

Derby Housing Strategy 2009-2014

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the updated draft Derby Housing Strategy and action plan.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consider the updated draft Housing Strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The consultation draft of the Housing Strategy was presented to the Commission on 16th September. The presentation included details of the proposed priority themes contained within the draft strategy and details of the consultation process.
- 3.2 The updated draft Housing Strategy incorporates the responses from the consultation process and includes a comprehensive action plan. Comments made at the previous Community Commission meeting were as follows:

- There were concerns that there were challenges over residents using private sector landlords, as they were not seen as accessible as social housing providers.

In response: whilst a key action of the Housing Strategy is to develop additional social housing and to maximise existing social housing, such as through schemes to support people living in under-occupied dwellings to downsize, it is acknowledged that we are unable to develop sufficient new social housing to meet the significant demand. It is therefore necessary to effectively utilise the private sector and ensure that private sector accommodation is of a high quality and accessible. Within the Housing Strategy, a number of actions have been identified to further improve the standards of accommodation offered by private landlords such as through the landlord accreditation scheme and the further development of the landlord forum.

- It was noted that there were issues concerning properties that had been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled resident but, after that tenancy ended, then being available to everyone with further money being spent to install similar adaptations on other properties within the City.

In response: For a period last year, Housing and Advice Services seconded an Occupational Therapist to the Division to collate details of all Derby Homes and other RSL dwellings that have received adaptations. This work with Derby Homes is now progressing well and an action has been included in the Housing Strategy to progress this work in order to collate and map both Derby Homes and other RSL dwellings in order to provide an adapted property register and ensure a greater usage of pre-adapted properties for people with disabilities.

- The report did not mention Council mortgages and it was suggested that this was something to look into further. It was noted that Liverpool City Council had produced an innovative housing strategy to look at Council mortgages. It involved residents borrowing a deposit from the local authority and paying it back at a lower rate.

In response: Liverpool City Council has been contacted about this scheme. From conversations with them, it is understood that the scheme is in place in specific areas of Liverpool to support specific failing housing areas in the City which are within the Housing Market Renewal Area and therefore receive additional financial support which is currently unavailable to Derby due to this.

With regards to the operation of Mortgage Rescue Schemes, Liverpool has advised that they did operate a mortgage rescue type scheme some time ago, however, this scheme was abandoned. Housing and Advice Services have closely monitored the progress of the Government's new Mortgage Rescue Scheme and are currently considering opportunities to progress the scheme at a local level.

- It was reported that there were shared ownership schemes and low cost initiatives for residents within the City but this was not something Derby Homes was directly involved with. It was noted that Derby Homes could be more aware of these schemes and help to promote them to residents within the City. The Commission did note that a further report would be brought back to them on Council mortgages.

In response, the City Council is working closely with the regional HomeBuy agent, East Midlands Housing Association to promote HomeBuy products. This includes the production of a local easy to understand HomeBuy leaflet which will be available at a range of locations and offered to Derby Homes. Furthermore, a report is being compiled which analyses what types of HomeBuy dwellings are available, at what price and in which location and also examines what types of product are most in demand. This will enable a better understanding of what types of dwelling to develop in the future and enable better targeted marketing opportunities. Together with this work, training is being provided for front line staff in what HomeBuy products are available. This is contained as an action within the Housing Strategy.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Reasons for the Housing Strategy

Derby's first Housing Strategy was produced in 2003 and is now nearing the end of its shelf life. This updated strategy will take into account the changes in policy and Derby's housing market over the past 5 years.

The housing strategy is the high level plan for both public and private housing in the City. It takes into account housing needs in Derby and sets out priorities and plans to meet those needs. The Strategy is not just about buildings as it covers plans for the range of housing services.

The Strategy will provide a roadmap for housing and housing services in the City over the next 5 years and will include priorities and actions for our services over this period.

The Government requires that all Local Authorities have an approved 'fit for purpose' Housing Strategy. Derby was the first Local Authority in the country to produce a fit for purpose Housing Strategy in 2003. However, significant changes in housing policy and the housing market at a national, regional and local level now mean that an updated Housing Strategy is required.

The draft Housing Strategy has been through extensive consultation, culminating in a major stakeholder event on 16th September. Additionally, extensive housing needs research has been conducted which involved over 2,000 face to face household interviews across Derby and provided a wealth of data which will be used in the Strategy.

4.2 Consultation process

Through the consultation process, 17,000 feedback forms which were distributed in a range of locations including; libraries, Council House main reception and to all Derby Homes tenants and residents through the newsletter. These had a freepost address for people to be able to send short responses and included a dedicated email address and website where they could read the draft strategy or send a fuller response. They also included a contact telephone number. The consultation process was advertised through a press release; on the front page of the Council's website, through advertising in 'Your Derby', through the pointer panel and 'Your City Your Say' as well as circulating the draft widely to partners and attending meetings such as the Diversity Forum; City Housing Consultation Group Strategic Liaison and the Community Commission.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 To not have an updated Housing Strategy would mean that Housing Services would be without an overarching document to identify housing service priorities and an action plan to drive forward services.

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Background papers:	Draft Housing Strategy
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – The Housing Strategy

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Specific actions will be identified as the Strategy is developed and the cost implications of each of these will need to be considered at that time. The financial implications of these actions are being outlined in the action plan attached to the strategy.

Legal

- 2.1 None directly arising from this report and the accompanying draft strategy. Specific resource implications are being identified in the developing action plan.

Personnel

- 3.1 None directly arising from this report and the accompanying draft strategy. Specific resource implications are being identified in the developing action plan.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The standard of housing and housing related services in the city impacts upon the quality of life both for tenants and for those living in the neighbourhood, impacting most heavily on the more vulnerable sections of Derby's community. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed on the Housing Strategy in February.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 This report links with the following Corporate Objectives,
- Making us proud of our neighbourhoods
 - Creating a 21st Century City Centre
 - Leading Derby towards a better environment
 - Giving you excellent services and value for money
 - Supporting everyone in learning and achieving
 - Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent
 - Giving you excellent services and value for money