

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2017-2020
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Panel Economy and Growth (E&G) - Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2017 Cabinet Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2017
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Cllr Ryan Fuller, Executive Councillor for Housing and Regulatory Services
<b>Report by:</b>	Caroline Hannon, Housing Strategy Manager
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All

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**Executive Summary:**

The Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy is a key document setting out the housing issues in the district including the need for housing growth, the high level of need for new affordable housing, the increase in homelessness and the ageing population.

The Strategy provides a summary of the legislative changes relevant to the housing sector and the significant impact those policies could have on the provision of housing in Huntingdonshire.

There is a summary of the local context describing the demography, identifying the ageing population; the housing stock, identifying the high level of owner occupation and relatively low level of social housing; and house price information which highlights the rising prices (£17,157 rise in average house prices in the last year) and how this is affecting affordability.

The document highlights the need to address the housing requirements of all groups in particular those with particular needs such as older people or people with disabilities. There is a focus on enabling people to remain safe within their own homes for as long as possible through the provision of housing grants and initiatives such as the handyman service. The document also identifies the need to provide new supported and specialist accommodation for those who need it.

The document describes how Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) through its Corporate Plan is aiming to improve the quality of life for people in Huntingdonshire and deliver economic growth and how housing solutions can contribute to achieving the aims of the Corporate Plan.

The Strategy sets out the good work which has already been done by Members on two working groups to identify the relevant local housing issues and identify solutions.

The Housing Strategy 2017-2020 identifies four overall housing priorities:

1. To increase the supply of new affordable housing and encourage sustainable growth.
2. To identify housing need and improve health and wellbeing.
3. To improve housing conditions in existing housing.
4. To work in partnership to improve outcomes.

Alongside the Housing Strategy 2017-20 a Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 has been prepared. The Action Plan sets out the key actions the Council will undertake in the first year of the Housing Strategy and includes actions to accelerate the delivery of housing, especially affordable homes and to increase the provision of temporary accommodation to address the significant issue of homelessness in the district. It identifies areas where we continue to be effective such as delivering affordable housing through planning policies and identifies initiatives to explore further such as using Council money and land resources to deliver housing, exploring opportunities to access funding for affordable housing from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and exploring setting up a housing company or joint venture. The Action Plan will be refreshed annually to ensure the Council is able to respond to emerging priorities.

This strategy is complementary to other strategies including the Local Plan to 2036.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to endorse the Housing Strategy 2017-18 and Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 and recommend to Cabinet that it be adopted.

The Cabinet adopts this Housing Strategy 2017-20 and Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy is a major policy item for the Council. The Strategy sets out the key role that housing plays in improving the economic and social aspirations of the Council, and the Housing Strategy Action Plan provides solutions to address the housing needs of current and future households.

## **2. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 2.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

## **3. KEY IMPACTS**

- 3.1 The Strategy sets out the key housing issues and the impact of legislative changes on housing growth. The Housing Strategy sets out the priorities and commitments for the period 2017-2020 on a range of housing matters including affordable housing supply and homelessness. The Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 will commit the Council to undertaking various activities within the first year of the Housing Strategy. The Action Plan will be refreshed annually to ensure the Council is able to respond to emerging priorities.

## **4. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Should the Housing Strategy be adopted by Cabinet, it will be effective immediately.

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

- 5.1 The Housing Strategy 2017-2020 contributes to all of the Strategic Priorities in the Corporate Plan:
- Enabling Communities
  - Delivering Sustainable Growth
  - Becoming a More Efficient and Effective Council

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Housing Strategy 2017-2020 and Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 has been informed by an Affordable Housing Working Group and a Registered Social Providers Working Group.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Local Authorities in England are no longer required to have a Housing Strategy (Deregulation Act 2015 amendments apply). However it is an important strategy to deal with the housing needs of the growing population and an important part of the major policy framework.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATION**

- 8.1 Preparation of the Housing Strategy involves staffing resource that is met within existing budgets. However the Housing Strategy Action Plan commits the Council to exploring various activities such as using Council money, disposing of Council land or setting up a Housing Company to increase the supply of affordable housing. There may be resource implications should the Council decide to pursue any of these options.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy is a key document setting out the housing issues in the district including the need for housing growth, the high level of need for new affordable housing, the increase in homelessness and an ageing population. The Housing Strategy Action Plan includes current activity and identifies further initiatives for HDC to explore to make a difference to the rate and extent of housing delivery.

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel endorse this Housing Strategy 2017-2020 and Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 and recommend to Cabinet that it be adopted.

It is recommended that the Cabinet adopts this Housing Strategy 2017-2020 and Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-2018.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2017-2020
- Appendix 2 – Draft Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-2018

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Report from the Affordable Housing Working Group
- Report from the Registered Social Providers Working Group

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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