

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL – 9TH OCTOBER 2018

### Report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing Lead Member: Councillor Mercer

#### ITEM 8 HOUSING STRATEGY 2015-2020 UPDATE

##### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the delivery of the Housing Strategy 2015-2020 and the continued actions to deliver the priorities.

##### 2. Recommendation

To note the update of the Housing Strategy 2015-2020 and comment on the future actions to deliver the priorities.

##### 3. Reason

To ensure that the Housing Strategy 2015-2020, which provides a clear framework to deliver the Council's value of 'Creating a Strong and Lasting Community', meets its obligations in respect of the strategic housing needs of the Borough.

##### 4. Policy Context and Justification

The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 is designed to help deliver the Council's priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

##### 5. Background

5.1 The Housing Strategy 2015-2020 sets out how housing will contribute towards achieving the Council's strategic goals. The Strategy concentrates on three priorities:

Priority 1: Increasing the Supply of Suitable Housing

Priority 2: Reducing the Barriers to Housing

Priority 3: Prioritising Services to Enable People to Stay in their Own Homes

5.2 The current Housing Strategy for Charnwood was adopted in April 2015. Since then, we have seen some significant changes to the housing landscape; in particular, the introduction of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and more recently, the publication of the Housing White Paper, 'Fixing our broken housing market'.

5.3 The Housing Strategy progress report (see Appendix 1) provides an overview of our current priorities and our achievements including setting out our actions planned up unto April 2020.

Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Progress report 2017-2018

Background Papers: Cabinet, Report – 9th April 2015  
Policy Scrutiny, Minutes – 10th March 2015  
Policy Scrutiny, Minutes – 18th November 2014  
Policy Scrutiny, Minutes – 26th September 2017

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## housing strategy progress report 2017-2018

	ACTION	PROGRESS UPDATE AND OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
1.	Explore the alternative delivery models to increase the numbers of affordable homes other than through planning gain	<p>An Affordable Housing Delivery Paper prepared setting out the current approach and future options.</p> <p>Paper to be presented to Members, date to be confirmed.</p>	Continuous
2.	To adopt a flexible approach to securing affordable housing which meets the housing needs for our residents and promotes new housing sites across the Borough to support housing growth	<p>Sites are considered on an individual basis to secure the appropriate affordable housing to meet housing need.</p> <p>During 2017-2018 this resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44 new planning applications reviewed the securing the future building of 186 new affordable dwellings</li> <li>• Securing of £137,500 commuted sum to support the delivery of affordable housing across the Borough</li> <li>• 27 new homes secured for social rent to be gifted to the Council in 2018-2019</li> <li>• 15 completed discounted homes for sale to those households not able to afford to buy at full market price</li> <li>• 175 completed homes available for social and or affordable rent</li> <li>• 41 completed homes available for part buy and rent (shared ownership)</li> </ul> <p>During 2018-2019 Quarter 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 new pre-planning applications have been reviewed and affordable housing advice provided</li> <li>• 9 new planning applications have been reviewed and affordable housing commentary provided to assist with maximising the securing of affordable housing through planning gain to meet housing needs</li> <li>• A Section 106 template for affordable housing clauses has been prepared with the aim of reducing the drafting time and costs</li> <li>• A meeting held with the Registered</li> </ul>	Continuous



		<p>Providers and the North East Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension Team to consider the delivery of the affordable housing across the scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting held with Officers and the North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension Team to consider the housing needs for an ageing population</li> <li>• The Council has entered into a new 12 month Partnership Agreement with Midlands Rural Housing to consider housing need in the Rural Parishes in the Borough</li> </ul>	
3.	Develop and publish a Housing Acquisition Policy to secure affordable housing on Section 106 sites where there is no Registered Provider interest and acquire existing properties including ex-council properties sold through Right-to-Buy to meet housing need, as well as preventing homelessness to vulnerable households in mortgage arrears	<p>During 2017-2018, the process for acquiring properties for sale on the open market was piloted.</p> <p>This resulted in the Council acquiring 2 properties and the development of a Housing Acquisition Policy, approved by Cabinet in May 2018.</p> <p>In February 2018, Members approved a budget of £1,953,000 for 2018-2019 and £1,856,000 for 2019-2020 to acquire properties.</p> <p>To date Officers have made offers to acquire 14 properties for sale on the open market of which 7 have been accepted.</p>	Continuous
4.	Improve access to the Private Rented Sector	Appointed a Social Lettings Coordinator who will work with the Private Rented Sector to improve access to the Sector.	Continuous
5.	Promote Mutual Exchange to make the best use of existing stock	<p>Mutual Exchanges are discussed with tenants who apply to transfer or who are under occupying properties impacted by the under occupation charge.</p> <p>During 2017-2018, 74 Mutual Exchange applications were received, of which 38 resulted in a successful move.</p> <p>The scheme is promoted through the Council's website and an article was included in the Spring 2018 our Homes Matter Newsletter.</p>	Continuous
6.	Deliver the Rough Sleeper Project to provide support and improve access to accommodation for this	The Council works with The Bridge to deliver the Rough Sleeper Project across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.	Continuous



