

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET15 September 2016Report by Director of EnvironmentCONSULTATION ON DRAFT LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY (LHS) 2017-2022**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To seek approval to proceed to public and partner consultation on the draft outcomes and commitments identified for the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) (2017-2022). Consultation with the community and partners will help deliver the LHS is critical in the ongoing development of the new Local Housing Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the draft outcomes and commitments identified for East Renfrewshire's draft Local Housing Strategy as the basis for a 10 week public consultation from October 2016.

BACKGROUND

3. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) - a five-year plan setting out the strategic direction for housing and related services for the local area. This is refreshed 5-yearly reflecting progress and shifting priorities nationally and locally. Scottish Government guidance also reinforces the LHS as the main housing plan for the local area, with an emphasis on the Council's corporate role in 'enabling' local improvements. The current LHS expires in 2017 and the priorities it identifies remain relevant and will be reflected in the new strategy.

4. The strategy should be "outcome focused" and provide the framework for achieving housing related outcomes in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Close links are made between the SOA and current LHS through housing outcomes which complement those identified for East Renfrewshire as a whole – principally SOA3. "East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses to grow" and SOA4. "East Renfrewshire residents are safe and supported in their communities and homes". The identified priorities in the draft LHS are also underpinned by these existing SOA outcomes. Joint work will be undertaken to ensure the work of the LHS accounts for the emerging Local Outcome Implementation Plan being prepared for 2017.

5. High priority continues to be placed nationally on delivering enough homes of the right type and quality, in the right places, and which are affordable to meet people's needs. Scottish Government's target of delivering at least 50,000 additional affordable homes by 2021 reinforces this, and is critical to meeting rehousing and homelessness duties, creating a more balanced housing system and achieving national Housing and Regeneration outcomes.

6. Research and consultation has been undertaken by Housing Services to refresh our understanding of the main issues affecting housing supply, condition and related services. This has been used to identify the priority areas the new LHS should address. Online and face to face consultation has taken place with partners and the public in the first half of 2016, using Citizen Space and established partner and consultation networks.

7. The Strategic Housing Need and Demand Assessment (SHNDA) forms a main part of the evidence base for the strategy, by identifying the need for affordable and private market housing over the medium and long term. The results are prepared regionally by the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Market Partnership. The finalised SHNDA was approved by Scottish Government in January 2015. This evidence has informed proposed targets for new private and affordable homes to be delivered in East Renfrewshire over the lifespan of the emerging LHS and Local Development Plan.

8. It is proposed that the draft LHS outcomes and commitments for action (Appendix 1) provide the basis for detailed consultation from October 2016, both with partners required to deliver the strategy, and the community whose needs it aims to address. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure our priorities are correct and deliverable and to agree a practical, measurable action plan going forward. The finalised strategy will be prepared for approval by January/February 2017.

REPORT

9. Four priority areas have been identified for the LHS. Several outcomes and draft commitments are proposed linked to these, which illustrate the improvements the strategy will seek to deliver over 5 years. These cover the following areas:

Priority 1: Increase Access to Housing

- *Our residents are able to access a choice of suitable, affordable housing to meet their needs.*
- *Innovation is used to positively impact upon the available housing supply.*

Priority 2: Thriving, Attractive & Sustainable/ Inclusive Neighbourhoods

- *Residents live in communities that are safe, resilient and supportive.*
- *Residents live in warm, dry homes that are in good condition.*

Priority 3: Facilitate / Support Independent Living

- *Our vulnerable residents are able to live as safely and independently as possible in the community with appropriate care and support.*
- *Support is available to those who require it, to prevent housing crisis and find sustainable housing solutions.*

Priority 4: Improve Access & Participation

- *People can access the information they need about our services, so they can make informed choices about their housing options.*
- *Residents feel included and empowered to make a valuable contribution to their local communities, in the way that suits them best.*

10. There are also key targets set out by the Scottish Government which the LHS must take into account. i.e.

- Delivering at least 50,000 additional affordable homes nationally by **2021**.
- Continuing annual compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) for social rented homes, following the original target to meet this standard by **2015**.
- All social rented homes meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by **2020**.
- By December **2020**, improvements in housing design and energy efficiency to contribute to Scotland's commitments to reduce its energy consumption by 12% and greenhouse gas emissions by 43%.

11. A context of real uncertainty about future public sector resources means an element of caution must be exercised to achieve a strategy which is ambitious but deliverable. Available resources will determine the outcomes achieved over 5 years and this detail will inform the options appraisal element of the strategy consultation.

