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Housing Strategy 2020-2029

Purpose

- 1.1 To obtain cabinet approval for the adoption of the new Housing Strategy 2020-2029.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To agree to the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2020-2029.

Reason

- 3.1 Housing is of critical importance. Good quality, well managed housing is inextricably linked with health and well being; it enhances the quality of life of adults and the life chances of children. It not only provides shelter, but promotes stability and a sense of identity. Strategic planning for the continued and effective provision of housing and related services in Derby is therefore a key priority.
- 3.2 Having a coordinated strategy in place will contribute towards improving housing supply and quality. This in turn will support our broader corporate goals around health and well being, regeneration and economic growth.

Supporting information

The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

- 4.1 *The effects of Covid19 will clearly have a significant impact on the delivery of housing and related services in the months and years ahead. We have consequently reviewed the new strategy in light of this; the findings of this review are summarised from paragraph 4.10.*
- 4.2 The proposed strategy addresses the Council's statutory obligations in respect of the provision of housing advice and assistance and the assessment of housing need under the Housing Act 1985. It also addresses the Council's obligations in respect of the assessment and enforcement of housing standards under the Housing Act 2004.





- 4.3 Since our last Housing Strategy was written in 2015, we have seen significant changes to the environment in which housing and related support services are delivered. Housing as an issue is more 'high profile' than it has been for many decades. Government has announced a series of policies to 'Fix our broken housing market' and backed these up with substantial new funding streams intended to accelerate construction and tackle infrastructure barriers. It has also lifted the borrowing cap on stock-owning authorities such as Derby. These measures will improve access to the resources required to build more homes.
- 4.4 Although capital funding for new build is more substantially available, significant revenue pressures to the Council and its partners persist. Consequently, the medium term financial outlook for Derby, as for many local authorities, remains extremely challenging. These pressures may restrict the scope for providing the support services necessary to help vulnerable people live sustainably in suitable homes.
- 4.5 Relaxation of national planning guidance also causes concern in some quarters that new development might be focusing on 'quantity over quality'. While the possible extension of 'Right to Buy' to cover Housing Association properties as well as Council properties may further reduce the stock of scarce affordable housing.
- 4.6 These and other factors, such as the growing and ageing population, are likely to increase the demand for services while continuing to stretch resources. Nevertheless, the challenge - and our intention - remains to maximise the supply and quality of suitable homes across tenures, while supporting broader goals around health and wellbeing, economic growth and regeneration.
- 4.7 This new strategy will help to ensure our actions continue to be up to date and successful. It provides the broad framework to maximise the effectiveness of service provision across agencies.

Strategic Priorities

- 4.8 The strategy identifies 4 priorities which must be delivered if we are to achieve our vision of a Derby where all residents have access to suitable housing. These are:

Priority 1	Best use of stock – getting the most out of the homes that already exist.
Priority 2	Housing quality and standards – promoting well-managed, well-maintained, greener homes.
Priority 3	Vulnerable people - providing suitable accommodation for vulnerable groups.
Priority 4	Housing development and regeneration - supplying a range of new housing that meets need and contributes to urban renewal.

The Priorities in More Detail

- 4.9  Priority 1 acknowledges that an essential part of meeting need is to ensure that we make the best use of the homes we already have. It encompasses work on empty homes, mutual exchange, under-occupation, allocations, and the Tenancy Strategy.
-  Priority 2 emphasises the importance of providing homes that are decent, well managed and conducive to health and well-being. It encompasses work on advice and assistance, private sector enforcement, and design and space standards. It also emphasises the importance of energy efficiency measures and their contribution to reducing climate change
-  Priority 3 recognises that certain vulnerable groups such as disabled people, older people, or homeless people may need additional support to live independently in suitable housing. It encompasses work undertaken in housing advice, the healthy housing hub, disabled facilities grants, social care and the critical role of the voluntary and community sector.
-  Priority 4 highlights the role of new house building in meeting need and contributing to regeneration and growth. It specifies the types of new housing that we will support and addresses:
- The need to provide additional housing across tenures as well as affordable housing
 - The role housing development and renewal can play in regenerating inner city areas such as in Castleward, Normanton and Arboretum.
 - The importance of housing to economic growth and the consequent need to foster a balanced housing market in Derby. This includes the provision of high end accommodation to attract skilled workers and business leaders, thereby helping to ensure that the wealth generated by Derby's hi-tech industries are retained in the city and not lost to surrounding areas.

