

REPORT TITLE: HOUSING STRATEGY 2023-2028

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Local Government Act 2003 requires all local housing authorities to publish a Housing Strategy setting out a vision for housing within its district, including housing objectives, targets, and policies on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role.

The current strategy expires in 2023 and a review is appropriate.

The Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 is a high-level strategic plan that sets out the council's vision and housing objectives to ensure we meet the housing aspirations and needs of our residents. It sets out how we will enable households to live in energy efficient, safe homes and sustainable neighbourhoods within the context of National Housing Policy, the Council Plan and Local Plan.

The Housing Strategy has 4 key objectives setting out where we will be in 2028. The actions to deliver on the objectives is outlined in the Delivery Plan at appendix of the report.

This is a Housing Strategy that recognises our achievements, acknowledges our challenges, but most importantly looks to the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Cabinet Committee: Housing approves and adopts the Housing Strategy 2023-2028.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
- 1.2 'Greener Homes' is one of the key strategic objectives within the Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 and will help develop and support a greener district and address the climate emergency. Delivering high-quality energy efficient new homes, improving existing council homes through the retrofit carbon reduction programme and by promoting government energy efficiency schemes to help improve poor energy performing homes within the private sector housing stock.
- 1.3 Homes for All.
- 1.4 'More Homes for all' is a key strategic objective within the housing strategy to achieve the development of high quality and affordable homes and to enable other housing providers to maximise the amount of new affordable housing delivered across the district.
- 1.5 Vibrant Local Economy
- 1.6 The delivery of the housing strategy brings benefits to the local economy, there is a clear connection between good quality housing and a vibrant economy.
- 1.7 Living Well
- 1.8 Where we live and the quality of our immediate environment has a huge impact on the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents. The key strategic objectives of the Housing Strategy will help people to live well through the positive impact a safe, and affordable home has on residents, neighbourhoods, and communities.
- 1.9 Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.10 The housing strategy as a 5-year live document will engage with tenants and residents across the district with an aim to capture wider representative views through digital surveys, focus groups, meeting with established community and faith groups and through organised neighbourhood and community events.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The HRA budget and business plan will ensure the key objectives of the housing strategy remain deliverable over the 5-year delivery plan.

- 2.2 The strategic housing General Fund budget, reserve fund and various housing grants directly received from central government are in place to help deliver on the strategic homelessness objectives within the Housing Strategy. However, reductions in government homelessness support through the annual allocation of the Homeless Preventing Grant may reduce or stop the delivery of the discretionary grant elements of the housing options service.
- 2.3 There is the potential of Hampshire County Council - Social Inclusion budget cuts which may result in the loss of key supported housing providers resulting in an increase of homelessness presentations made to the council.
- 2.4 National housing policy may shift its focus and new priorities emerge, but it is anticipated that the key objectives within the housing strategy will remain relevant but the way we fund and deliver them over the 5-year plan may need to change.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires all local housing authorities to publish a Housing Strategy setting out a vision for housing within its district. The council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness and reviewing housing conditions. The housing strategy will assist the council in meeting those duties.
- 3.2 All works commissioned to meet the housing strategy objectives included in this strategy will be procured in accordance with the council's contract procurement rules.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are various workforce implications from the provisions of the strategy itself in addition to the impact of existing and the potential of new legislation. For example, full asylum dispersal, the Housing White paper and the Social Housing Regulation Act, the Renters (reform) Bill and other government initiatives which may evolve during the term of this strategy.
- 4.2 Any increase in the new build programme and any additional rounds of the Local Housing Authority Fund (LAHF) will have resource implications for the service and other services such as the New Homes team, Finance and Legal teams. As is the potential to move towards a policy focused on acquiring new homes already built on s106 sites.
- 4.3 Any changes to funding such as the reduction of the government's Homeless Prevention Grant, Homes for Ukraine, the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation

will all impact on teams and service resources and the ability to maximise the opportunities presented.

- 4.4 Any legislation and policy impacts to this strategy during its term will be assessed at that time and either the workforce or the strategy will be adjusted accordingly.

