it is unlikely the Councils will reduce homelessness and higher numbers of BMSDC residents may be at increased risk. This will impact most on our vulnerable residents and children.	Highly unlikely (1)	Disaster (4)	Dedicated officer resources support the production and inclusion of a reviewed Homelessness Reduction Strategy in accordance with new duties and guidance of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as part of the comprehensive Housing Strategy development process.
Without an effective plan for increasing new homes delivery the Councils may increase the risk of a loss of planning control and a potential loss of New Homes Bonus for local authorities in accordance with the new 'Housing Delivery Test' currently under consideration as part of the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued March 2018. A revised NPPF is expected to be published in late July 2018.	Highly probable (4)	Disaster (4)	<p>Within the new Housing Strategy increasing the delivery of new homes is given highest priority. This means new and additional resources are already on track to support this work as well as preparation of a Housing Delivery Test – Action Plan. E.g. additional staff resources have been allocated within Strategic Planning and Housing Solutions.</p> <p>The Joint Local Plan will allocate sites for housing delivery over the period to 2036 that will be supported by evidence to their delivery.</p>
Without an effective plan to address the changing housing needs of an ageing population, the Councils may see a significant proportion of	Probable (3)	Disaster (4)	The Councils are actively working with Suffolk County Council colleagues to develop shared understanding and action plans to address the

residents being inadequately housed. Inadequately housed may mean people are: unsafe; insecure; at high risk of premature death.			highest priority housing needs of older residents. Also exploring all and every new funding stream to bring in the necessary resources to support this ambition.
Without a plan to support the most vulnerable households find and sustain a home, it is unlikely the Councils will be compliant with the new Duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 leading to reputational damage and / or potentially significant financial penalties.	Highly unlikely (1)	Disaster (4)	The co-production of a revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy and associated action plans alongside the comprehensive Housing Strategy. A programmed and continuously monitored project plan is on track.
Without continuing to ensure current housing stock (approximately 80,000 homes) is fit for 21 st century living, it is unlikely the Councils will make best use of public and private assets and investments.	Probable (3)	Disaster (4)	Detailed action plans to support private sector landlords fulfil their duties form part of the Housing Strategy, to include Licensing of relevant Houses of Multiple Occupation. Warm Homes funding bid opportunities constantly monitored to bring in additional funding for to support those households in fuel poverty. Empty Homes project revitalised to bring even more empty homes back in to use. The Housing Revenue Account business plan used to maximum to support BMSDC social landlord function, new build work and estate regeneration.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 A BMSDC Housing Strategy project '*Communications and Stakeholder Involvement Plan*' (included as Appendix g) has been created to ensure relevant stakeholders can have their say. It details:

- Housing Strategy background issues

- Aims of the Housing Strategy
- Key messages and Communications Framework
- Key audiences
- Communications Channels
- Communications Tools
- Spokespersons
- Risks and mitigation measures.

9.2 A timetable of activity with key audiences is included.

9.3 To date, stakeholder engagement activities have been undertaken with technical stakeholders and providers of housing services and products, as well as BMSDC Members.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 See screening Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix h) for the Housing Strategy 2018-2036. No further action required at this time.

10.2 Equality Impact Assessment screening in respect of the revised Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023 will be available when the HRS is further developed.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report. However, environmental implications with regard new homes and investing / adapting current housing stock will be covered in detail when appropriate operational work is undertaken, taking note of the guidance from 'Suffolk, Creating the Greenest County' weblink on the Suffolk County Council website, and BMSDC 'Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines Table'.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Deregulation Act 2015, Section 29 Removal of power to require preparation of housing Strategies:	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/section/29
(b) Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted
(c) 'Housing and Health' JSNA evidence base 2018	https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/hhna-Infographic.pdf

	https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Suffolk_Housing_and_Health_Final_Mar_18HWB.pdf
(d) Suffolk Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019	https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Joint-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-for-2016-2019.pdf
(e) Ipswich & Waveney Housing Market Area Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017	https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Ipswich-and-Waveney-Housing-Market-Areas-Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-Part-1-May-2017.pdf https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/SHMA-Pt2-Sept-2017-2.pdf
(f) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as enacted and as amended. Section 38(6) doesn't change.	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/38/enacted http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/38
(g) BMSDC Housing Strategy Communications & Stakeholder Involvement Plan	Appended.
(h) BMSDC Housing Strategy Equality Screening Analysis	Appended.

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

'Laying the Foundations': a housing strategy for England. Nov 2011.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laying-the-foundations-a-housing-strategy-for-england--2
'Fixing our broken housing market'. Feb 2017. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for homes in the right places • Build homes faster • Diversify the housing market • Help people now. 	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market
The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) is a sophisticated network bringing	https://www.housinglin.org.uk/AboutHousingLIN/

<p>together housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population.</p>	
<p>The International Longevity Centre – UK (ILC-UK) is a futures organisation focussed on some of the biggest challenges facing Government and society in the context of demographic change.</p>	<p>http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/publications/publication_posts/C23</p> <p>This research publication section of ILCUK online directory focusses on 'Community and Housing' issues.</p>