



Housing, Finance and Welfare Cabinet Members Meeting

14 April 2015

Report of the Interim Strategic Director of
Adults, Health & Housing

ITEM 5

Housing Strategy 2015-2019: Public Consultation

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 places a legal duty on local authorities to develop and implement a Housing Strategy. The Act states that this should set out “a vision for housing in its area” and the “objectives, targets and policies” which will be implemented to meet housing and related support needs.
- 1.2 Derby’s last Housing Strategy was written in 2009 and is now ready for renewal and review. The new strategy will outline how we will:
 - a) assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
 - b) make the best use of existing housing stock
 - c) plan and facilitate new supply
 - d) link housing with the support services which vulnerable people may need in order to live in their homes sustainably
 - e) promote partnerships that work to improve housing management and property conditions across neighbourhoods and across tenures.
- 1.3 As part of the process of developing the new strategy, we need to consult widely to ensure that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account.
- 1.4 The proposed consultation process is provided in full in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the commencement of the Housing Strategy public consultation.
- 2.2 To approve the Housing Strategy consultation process detailed at appendix 2.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that the strategy takes into account the views of key stakeholders, fulfilling the Councils duty to consult.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Rationale

- 4.1 Housing is of critical importance. Good quality, well managed housing is inextricably linked with health and well being; enhancing 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. These elements all contribute to cohesive, thriving communities.
- 4.2 Providing housing of suitable quantity and quality is therefore a key priority in Derby. Similarly, providing support where necessary to enable vulnerable people to access and continue to live in their own homes is also a priority. There are a number of commitments relating to the ownership, management and quality of housing in the 2014 Derby City Labour manifesto.
- 4.3 Having a housing strategy is a legal requirement as set out in The Local Government Act 2003. The last strategy was written in 2009 and expires soon.

Context

- 4.4 Since our last Housing Strategy was written in 2009, we have seen dramatic changes to the environment in which housing and related support services are delivered.
- 4.5 The Localism Act 2012 has provided new freedoms for councils in terms of how they manage and develop housing. For example, it provides greater local discretion in the management of waiting lists, and greater flexibility to use certain revenue streams, such as the housing revenue account and 'right to buy' income, for housing development. But significant funding cuts are restricting the scope for building new affordable homes and providing the support services necessary to help vulnerable people live sustainably in suitable homes.
- 4.6 Changes resulting from the economic downturn, and in particular welfare reform, are impacting detrimentally on many low income groups and those most likely to be in housing need. These factors impact on the demand for housing and housing services.
- 4.7 There is also considerable uncertainty over the future. Although the economy has emerged from recession, the benefits of this are yet to be felt by many low income households. Furthermore, there will be a general election in May this year, with the policy direction of any new government difficult to anticipate.
- 4.8 These factors make the need for an up to date strategy crucial. However, because of the importance and complexities of providing suitable housing, and the many different organisations involved, it is vital that in developing the new strategy we consult widely. Our proposed approach to this consultation is shown in the Consultation Plan in Appendix 2.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 There are no other alternative options.
- 5.2 The passage of time since 2009, the change in the economic and social housing landscape in that time and legislative changes make the current policy arguably out of date, or at least worthy of review to satisfy the Council of its continuing fitness for purpose.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal Services Toni Nash, Head of Adults Health & Housing & Resources Finance N/a N/a Perveez Sadiq, Director – Integrated Commissioning Ann Webster, Lead on Equality and Diversity
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Jeremy Mason 01332 640329; jeremy.mason@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Consultation Plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 None, as this report seeks authority to consult only. Should any future actions arising from the finalised strategy result in adopting a recommendation that incurs additional costs in the future, a separate report will be presented which will detail the costs and funding arrangements.

Legal

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to develop and implement a Housing Strategy. Such a strategy, once implemented, requires regular review to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.

Personnel

- 3.1 None directly arising

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- 4.1 None directly arising

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The strategy is intended to provide a framework covering our actions in relation to housing across all tenures. Because vulnerable groups, including minority ethnic communities, disabled people and people on low incomes can find it relatively more difficult to access suitable housing, the strategy when implemented should have a beneficial effect on these groups.
- 5.2 Any review of the strategy will require an equality impact assessment to be undertaken when it is in draft form, before it is referred for final approval.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None directly arising

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None directly arising

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None directly arising

Risk Management

9.1 None directly arising

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 To provide good-quality housing across the city and reduce homelessness by increasing the housing supply

Housing Strategy 2015 – Consultation Plan

1. *Overview and purpose*

Following extensive research and consultation undertaken in the development of a number of existing strategies¹, we have established the following as being priority outcomes...