	group	<p>During 2017-2018 the Rough Sleeper Project has provided the following outcomes for Charnwood residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38 individuals at imminent risk of sleeping rough worked with, of which 13 prevented from sleeping rough</li> <li>• 26 rough sleepers worked with, of which 17 accommodated</li> <li>• 42 individuals provided with emergency accommodation under the No Second Night Out scheme, for a combined of total 381 nights</li> </ul>	
7.	Review housing need at a Parish level in rural areas to support the delivery of homes for local residents	<p>During 2017-2018, 3 Rural Housing Need Surveys were completed and published for Rearsby, Newton Linford and Seagrave.</p> <p>During 2018-2019, the Council will be working with Midland Rural Housing to increase awareness of the need for affordable housing and the impact of a lack of local affordable homes may have on the sustainability of local communities.</p> <p>The local Housing Needs Surveys for Woodhouse Eaves and the Wolds parishes are to be refreshed during 2018-2019.</p>	Continuous
8.	Review services to meet the requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	<p>The Housing Options Service has been reviewed and changes made to ensure that the Council is able to fulfil the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 implemented from the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple training courses relating to the Act arranged for the Housing Options Team</li> <li>• Working Group including Housing Options Officers reviewed relevant aspects of service</li> <li>• Change to roles within the Housing Options Team, to increase focus on prevention and relief activities</li> <li>• Review of partnership working arrangements with key partners The Bridge, Citizens Advice Bureau and other Homelessness Strategy Steering Group members</li> <li>• Development of procedure flowcharts, Personalised Housing</li> </ul>	Continuous



		<p>Plan and letter templates for the Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a Social Lettings Service, in order to increase ability to prevent or relieve homelessness through Private Rented Sector offers</li> <li>• The Homelessness Strategy reviewed to take into account new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Following consultation with Partners and Policy Scrutiny Group a new Homelessness Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2018</li> <li>• Joint working opportunities explored through the County and City Homeless Delivery Group</li> </ul>	
9.	Work in partnership with the Leicestershire Councils to implement the Lightbulb Service Model across the Borough to deliver an integrated model for housing support	<p>Cabinet approved the Council's participation in the Lightbulb Project in May 2017.</p> <p>The Project went live across the County in October 2017. There was a delay in the Council signing the Agreement, as Charnwood are the only Council providing a Locality based team.</p> <p>Charnwood went live in January 2018 with a backlog of 172 cases awaiting a Housing Support Coordinator assessment. On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018, a waiting list snapshot identified 121 referrals awaiting assessment, a reduction of 43% in a month.</p> <p>The waiting list is not static with an average of 15 new referrals a week coming into Charnwood from the Customer Contact Centre at Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>During April to June 2018, 146 visits were undertaken 7 cases referred to the Occupational Therapists and 139 cases successfully resolved.</p>	Continuous
10.	Continue to work with The Bridge to provide services to households at risk of losing their home	<p>Charnwood Borough Council continues to work closely with The Bridge to provide services for households who are at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>In 2017-2018 Charnwood Borough Council provided funding to The Bridge</p>	Continuous



		<p>for the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Housing Advice</li> <li>• Tenancy Support</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Tenancy Relations</li> <li>• Single Access Point for 16 to 17 year olds</li> </ul>	
11.	Convene a working group to explore improving housing options for those with mental health issues	<p>The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group agreed to discuss the possibility of developing a Mental Health Service across Charnwood with a local GP practice in Loughborough</p> <p>A meeting was held in August to develop the Homelessness Advice and Prevention pathway for people with Mental Health problems and the possibility of a Homeless Mental Health Service across Charnwood was discussed.</p>	Continuous
12.	Review the current Tenant Finder scheme	The new Social Lettings Coordinator has carried out research and reviewed the existing Tenant Finder Scheme. 3 potential service options are under consideration. Consultation with Private Sector Landlords will take place later in the year.	Continuous
13.	Strengthen the Offender Pathway through ensuring involvement of prison staff	<p>A Prison Release Protocol was prepared, agreed, signed off and piloted across Charnwood and is now under review following the implementation of the new Act.</p> <p>A meeting was held in August to develop the Homelessness Advice and Prevention pathway for offenders and prison releases.</p>	Continuous
14.	Identify opportunities to promote grant funded assistive technology	<p>There has been a review of the grants process, which has led to a change in criteria and eligibility to award grants for assistive technology.</p> <p>The Lifeline Officer promotes the grant. In the year 2017-2018, 6 Lifeline customers applied for and received the grant. The Lifeline Service is regularly promoted in the Charnwood Newsletter, the Housing Newsletter and social media.</p>	Continuous
15.	Deliver a Financial Inclusion Programme	The Council employs 2 full time Financial Inclusion Officers to support Council tenants.	Continuous



		<p>During 2017-2018, the Financial Inclusion Team dealt with 480 referrals and generated nearly £96,000 of rental income.</p> <p>The Council works in partnership with Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau to support homeowners and Private Sector tenants with debt and money advice.</p>	
16.	Work with Leicestershire County Council to identify the necessary pipeline of housing for people with learning disabilities	<p>Leicestershire County Council published a new Accommodation Strategy for Working Age Adults 2017-2022, which considers people with learning disabilities and autism.</p> <p>The County have recently employed an Officer to identify the housing need at a local level for this group. Officers are liaising with the County to understand the housing need for this Group across the Borough to assess whether there is a need for additional accommodation.</p>	Continuous
17.	Improve take up of credit union facilities	<p>There are now over 60 tenants who have an active Clockwise Rent Account.</p> <p>The Account provides the Council with reassurance of that the rent will be paid and assists Tenants in money management and tenancy sustainment in preventing homelessness and securing income for the Council.</p>	Continuous
18.	Review Empty Homes Enforcement Protocol	A new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy was approved by Cabinet in May 2018 incorporating Empty Homes enforcement options.	Complete

Issue date: September 2018