12. The shortfall of affordable housing locally has been a persistent problem, although there has been a modest increase in new build social rented homes in the last 5 years and the LHS housing supply target has been achieved. The delivery of sufficient new affordable homes will remain a priority but a significant challenge with the added pressure of a sharp increase in Right to Buy applications before the scheme was abolished in July 2016.

13. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 identifies the availability of appropriate good quality housing and housing services as making an important contribution to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. Being able to live safely and comfortably at home for as long as possible is important to many older and disabled people who want to live independently. A requirement of the Act is the production of a Housing Contribution Statement which outlines how the housing sector can support delivery of integrated health and social care services. A draft statement has been produced and is being jointly considered by staff from Housing Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership – with the recommendations from this included as part of the draft LHS consultation.

14. The draft strategy will also seek innovation in the delivery of new homes and to maximise opportunities for finding a suitable home across all housing tenures through collaborative working and high quality advice and support. Ensuring homes and neighbourhoods are kept to a good standard and supporting people to live independently for as long as possible will be our focus for our own tenants and how we support private owners and landlords. Emphasis will also be placed on supporting residents who are facing crisis to find a home and keep it where possible.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

15. Any financial implications associated with the draft LHS consultation and development of the finalised strategy will be met from within current resources.

CONSULTATION

16. Development of the draft outcomes and commitments for the new LHS has been informed by wide ranging consultation, e.g. Elected Members, partner departments and organisations, and members of the public. This has included public consultation using the Citizen Space online portal as well as focus groups, discussions with community groups, and on-street survey work in 2016.

17. A range of mechanisms have been used to ensure as constructive and inclusive an approach to consultation as possible and we will continue this approach in ongoing consultation on the draft LHS.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

18. The draft outcomes and commitments proposed for the strategy have been informed through wide-ranging public consultation and our established partner forums, i.e. Strategic Housing Partnership, Housing Providers Forum and direct discussion including Planning, Regeneration and HSCP.

19. The LHS reflects the Council's strategic responsibility in 'enabling' improvements in local housing and services for the whole area. Scottish Government guidance stresses that for the strategy be delivered effectively it expects to see commitment corporately and by partner organisations to delivering the action plan identified. Successful delivery requires sharing responsibility, knowledge and resources and pooling these to achieve the best outcomes possible for local residents. Through the process of developing the LHS, emphasis continues to be placed on the importance of partnership working and "buy in", in order to ensure the successful delivery of the LHS.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

20. The significant equality and sustainability implications of the strategy will be fully considered through the process of consultation and options appraisal. This proposal does not directly raise any significant new staffing, property, policy or IT issues.

CONCLUSIONS

21. The LHS shapes the direction that housing and related services will take locally and influences identification of housing land through the emerging Local Development Plan. A revised Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) will also be developed by November 2016, and will be critical in directing available resources towards delivering targets for new housing supply.

22. Consultation on the proposed outcomes and commitments for the new strategy provides the Council with the opportunity to discuss with partners and the community the priorities identified for development of housing and related services over the long term.

RECOMMENDATIONS

23. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the draft outcomes and commitments identified for East Renfrewshire's draft Local Housing Strategy as the basis for a 10 week public consultation from October 2016.

Director of Environment

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 – Draft Priorities and Commitments for LHS Consultation (Autumn 2016)
- Local Housing Strategy Guidance – Scottish Government publication (August 2014)

KEY WORDS

A report seeking approval of the draft priorities and commitments for the Local Housing Strategy (2017-2022), and for their use in public consultation in Autumn 2016.

(**Key words:** local, housing, strategy, affordable, needs, homelessness, condition)

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Deliver on agreed Housing Supply Targets

Maintain a sufficient 5-year land supply to support delivery of new homes.

Review the Council's Housing Allocations policy to ensure it continues to address local housing needs.

1.1 Our Residents are able to access a choice of suitable, affordable housing to meet their needs.

Review and improve how efficiently we let Council and Housing Association properties.

Use 'Off the Shelf Purchases' locally to boost housing supply.

Ensure our Private Sector Rent Deposit scheme is responsive to local needs.

Develop a modest programme of Council house building.

Ensure housing need and demand information is kept up to date, in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Develop our longer term strategy for acquiring and assembling sites for housing development, to support effective investment.

Ensure effective advice and signposting is available on all opportunities for renting and buying locally.

Bring long term empty homes back into use by offering support to owners, and where required taking enforcement action.