5 PROPERTY. AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The housing strategy will seek to make best use of all housing assets and links within provisions of other related strategies and policies such as the Local Plan, New Homes Development Strategy and the HRA Asset Management Strategy.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The housing strategy has been developed in consultation with residents and tenants, key stakeholders from statutory organisations and voluntary agencies, Registered Providers and Letting agencies. It also captured senior officer, and key Member views and staff views through focus groups. Consultation was in the form of a resident and a stakeholder online survey, virtual meetings, and workshops.
- 6.2 An online survey was developed to better understand the housing strategy priorities of residents. Survey questions were asked on a series of multiple-choice questions that enabled residents to suggest their priorities of concern. The survey encouraged residents to select their top 5 housing challenges. Over 406 residents responded to the survey.
- 6.3 Top Five Survey Challenges:
1. A shortage of affordable housing.
 2. A shortage of properties for people to buy.
 3. A shortage of private rented housing.
 4. Limited alternative housing options of low-cost home ownership; shared ownership or homes for mid-market rent.
 5. A lack of accessible housing for people living with health problems or disabilities.
- 6.4 The emerging draft housing strategy was presented at the Business and Housing Policy Committee on 19 September 2023. David Chafe, Chair of the tenant's group 'Tenants and Council Together' (TACT) was present at the meeting and supported the aims of the housing strategy. Mr Chafe was

particularly supportive of the strategy objectives that help young people and families to access local housing options. The Housing Strategy and its objectives were debated at length at the committee by Members, the strategy was well received by the committee with the key strategic objectives endorsed. Committee and TACT feedback is captured in the BH&P Committee minutes at Background Information of the report.

- 6.5 An individual consultation meeting was held on 18 October 2023, with the Shadow Member for Housing, Corporate Head and Director of Housing Services and the Portfolio Holder for Housing. Several observations and feedback suggestions were discussed with several actions incorporated in the housing strategy.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The housing strategy aims to minimise the environmental impact of the existing housing stock and future housing development in the interest of climate change. Throughout the 5-year life span of the strategy, the council will work with policy makers, developers, and private and social landlords to maximise resource efficiencies and to ensure optimum use of sustainable construction techniques.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 The strategy will impact positively on significant numbers of individuals in housing need by increasing the supply of affordable homes in the district and by providing good quality housing advice to all. The strategy will prevent and relieve homelessness in the district and create sustainable and diverse communities.
- 8.2 The EIA at Appendix 3 has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure Insufficient strategic housing budget to meet the statutory	Budgetary control processes in place.	Proactively seek and submit potential funding opportunities including

<p>homelessness function due to the reductions in the government Homeless Preventing Grant. Discretionary housing support may be reduced or stopped.</p> <p>Hampshire County Council – Social Inclusion Budget reduction consultation. Potential loss of supporting funding for local key homelessness stakeholders.</p> <p>HRA Budget restraints to deliver the New Homes Development Programme due to high interest rates and construction costs.</p>	<p>Partnership working and a review of the current Winchester homelessness pathway and models of provision is underway to complete this year to ensure best use of homelessness resources.</p> <p>Current internal review underway to explore ways of addressing the funding gap. Lobbying HCC in partnership with the Strategic Housing Officer Group of Hampshire Local Housing Authorities.</p> <p>Remodelling the HRA Business Plan. Exploring alternative development options with Registered Providers and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>DLUHC bids where applicable and appropriate.</p>
<p>Innovation</p> <p>The housing strategy is a high-level strategic plan that sets out the council's vision and housing objectives (2023-28) to meet the housing aspirations and needs of residents.</p>		<p>The council delivers on its strategic housing role, enabling households to live in safe homes and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>Reputation</p> <p>The risk of not delivering on the housing strategy</p>	<p>The risk of not delivering on the housing strategy is</p>	<p>The housing strategy is a positive 5-year high- level</p>

	mitigated through the monitoring and governance measures contained within the housing strategy supported by the delivery plan.	plan that sets out the council vision for housing within its district, including on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role.
<p>Achievement of outcome</p> <p>Economic factors can lead to an increase in demand for statutory housing services. The housing market and the economy become unstable and therefore unable to meet some of the housing strategy key objectives due to an increased demand on existing resources.</p>	<p>Budgetary controls and processes in place.</p> <p>Robust monitoring of changes to the housing market and wider economy and review of demand figures.</p> <p>Developing joint working opportunities with partnership organisations. Maximise government investment and funding opportunities.</p> <p>Annual monitoring of the housing strategy delivery plan.</p>	
<p>Property</p> <p>Not delivering and increasing the supply of affordable homes within the district.</p>	<p>Making best use of all housing assets and links within provisions of other related strategies and policies such as the Local Plan, New Homes Development Strategy and the HRA Asset Management Strategy.</p>	
Community Support		

