

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Housing Strategy One Year On

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 9th December 2021

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development

Report by: Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

In October 2020 the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 was approved by Cabinet with a one year action plan. The Strategy had been developed following internal and external consultation - including a member workshop with Overview and Scrutiny in August 2020. External consultation had also included a variety of housing providers and interested parties. A one year action plan, rather than a five year plan was produced at the time due to the Covid Pandemic and contained details on how the outcomes set out in the strategy would be accomplished. This report seeks to update members on what has been achieved against these objectives in the first year.

The action plan attached will be used going forward to enable continued reporting and ensure we meet the original objectives in the strategy.

Recommendation:

- (a) To acknowledge the work completed against the objectives in the Housing Strategy Action Plan; and
- (b) To approve the use of this action plan for the remaining years of the Housing Strategy 2021-25

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on the work that has been undertaken over the last twelve months to achieve the objectives in the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- 1.2 The Covid pandemic has highlighted a number of inequalities over the last 18 months but the impact of housing inequality is one of the most apparent. Last year, the then Housing Secretary, Robert Jenrick acknowledged that the pandemic has highlighted “*the importance of having somewhere secure and comfortable to live*”. Some households experienced lockdown from homes with separate workspace, reliable Wi-Fi, affordable heating, insulation and gardens. Their experience of lockdown was therefore very different to those families living in overcrowded or damp homes with limited or no outside space.
- 1.3 It has long been accepted that there is a direct link between housing and health. The Healthy Urban Development Unit identifies decent and adequate housing as being critically important to health and wellbeing and the National Planning Policy Framework highlights the importance of ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. This is further summarised by Public Health England “*the right home environment is critical to our health and wellbeing; good housing helps people stay healthy, and provides a base from which to sustain a job, contribute to the community, and achieve a decent quality of life*”.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

- 2.1 The table below contains the high level documents that the Council uses to set out objectives, priorities, and future delivery. The Housing Strategy sits within this suite of documents and supports the delivery of the Local Plan and the Community Strategy.
- 2.2 The action plan highlights areas of activity over the last year but also recognises areas of work which have not yet commenced. Some of this work has not started due to there not being an available resource but others like the delivery of one level exception site, the evaluation of alternative entry level housing and the barriers for delivery of starter homes have waited until the introduction of First Homes.
- 2.3 A policy on First Homes will be shared with members as soon as clarification has been received on the interpretation of the new legislation.

Strategy bookcase



KEY:

BLUE=
underway
RED=done

Overarching Plans	Outcome Plans	Strategic Plans	Activity Plans
Place Strategy to 2050 (Vision for Huntingdonshire)	Local Plan (RF/ CK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset Management Strategy (JG/ JA) [Oct] Waste Strategy (MB/ AR) Housing Strategy (RF/LB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan (RF/DB) Asset Management Plan (JG/ JA) [Mar] Waste Minimisation Plan (MB/ AR)
	Community Strategy (SB/ FF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Strategy (RF/LB) Consultation and Engagement Strategy (SB/ CD) Leisure and Health Strategy (SB/ JW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan (RF/DB)
	Economic Growth Strategy (RF/ CK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Strategy (RF/CK) Climate Change Strategy (MB/ NS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration Plan (RF/ CK)
Vision for HDC (RF/ JL)	Core Service Strategy (DK/ JA/JT) [Jul/Aug]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Strategy (JG/ AW) [Dec/Jan] Medium Term Financial Strategy (JG/ CE) Commercial Investment Strategy (JG/ JA) Digital Strategy (DK/ TE) Leisure and Health Strategy (SB/ JW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Management Plan (DK/ TE) Service Plan(s) (SMs)

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be circulated ahead of the meeting.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

4.1 Clarity of Purpose – if the Council does not have an up to date strategy in place it makes it difficult to engage with potential partners and plan service delivery.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

5.1 The Corporate Plan was agreed by Cabinet in September 2020. This includes housing objectives and targets for the coming year which should be regularly reviewed.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The action plan has been shared with officers and updates have been provided against the objectives.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There is a statutory duty to provide a range of housing support.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In delivering the work outlined in the action plan there are implications for several council departments. The Council has now recruited to the role of Strategic Housing Manager who has responsibility for the Action plan and will progress key actions that awaited their appointment.

9. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Housing plays an important role in the health of residents and is included in the evolving Leisure and Health Strategy. As stated above in Section 1 the link between housing and health has long been accepted in relation to quality and condition, stability and security and affordability.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 10.1 The Council needs to have a Housing Strategy that is current and fit for purpose. The strategy identified 3 overarching priorities:

1. New Homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future
2. Homes to enable people to live independent and healthy lives
3. Working in partnership to achieve shared objectives

When the strategy was approved it was agreed that due to Covid the focus would be on objectives that could be achieved within a one year action plan. It is necessary to acknowledge the good work achieved to date and to look to strengthen this work and also achieve the other objectives within the plan over the next four years.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy Action Plan 2020-2025

Appendix 2 – [Housing Strategy 2020 -2025 \(huntingdonshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet – 22nd October 2020 - [Report on Housing Strategy](#)

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