

To: City Executive Board
Date: 15 October 2014
Report of: Head of Housing and Property
Title of Report: Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide the City Executive Board with the Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018 with a proposed action plan that outlines the key priorities for the next three years, prior to wider consultation.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member: Cllr Scott Seamons, Board Member for Housing and Estates

Policy Framework: Housing Strategy Corporate objective- Meeting Housing Needs

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board approve the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan for wider consultation

Appendices

- A – Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018
- B – Housing Strategy Risk Register
- C – Housing Strategy EIA

Introduction

- 1 The Housing Strategy approved in April 2012 expires in March 2015 and is due to be replaced by a new strategy for the period 2015 – 2018. The Draft Strategy in Appendix A, contains the proposed priorities for the next three years.

- 2 The 2015-2018 Draft Housing Strategy has been developed to have a wider cross tenure approach to housing issues in Oxford and has termed this '*The Housing Offer*'.
- 3 The Draft Strategy has four main priorities proposed compared with six in the previous strategy; the new priorities have been identified as:
 - Priority 1 – Increase supply and improve access to affordable housing;
 - Priority 2 – Meet housing needs of vulnerable groups;
 - Priority 3 – Support growth of a balanced housing market; and
 - Priority 4 – Support sustainable communities

The previous priorities under the 2012-2015 Strategy were:

- Priority 1 – Provide more affordable housing in the City to meet housing needs;
- Priority 2 – Prevent and reduce homelessness;
- Priority 3 – Address the housing needs of vulnerable people and communities;
- Priority 4 – Improve housing conditions;
- Priority 5 – Improve housing services; and
- Priority 6 – Implement self-financing of the HRA

Progress to date

- 4 In April 2014, the Strategy & Enabling team held a workshop for a mix of internal departments to help start shape what the priorities would look like for the 2015-2018 Housing Strategy. Over 30 members of staff compared the existing Housing Strategy priorities of 2012-2015 and then assessed these against the current issues we are faced with in the Housing Market in Oxford. External partners through the ORAH Partnership (Housing Association partners) and the Homelessness Working Group were also consulted upon what the key priorities should be.
- 5 The questions that were asked as part of the Priority Setting stage were as follows:
 1. What are the key barriers to the housing market in Oxford?
 2. What should the priorities be in light of these barriers, and do the current 2012-2015 Housing Strategy priorities address these barriers?
 3. What are the key actions to deliver for the priorities that you have identified?
- 6 Following the work of these sessions, the new Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018 has four main priorities proposed compared with six in the previous strategy, the new priorities have been identified as:
 - Priority 1 – Increase supply and improve access to affordable housing
 - Priority 2 – Meet housing needs of vulnerable groups

- Priority 3 – Support growth of a balanced housing market
 - Priority 4 – Support sustainable communities
- 7 Within each Priority in the Draft Housing Strategy, there is a table that summarises what the key actions should be to help deliver each priority. These key actions have formed the draft Action Plan attached to the Strategy in Appendix A, to help with a wider consultation process.
- 8 Consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018 is being proposed for a 5 week period commencing on 22nd October 2014 and closing on 1st December 2014. Following consultation, all comments will be collated and the Draft Strategy will be revised and a final version prepared for bringing back to CEB in March 2015 and then Full Council for adoption. The aim of the consultation will be to check that the draft priorities are the right ones and to also check the key actions are correct and to add to these where actions might be missing.

Level of Risk

- 9 A risk register is attached as Appendix B. It should be noted that risks associated with specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects /programmes.

Environmental Impact

- 10 The Draft Housing Strategy 2015 to 2018 does not have any explicit environmental impacts in itself. Specific projects identified in the Housing Strategy Action Plan will have environmental impacts, specifically the provision of additional housing to meet housing needs. These environmental impacts associated with specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects / programmes especially where planning permission is required.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 11 The Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix C. The Housing Strategy and its action plan does take into consideration meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable people in Oxford under Priority 2 and as such no adverse impacts on any equalities group are expected as a result of this Draft Housing Strategy and the attached action plan.

Financial Implications

- 12 Any financial implications for specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects /programmes.

- 13 Included within the HRA Business Plan provision has been specifically made for the following:
- Delivery of new housing at Barton
 - The delivery of 113 new dwellings over the coming two years, part funded by HCA grant
 - On-going repairs, maintenance and refurbishment to its stock of council dwellings, including the tower blocks
 - Management related costs in providing all landlord services to our tenants
 - Headroom to support some of the strategic sites as part of the City Deal in relation to New Build.
- 14 In the General Fund Budget there is provision for the costs of homelessness and providing other private sector housing advice. No new financial implications are brought forward by this Draft Housing Strategy in relation to the General Fund.

Legal Implications

- 15 The Local Government Act 2003 requires local housing authorities to have in place a Housing Strategy for the City.
- 16 Meeting the Council's statutory housing obligations is reflected in the priorities of the Housing Strategy, including statutory homelessness duties; provision of housing advice; and landlord responsibilities.
- 17 There are no further legal implications resulting from the Draft Housing Strategy 2015-2018 and the attached action plan.

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List of background papers: None