Not improving the community housing opportunities of vulnerable and excluded households.	All stakeholders and partners commit to actions required in the Housing Strategy delivery plan. Continue to build on effective partnerships to deliver shared objectives.	Stakeholders, tenants, and residents have had the opportunity to contribute to the housing strategy key objectives and will be involved in the 5-year delivery plan.
Timescales. Not meeting the housing strategy delivery plan timescales.	The housing strategy is a 5-year live plan inviting scrutiny and benchmark performance to be reviewed annually by the Cabinet Committee: Housing.	
Project capacity	There is current project capacity within various team delivery resources. The Impact of local and national initiatives will be monitored by the Housing Service. Where appropriate support will be provided.	

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 **Introduction**

11.2 The council's current housing strategy expires in 2023. A new housing strategy and delivery plan is required for 2023-2028

11.3 The housing strategy is a high-level strategic plan that sets out the council's housing vision and strategic objectives to ensure it meets the housing aspirations and needs of residents.

11.4 The housing strategy takes its lead from the Council's Plan and complements other council strategies and policies. The housing strategy is particularly closely aligned with the council's Local Plan, but the strategy has a specific focus on a narrower range of communities compared to the Local Plan. The housing strategy aims to focus on those who are unable to exercise a reasonable degree of choice regarding their housing circumstances.

11.5 The strategic objectives that are set out in the housing strategy are high level and provide an overarching framework for the more detailed plans that are formulated or refreshed to deliver the objectives on more specific housing

issues. Such as the New Homes Development Strategy, Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Private Sector Renewal Strategy, HRA Asset Management Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

- 11.6 The housing strategy will be implemented through actions and investment of the council in conjunction with stakeholders, the voluntary sector, and strategic partnerships.
- 11.7 The housing strategy is a short strategic document with a delivery plan. The plan will be for 5 years and will focus on the 4 established objectives, it is not able to cover everything the council aspires to deliver on housing.
- 11.8 **The Housing Strategy Vision and Objectives.**
- 11.9 The housing strategy vision is not just to create new homes but to create high quality homes and adaptable new homes to meet local need, including a range of sizes and tenures. Homes that are energy efficient and affordable to run and that protect the natural environment. As well as investing in the existing housing stock to decarbonise the housing stock and reduce energy costs for our tenants.
- 11.10 The strategy will work to improve the quality and management of the Private Housing Sector to ensure it is fit for purpose and helps meet the challenges of climate change. The housing strategy is truly cross-tenure and will deliver choice and quality regardless of age or income.
- 11.11 **The Housing Strategy Vision and Objective.**
- 11.12 The housing strategy vision is to make a difference through the positive impact more homes for all have on our neighbourhoods and communities. It will promote the delivery of healthier and greener homes, meeting different housing need and creating safe and better neighbourhoods.

Housing Strategy Vision:

'By 2028 there will be healthier and greener homes meeting housing need within better neighbourhoods'

The Housing Strategy - Strategic Objectives:

Objective 1 - More Homes for All

Objective 2 - Greener Homes

Objective 3 - Homes that Better Meet Different Needs.

Objective 4 - Better Managed Homes, Better Neighbourhoods

More Homes for all

11.13 More homes for all will deliver high quality and affordable new homes, that meet identified need and address the climate change emergency, creating housing that people choose to live in and are proud to call their home.

Where we will be in 2028:

- Developed 659 of new affordable housing targeted to meet needs identified by the council's housing register demand.
- Developed an agreed Council and Registered Provider Development Strategy.
- Delivered a joined-up approach for the enabling and council delivery of low-cost shared ownerships properties that are affordable.
- Established and supported work with Registered Providers and the council's Registered Provider Partnership/forum to increase levels of affordable homes.
- Worked on the 'Next Generation Winchester' project to explore and address barriers to buy a home and privately rent.
- Maximised Home England investment and funding to deliver more affordable social rented homes.
- Worked with local communities and Parish Councils to deliver affordable housing in rural areas.
- Delivering different tenure offers through the Local Housing Company, Venta Living Limited,
- Regularly reviewed our approach to affordable housing development in the light of identified local needs, market and economic conditions and environmental objectives.

