

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Council	REPORT NUMBER: MC/18/52
FROM: Councillor Jill Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing	DATE OF MEETING: 18 March 2019
OFFICER: Gavin Fisk Assistant Director - Housing	KEY DECISION REF NO. CNL21

ADOPTION OF THE HOMES AND HOUSING STRATEGY (2019-2024)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the Homes and Housing Strategy (2019-2024) and associated action plans.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council has agreed to publish a Joint five-year Housing Strategy entitled 'Homes and Housing Strategy' to support the increased delivery of new homes and to inform future decision making on the Councils aims to deliver Housing and Housing services.
- 2.2 To not develop or publish a comprehensive Homes and Housing Strategy as currently there is no legal requirement to do so.
- 2.3 To create a Homes and Housing Strategy with a single focus on increasing new homes delivery. This approach to a Homes and 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 about 7,000 households, the Councils' new build programme supported by the Housing Revenue Account, the positive impact high quality design homes which are warm, safe and connected to communities has on households' health and well-being.
- 2.4 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 Homes and Housing Strategy which addresses all key housing related challenges, alongside a refreshed Homeless Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy compliant with new Duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Homes and Housing Strategy (2019-2024) attached as Appendix A and associated Action Plans attached as Appendix B be approved for implementation.
- 3.2 That the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, be delegated the authority to make future minor amendments and updates to the Strategy and Action Plans, where required and appropriate.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure Mid Suffolk District Council meets its expectations and desires to publish a Joint Homes and Housing Strategy for the next five years (2019-2024).

To ensure that Mid Suffolk through its Homes and Housing Strategy:

- Systematically reviews housing related issues in both districts.
- Sets out how it will meet key housing challenges to stimulate the housing market.
- Establishes priorities for action both by Babergh and Mid Suffolk alone and together with other services providers and stakeholders.
- Has a published, stakeholder agreed Joint Homes and Housing Strategy based on evidence of housing and health needs which will enable Mid Suffolk to be ready to access any additional funding streams to enhance the local housing market, in turn to support inclusive growth to the benefit of all residents.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The significance of having a ready supply of affordable homes, which are well designed inside and out, makes a huge difference to the health, wellbeing and quality of life our residents can expect.
- 4.2 The Housing Strategy titled 'Homes and Housing Strategy' sets out our current housing challenges and how we will tackle them over the short term through to 2024 and set the direction of travel beyond. The strategy and action plans will be developed by means of a Project Board which will monitor progress monthly and a review will take place annually with Councillors updated through Overview and Scrutiny. We will ensure the way we work will be flexible enough to incorporate changes as central Government Housing, Planning, and Social Care policy around us change.
- 4.3 There is a current housing shortage that needs to be addressed and the Councils have a key role to play. Existing housing stock and new homes delivery is under strain from several factors, including a growing population and increasing life expectancy. The refreshed Joint Strategic Plan 2016-2020 prioritises delivery of 'more of the right type of homes, of the right tenure in the right place' which forms the focus for this Strategy.
- 4.4 Both Councils support the Suffolk inclusive growth ambition, whereby everyone should feel the social and economic benefits brought to their local area by new homes, new people and enhanced facilities. Getting the housing element of inclusive growth right is fundamental to this, which is why Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors are creating these long-term strategic housing plans.

New homes are important not only in meeting housing need, but also raising housing standards and ensuring communities can thrive.

4.5 Both Babergh's and Mid Suffolk's vision for housing, is for our residents to live in districts where people have access to affordable and high-quality homes that enable them to build settled, safe and healthy lives, within sustainable and thriving communities.

4.6 The Homes and Housing Strategy is underpinned by four main principles:

- We will work with anyone that wants to develop and deliver the right homes, in the right place at the right time to provide much needed new homes; making more effective use of existing homes; and developing innovative solutions to the housing needs of our residents and communities.
- We will create a new relationship with residents which is based around their need and their experience, rather than the processes of individual agencies. We will empower residents with more choice.
- We will adopt a 'one public sector' approach, working together in a more linked up way with our public sector partners to deliver better, more effective and efficient services.
- We are committed to being open and transparent, providing frequent information as to how we are performing against the plan. This will ensure residents have the information at their fingertips to engage with us and ensure we deliver on our priorities.

4.7 The Homes and Housing Strategy has been developed with nine areas of focus, these are:

- The housing market functions effectively, providing homes which are as affordable as possible; to meet the needs of residents and support the local economy.
- There is a wide and varied choice of good quality, sustainable homes of different sizes, types, and tenures, to meet the needs of a wide range of different households.
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is prevented, and effective housing options meet the needs of vulnerable people.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk is an effective social landlord known for delivering quality services.
- Homes are in high quality sustainable environments, served by jobs and community facilities, appropriate green space, effective transport links and other necessary infrastructure.
- Best use is made of private sector land and accommodation across the Districts.
- People live in vibrant and well-connected communities; and homes and communities continue to meet the needs of residents into the future.
- Everyone has a suitable home, and residents are able to live as healthily, safely, independently as possible within sustainable communities.

- Both Councils have strong relationships with residents, developers and partners that enable us to deliver housing, infrastructure and services effectively, and to innovate where appropriate.

4.8 The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy will contribute to the outcomes and impacts of the wider portfolio of strategies which together support the strategic priorities. These include; Babergh and Mid Suffolk Open for Business Strategy; Infrastructure Strategy; and Communities Strategy.

4.9 Furthermore, the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy will relate to many Suffolk-wide strategies, policies, evidence and procedures, such as those from Public Health, Adult Services, Children Services, Clinical Commissioning Groups, 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.

