

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Housing Strategy Action Plan: Report on 2017/18 outcomes and 2018/19 priorities
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) – 11th September 2018
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development, Councillor Ryan Fuller
<b>Report by:</b>	Housing Strategy Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**Executive Summary:**

The Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2017-20 was adopted by Cabinet on the 22nd June 2017 following its consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) on the 20th June 2017, and was informed by a Member Affordable Housing Working Group and a Registered Providers' Working Group. It was agreed that the Housing Strategy would have an annual action plan to enable it to remain fluid and to adapt easily to external influences and internal priorities. The action plan is intended to support the Council to address the four priorities as set out in the Strategy which are:

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.

This report sets out the progress made towards delivering the objectives in the 2017/18 action plan and proposes the priorities for the 2018/19 action plan.

**Recommendation:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the outcomes of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017/18 and endorse the priorities for the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2018/19.

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

- 1.1 To identify the outcomes from the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017/18 and to set out the priorities for the 2018/19 action plan.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy 2017-20 was adopted by Cabinet in June 2017. Prior to adoption the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) endorsed the Housing Strategy 2017-20 and the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 and recommended to Cabinet that it be adopted. In addition the Panel requested that the Housing Strategy and the Action Plan return to a future Panel meeting to assess whether the Council are meeting the targets set out.
- 2.2 Section 4 below sets out the key housing pressures in Huntingdonshire identified in the Housing Strategy.

## **3. ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 A table providing analysis of the outcomes of the each of the priorities in the 2017/18 Action Plan is provided at Appendix One.
- 3.2 A table providing the list of priorities for the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2018/19 is provided at Appendix Two.

## **4. KEY IMPACTS**

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy 2017-20 sets out the key housing challenges in Huntingdonshire and the likely impact of legislative changes on housing growth. Each annual Housing Strategy Action Plan will commit the Council to undertaking various activities to address the housing challenges and address the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.
- 4.2 The four key strategic housing issues/risks in Huntingdonshire identified in the Housing Strategy 2017-20 are:

### **1. Huntingdonshire needs housing growth**

The need to plan for significant housing, population and employment growth in order to meet the needs of the growing population, rebalance the population structure to achieve a greater proportion of households of working age, and help to drive economic prosperity. Growth needs to be actively managed through delivery partnerships and the Council has the key role in providing the strategic vision for the delivery of growth and the creation of large new settlements.

### **2. There is a high level of need for new affordable housing**

At the extreme end, the Council's ability to manage front line demand presented by homelessness is reliant on a steady and adequate flow of opportunities to re-house people into. These stem from affordable opportunities in the private rented sector together with re-lets of existing social rented stock, and newly built affordable homes. Changes in Government policy coupled with the reduced viability of developments have impacted on our ability to enable affordable housing in recent years.

The number of new affordable homes provided in Huntingdonshire has reduced in recent years and the Council remains under pressure to enable affordable housing to help meet priority needs.

In addition to shortages in traditional forms of affordable housing, there is a disparity in local incomes to house prices and general affordability problems amongst much of our population. The increase in house prices in recent years indicates some imbalance between demand for and supply of dwellings.

### **3. We need to tackle Local Housing Needs and Homelessness**

There are currently around 3626 households on the housing register that see social rented housing as their preferred housing tenure; 12% are assessed as being in the highest housing need (priority band A).

The trend in homelessness in the district over the last three years has been similar to national trends, showing an increase in the number of statutory acceptances by the Council. As with the national picture, homelessness as a result of households being evicted from the private rented sector through no fault of their own is now the single biggest cause of homelessness.

The welfare reform programme and continued increase in the cost of privately renting in the district has meant that more households see social/affordable rented housing as their only realistic option. This has undoubtedly contributed to the number of households applying to the housing register and approaching the Council for assistance when faced with homelessness. The lack of properties available within Local Housing Allowance rates in the private rented sector has meant that the opportunities to help households into this sector has reduced, affecting households on low incomes as well as those not currently in employment.

### **4. We will work in partnership to help meet the needs of our ageing population**

Huntingdonshire has an ageing population. There is a need to boost the percentage of people of working age in order to achieve a more balanced population base. This is one of the drivers for enhanced rates of house building. The ageing population presents challenges for health and social care but 'housing' can also form part of the solution by ensuring that there are adequate amounts and types of accommodation on offer to support people as they age

The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) can contribute towards reducing admissions to and speeding up discharge from hospitals. They can also prevent/delay moves to care homes as people are able to continue to live safely in their own homes.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Appendix Two provides details of the actions to be undertaken during 2018/19 and the timescales for implementation to address housing issues set out in Section 4.
- 5.2 The key focus of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2018/19 will be to support the growth agenda and to ensure that Huntingdonshire grows in the right way to provide the type, size, scale and affordability of housing to meet our residents' needs.

5.3 To achieve growth, there will be an emphasis on partnership/collaborative working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to maximise opportunities to provide the necessary housing and infrastructure across Huntingdonshire.

5.4 The action plan will also challenge the Council to explore opportunities to take a direct role in the provision of housing working with public and private sector partners in innovative ways to accelerate and increase the supply of new homes. By doing so, the Council will drive growth and investment in the local economy whilst at the same time challenging itself to deliver good services for a lower cost.

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

6.1 The Action Plan includes specific actions in relation to the People and Place themes in the Corporate Plan and will help meet the objectives to make Huntingdonshire a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and for communities to get involved with local decision making and we want to deliver new and appropriate housing

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 Consultation on the outcomes of the 2017/18 Housing Strategy Action Plan and the proposed 2018/19 Housing Strategy Action Plan was undertaken with all relevant service areas.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Whilst the cost of many of the actions within the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2019/20 will be met from existing budgets, it is acknowledged that some of the actions, especially in relation to the direct delivery of housing, will have resource implications.

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

9.1 The proposed 2018/19 Housing Strategy Action Plan will support the Council to meet the key housing priorities in the district.

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

Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017/18 - Outcomes

Appendix 2 – Housing Strategy Action Plan 2018/19

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Report to June 2017 Cabinet and O&S Panel and appendices Housing Strategy 2017-20](#)

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