Greener Homes

11.14 Providing greener homes help support the delivery of high-quality new homes that limit carbon emissions and are energy efficient in construction. Promoting new homes that are healthy to live in and affordable to run to help reduce levels of fuel poverty.

Where we will be in 2028:

- All new council developed homes built to high energy efficiency and Local Plan Standards
- Delivered on the existing council housing retrofit carbon reduction programme to achieve more energy efficient performing council homes, reducing energy costs.
- Delivered on the 'Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund' programme to upgrade the energy efficiency of the worst performing council homes.
- Delivered on the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG 2) programme to help upgrade the energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock, supporting residents who are off the gas grid and on low incomes.
- Exploring financial incentives and green grant opportunities through the 'Warmer Homes Initiative' to help improve poor energy performing homes within the private sector housing stock.
- Introduce a climate change/greener homes tenant engagement and carbon literacy training programme.

Homes that Better Meet Different Needs

11.15 Homes that better meet different needs will improve the housing opportunities of vulnerable households, those in housing need, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless and for an ageing population which often require specialist accommodation.

Where will we be in 2028:

- Developed an Older Persons Accommodation Strategy.
- Increased the delivery of age friendly housing, different models for different needs.
- Developed specialist accommodation - extra care and remodelling existing provision.

- Making best use of the Disabled Facilities Grant, providing adaptations, advice, and guidance to enable people to live well at home.
- Reviewed and developed specialist temporary accommodation, supported housing and Housing First models of provision for those who are street attached.
- Developed a Supported Housing Strategy.
- Improve the quality and management of the Private Housing Sector to ensure it is fit for purpose and helps meet the challenges of climate change.
- Provided sanctuary to those escaping conflict and domestic abuse to settle and remain in the district.

Better Managed Homes, Better Neighbourhoods

11.16 Better managed homes and neighbourhoods will have a huge impact on the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents. This includes the physical environment, the cleanliness of streets and quality of green place; but also, how residents feel safe and have a sense of community.

Where will we be in 2028:

- Be proactive in resident engagement to create better neighbourhoods and improve customer insight.
- Delivered on the proposals set out in the governments ASB action plan in response to the feedback of the tenant satisfaction survey.
- Responded to the new private sector housing regulatory requirements.
- Improved the physical quality of social and private rented homes - setting out the next steps for damp and mould.
- To have reviewed and updated the Fire Safety Policy and the Housing Fire Safety Strategy to keep tenants safe in their homes.
- Achieved the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to improve the lives of those who are subject to domestic abuse.
- Developed a Registered Provider forum to set the standard that residents can expect from any affordable housing landlord in the district.

- Delivered on the White paper- 'Charter for Social Housing Residents' and the reforms and requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Act.

11.17 Monitoring and Delivering the Housing Strategy.

11.18 It is important that the housing strategy is kept under review through the supporting 5-year delivery plan. The delivery plan will be updated as actions are completed and as the plan evolves. It will continue to monitor progress, inviting scrutiny to drive up quality and to benchmark performance.

11.19 The housing strategy delivery plan is a live document and will be reviewed annually at Cabinet Committee: Housing, the Registered Providers Forum, Homelessness Pathway Group and by tenants and residents.

11.20 The housing strategy delivery plan at Appendix 2 sets out how the council will achieve the strategic objectives of the housing strategy, outlining what will be done, when and by whom

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 It is a legal requirement of all local housing authorities to publish a housing strategy setting out a vision for housing within its district, including on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: -

Previous Committee Reports: -

- CAB2935 – Draft Housing Strategy (2017/18 to 2022/23) - 6 July 2017
- <https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/olddocuments/CAB2935HSG.pdf?F=CAB2935%28HSG%29.pdf&MId=602&D=201707061630&A=1&R=0#search=%22CAB2935%22>
- Housing Strategy presentation to Business and Housing Policy Committee 19 September 2023 and minutes of the meeting

Other Background Documents: -

- Housing Strategy 2017/18 to 2022/23.
- <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-2013-14-2018-19#:~:text=The%20five%20priorities%20of%20the,housing%20which%20meet%20their%20needs.>

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Housing Strategy 2023-28.

Appendix 2: Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2028

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Housing Strategy 2023-28