Delivery, Monitoring and Review

Review of the strategy in light of the Coronavirus Pandemic

- 4.10 a) *The accelerating spread of Covid 19 and its immense effect on the whole of society has resulted in a postponement in presenting this strategy to cabinet while we 'took stock' and reviewed the possible long term impacts on housing.*
- b) *Following this review we are satisfied that the over arching priorities it sets out for the 10-year life span of the strategy are still the right ones for Derby. These priorities are set out in the table in paragraph in 4.8 above.*
- c) *The most marked effect Covid19 is likely to have will not be on these broader priorities but on delivery; particularly the actions as set out in the action plan from*

page 44 of the strategy. Nevertheless, some additional text is provided on the possible impacts of Covid 19 on each priority, at the point in the strategy document they are introduced.

- d) With respect to delivery, the timescales of many of the actions in the action plan will clearly be subject to change. A number of the most significant delays may well fall within the scope of priority 4, which concerns housing development and regeneration. And it may also be that a small number of actions are replaced with new ones. But the extent to which this happens will become clearer as the full impact of the virus unfolds*
- e) The action plan is already scheduled to be reviewed on an annual basis. In the interim we have highlighted which actions in it are most likely to be subject to severe delays and we will monitor these closely. We are also preparing a report for members on the impact of COVID 19 on the housing sector and the Derby response. This will be presented in the forthcoming weeks.*
- f) We have not made any further changes to the action plan at this stage, but propose to defer any such changes until this first review, in April 2021. By this time the long term impact of Covid19 should be much clearer, and our learning from the process of dealing with the impacts of the virus will inform the review.*

- 4.11 This strategy sets out how we plan to deliver our housing goals over the next ten years. It sets out our 'direction of travel' and our over-arching priorities. It also contains a delivery plan which highlights our key actions to achieve these priorities.
- 4.12 It has been formulated to be aligned with and supportive of a wide range of corporate and partnership policies, strategies and initiatives. These include those relating to health and wellbeing, social care, planning, economic growth and regeneration.
- 4.13 With regard specifically to housing, the priorities and actions set out in this strategy are aligned with and directly supported by a wide range of more specific housing related policies and strategies. These include:
 - Allocations policy
 - Empty homes strategy
 - Homelessness strategy
 - Housing renewal policy
 - Older persons' housing strategy
 - Tenancy strategy
- 4.14 The majority of the strategies in this list contain detailed delivery plans with specific, time-bound actions. The delivery plan set out in this housing strategy is less detailed, but highlights the key actions and 'big ticket' items which will be instrumental in delivering our priorities. It will consequently be very closely linked to the achievement of the delivery plans in these 'sub' strategies.

- 4.15 All of these housing related strategies and their constituent delivery plans can be found at: www.derby.gov.uk/housing-strategy

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Stakeholder engagement including with the cabinet member for Adults Health and Housing was conducted in September-Nov 2019. Public Consultation on the draft strategy commenced in December 2019 and concluded in March 2020. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken in January 2020.

Changes to the strategy following public/stakeholder engagement and EIA

- 5.2 Feedback from the consultation and engagement process gave rise to additions/amendments to a number of elements in the strategy including:
- More explicit links with detailed actions in critical areas such as homelessness prevention
 - More robust actions around climate change and carbon reduction initiatives
 - Greater emphasis on the provision of supporting infrastructure and community facilities in new housing developments
 - The need to review elements of service provision in sheltered and age-restricted housing schemes - specifically whether a partial relaxation of age-restrictions and the replacement of floating support in sheltered blocks is effective.

Other options

- 6.1 None considered – effective strategic planning for the provision of suitable housing is a key priority.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 The strategy contains a detailed action plan which commits to a wide range of actions. Many of these are in place to fulfil our statutory obligations and will continue to be met from existing funding streams. Where additional actions are proposed which may incur further costs in the future, a separate report will be presented which will detail the costs and funding arrangements.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The proposed strategy addresses the Council's statutory obligations in respect of The Housing Acts 1996 and 2004.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 The strategy is intended to provide a framework covering our actions in relation to housing for all the residents of Derby and how we will provide accommodation and services to meet their needs. It supports the Council Plan 2019-23 themes of: *A City of Health and Happiness* and *A Council focussed on the things that matter*.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu	28-2-20
Finance	Amanda Fletcher	4-3-20
Service Director(s)	Ian Fullagar	9-3-20
Report sponsor	Rachel North	TBC
Other(s)		
Background papers:		
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – The Housing Strategy 2020-2029, attached separately.	