- a) Improving the supply and range of housing
- b) Providing suitable accommodation for vulnerable groups, tied in with appropriate support services where needed
- c) Tackling poor quality, mis-managed, over crowded or underused properties
- d) Linking housing initiatives with those relating to health & well being, regeneration, growth and neighbourhood management.

Consequently, this consultation is predominantly about how best to deliver these outcomes rather than what the outcomes should be. (That said, we are open to suggestions as to any additional key outcomes that should be added to the list. We will in the near future also hear the views of the public on housing as expressed in the 'Big Conversation' exercise).

2. *Consultees*

- a) Members of the public
- b) Elected Members, including the Cost of Living Overview and Scrutiny Board (COLB)
- c) Tenants and residents' groups
- d) Housing associations and Derby Homes
- e) Partners in Health and Social Care
- f) Charities, support providers and third sector organisations
- g) Council departments including Public Health, Adult Social Care, Regeneration, Planning and Commissioning
- h) The Council's Diversity Forums

3. *Timescale and Major Elements*

The consultation will last for approximately three months, commencing in May and running until August

Major elements will include:

¹ These include The Older Persons Accommodation and Support Strategy; The Homelessness Strategy; The Accommodation Strategy for Disabled Adults; The Housing Renewal Policy, The Empty Homes Strategy, The Tenancy Strategy and The Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment.

- a) Press release
- b) Use of e-media such as council web site ('Your City, Your Say'), In Touch, iberby, social networks
- c) Workshops / consultation event
- d) Written correspondence with key stakeholders
- e) Equalities forum(s)

It will be necessary to carry out a full equalities impact assessment (EIA) on the draft strategy before it is formally approved.

4. Other activities that will influence the strategy.

There are two key activities currently on-going which will inform the new strategy:

- a) The development of the Core Strategy
- b) The COLB Review of Affordable Housing

The Core Strategy is a document which identifies the scale and location of growth and the main mechanisms by which planning and infrastructure issues are addressed. It outlines our key planning objectives and policies in a wide range of areas including the supply of housing across tenures. Once adopted, (anticipated early 2016) it will become the starting point for all planning decisions including those relating to housing development. The evidence base that underpins the housing elements of the Core Strategy includes the Strategic Housing Market assessment (SHMA). This document will also provide a substantial part of the evidence base for the new housing strategy.

The COLB review into affordable housing considers how housing developers can be encouraged to supply a higher level of affordable homes and how additional affordable housing provision can be met by the respective development programmes of Housing Associations, Derby City Council and Derby Homes. It also considers how financial assistance/ mortgage schemes and change of class use/conversion of existing buildings can be used to support housing development.

This review and its recommendations will play a key role in informing the new housing strategy in respect of the affordable tenure.

5. Council Approval – timescale

The Strategy will be taken to Cabinet in October/November. Chief Officer and directorate level approval will therefore take place around September.

Delivery

Work will be led by the Housing Strategy Team. Close liaison with Housing Options and assistance from other teams such as Policy, Research & Engagement, Communications and Business Support will be sought where appropriate.

The following table provides an indicative summary of key actions and likely timescales. It is subject to amendment.

Action / Activity	Lead Team	Support	Timescale
Internal Soundings with HoS*	Housing Strategy	None	Feb / March
Writing of initial draft	Housing Strategy	None	March/April
Posting on 'Your City Your Say'	Housing Strategy	Policy, Research & Engagement (PRE)	May
Consultation events / Workshops	Housing Strategy	PRE	May
EIA	Housing Strategy	PRE / Equality & Diversity Task Group/Diversity Forums	July/August
Equalities forum (s)	Housing Strategy	PRE / Equality & Diversity Task Group	May-July
Press release	Housing Strategy	Communications	May
e- publicity	Housing Strategy	Communications	May-July
Review & Revise	Housing Strategy	None	June-Aug.

*This will include Heads of Service or other senior staff in in Housing/ PRE / Planning/ Regeneration/ Commissioning/ Social Care/ Public Health/ Derby Homes.