4.10 Inclusive growth is being shaped and informed by the development of the new Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan through to 2036. By developing the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy and action plans with partners, their expertise will be incorporated from the start to ensure housing makes a key contribution to the delivery of inclusive growth, whilst protecting and enhancing quality of place.

4.11 The Joint Local Plan consultation document (August 2017) set out a housing requirement for the two districts. This is based upon evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2017). However, due to the release of a revised Government standard methodology for calculating housing need, and using the 2014-based household projections, we have an annual requirement from 2018 to 2036 of:

- 420 new homes in Babergh and,
- 585 new homes in Mid Suffolk.

4.12 To achieve the Babergh and Mid Suffolk housing vision, work will be undertaken to improve the quality, choice, and supply of homes for current and future households. With a projected population increase of 16,600 over the period 2018 to 2036 based on Government projections, 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 better health and well-being through the home of the over 60s population.

4.13 The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Homes and Housing Strategy outcomes are about more than simply increasing the supply of new homes to meet identified housing need, maintaining and regenerating our existing social housing stock, or ensuring decent homes are available to all.

4.14 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.

- 4.15 Therefore, we will emphasise 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.
- 4.16 The separately published yet connected Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy's vision is to end rough sleeping in our Districts, work with clients as early as possible to prevent homelessness occurring, further reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, support households to secure accommodation in the private sector and ensure every person contacting our service, receives the same level of in-depth advice and assistance to resolve their housing crisis.

5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- 5.1 The Councils have re-iterated and highlighted priorities, grouped under five strategic themes, in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk 'Annual Report Summary 2017/18' which supports the delivery of the refreshed Joint Strategic Plan 2016-2020. They are part of the vision for the Councils, centred around Economy and Environment, Housing Delivery and Strong and Healthy Communities.
- 5.2 'Housing' is a vital aspect of the Councils sustainable inclusive growth ambition. It will make a significant contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the Joint Strategic Plan.
- 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

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to the final production and launching of both the Homes and Housing Strategy and Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy, other than nominal costs which will be within existing budget provision. Naturally there will be financial implications of the pledges and actions within both strategies and each will be considered individually as part of a business case or project document.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is not a statutory requirement to publish a housing strategy and there are no legal implications of producing and implementing the Homes and Housing Strategy. Where associated tasks within the action plan involve statutory outcomes they will be considered at the time each specific action requires legal consideration.

7.2 It is a statutory requirement to publish a Homelessness Reduction Strategy. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government monitor which Councils have published a strategy and will contact us if we fail to publish one during 2019/20.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 1a – We may not have an up to date understanding of housing need and demand and 1e – There may be an insufficient local supply of appropriate homes for the ageing population. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Without the adoption of a comprehensive Babergh and Mid Suffolk Homes and Housing Strategy, it is less likely the Councils will achieve their vision for housing.	Highly unlikely (1)	Bad (3)	Joint Homes and Housing Strategy project plan and officer working group in place to deliver the Homes and Housing Strategy and Action Plans, and associated Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy and action plans.
Without systematic collaboration, it is unlikely the Councils will work most effectively with other 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 2018 with housing market stakeholders to invite them to shape and inform the homes strategy and action plans from the outset.
Without effective use of Babergh and Mid Suffolk 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 Babergh and Mid Suffolk 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.

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
<p>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' introduced by a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2018.</p>	<p>Probable (3)</p>	<p>Bad (3)</p>	<p>Within the new Homes and 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>
<p>Without an effective plan to address the changing housing needs of an ageing population, the Councils may see a significant proportion of residents being inadequately housed. Inadequately housed may mean people are unsafe, insecure, at high risk of premature death.</p>	<p>Probable (3)</p>	<p>Bad (3)</p>	<p>The Councils are actively working with Suffolk County Council colleagues to develop shared understanding and action plans to address the 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.</p>
<p>Without continuing to ensure current housing stock (approximately 80,000 homes) is fit for 21st century living, it is unlikely the Councils will make best use of public and private assets and investments.</p>	<p>Probable (3)</p>	<p>Bad (3)</p>	<p>Detailed action plans to support private sector landlords fulfil their duties form part of the Homes and 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.</p>

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
			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 Babergh and Mid Suffolk social landlord function, new build work and estate regeneration.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 April 2018: Housing market stakeholder event to determine areas of strategic focus and begin work on action plans.
- 9.2 June 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors workshop event to comment on and refine work so far.
- 9.3 June 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Town and Parish Councils alerted in advance of the consultation period during September / October.
- 9.4 July 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: to comment on the process and endorse the approach.
- 9.5 September 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinets decided further work was required to the draft Homes and Housing Strategy and actions and subsequently authorised a 30-day consultation that begun on the 27th October until 7th December 2018. Promotion included web pages, an email banner that all staff used and articles on social media. During the consultation period copies of the draft strategy were sent to all key stakeholders including; Parish Councils, Local Borough and District Councils, Third Sector organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux, with a request to complete a survey and capture views.
- 9.6 October 2018: An event was held in Endeavour House Atrium whereby stakeholders could speak to officers regarding the content of the strategy and action plans.
- 9.7 November 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors workshop to consider consultation feedback and offer final amendments to the strategy and associated action plans.
- 9.8 March 2019: Strategy and action plans to Full Council to request adoption.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 If any of the protected characteristic groups may be affected as a result of the recommendations in this report, a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be carried out as indicated in the overarching EIA attached at Appendix (e).

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of the Joint Homes and Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Homes and Housing Strategy (2019-2024)	Attached
(b) Homes and Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plans (2019-2024)	Attached
(c) Homes and Housing Strategy National Context	Attached
(d) Homes and Housing Strategy Local Context	Attached
(e) Homes and Housing Strategy Glossary	Attached
(f) Homes and Housing Equality Impact Assessment	Attached

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 13.1 None.