Maximise use of available support nationally (*'More Homes Scotland'*) to accelerate delivery of new housing.

1.2 Innovation is used to positively impact upon the available housing supply.

Promote the development of an Accessible Housing Policy through the emerging Local Development Plan.

Develop area based plans to maximise affordable housing opportunities, as well as community 'connectedness' in areas of pressure.

Challenge for innovation in the design and delivery of new affordable homes developed locally.

Priority 1 - Required Delivery Partners

- Planning
- Regeneration/ Major Developments Team
- Housing Associations
- Property & Technical Services
- Legal Services
- Education
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Glasgow & Clyde Valley Housing Market Partnership
- Land Owners/ Developers

Resettle up to 50 refugees locally by 2021.

Monitor the impact of the introduction of the new private rented sector tenancy locally, and respond to any emerging issues.

Ensure effective joint-approach to re-settlement of Syrian refugees locally, including unaccompanied children/ young people.

Contribute to developing plans for Thornliebank and Clarkston Town Centres, ensuring improvements in housing are explored.

2.1 Residents live in communities that are safe, resilient and supportive.

Develop an improved joint approach to neighbourhood inspections to raise standards

Promote available information and support to reinforce owners' responsibilities to maintain their homes.

Expand the use of factoring services to achieve improved standards in mixed tenure areas.

Review letting standards for Council and RSL homes to support improved tenancy sustainment.

Improve our joint understanding of the needs of Gypsy Travellers living in and travelling through the local area.

Respond to emerging requirements for regulating energy efficiency standards in privately owned and rented homes.

Continue to invest in the 'Mixed Tenure Scheme' to assist in raising the standard of the physical environment.

EESH Compliance in Council and RSL homes by 2020.

2.2 Residents live in warm, dry homes that are in good condition.

Use available powers and resources to proactively support improvement of homes in poorest condition (e.g. *Missing Shares*)

Continue to direct available support for home energy efficiency improvements towards the most vulnerable households.

Support increased participation of owners in capital programme works through improved planning and payment options.

Proactively improve our strategy for major Council capital programme improvements, through improved information and joint planning.

- Priority 2 - Required Delivery Partners**
- Regeneration/ Major Developments Team
 - Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction Team
 - ERC Syrian Resettlement Task Group
 - Housing Associations
 - Education
 - Cleansing
 - Roads & Transportation
 - Police Scotland (GRIP)
 - Property & Technical Services
 - Legal Services
 - Tenants & Residents Groups
 - Private Landlords & Home Owners

Maximise the contribution of housing to meeting Health and Social Care needs through identifying areas for effective collaboration.

Review of existing housing services supporting independent living, to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Use digital technology to improve awareness of potential adaptations and design features to support homes to meet a lifetime of needs.

Prioritise improvements to support tenancy sustainment for new tenants and other vulnerable households.

3.1 Our vulnerable residents are able to live as safely and independently as possible in the community with appropriate care and support.

Ensure disabled adaptations are used to support people in most need across tenures.

Continue to prioritise available grant funding towards adaptations.

Review the capacity of social housing provided for older and disabled people to be 'futureproofed' for changing needs.

Promote "Help to Adapt" scheme and use pilot outcomes to inform local improvements in policy and advice.

Review "move on" rates from temporary accommodation to establish areas for improvement in achieving successful rehousing outcomes.

Review the outcomes of our joint protocol for Looked After and Young People to ensure we are effectively meeting our statutory duties towards vulnerable young residents.

Priority 3 - Required Delivery Partners

- Health & Social Care Partnership
- Housing Associations
- Care & Repair
- Home Owners
- Community Groups
- Voluntary Organisations
- Women's Aid
- Money Advice & Rights Team
- Education
- DWP/ Benefits
- Private Landlords

Continue to reduce our use of Bed and Breakfast for temporary accommodation.

Maintain an effective supply of temporary accommodation which is responsive to changing needs.

3.2 Support is available to those who require it, to prevent housing crisis and find sustainable housing solutions.

Monitor the impact of Universal Credit on council tenancies, and develop effective responses to reduce rent arrears and the risk of homelessness.

Work jointly with Women's Aid to increase the supply of accommodation available to victims of domestic violence.

Consider alternative housing solutions for vulnerable groups which are affordable and supportive, e.g. sharing, supported landlady.



4.1 People can access the information they need about our services, to make informed choices about their housing options.

Modernise our digital communication with customers by introducing online services and direct messaging.

Ensure housing advice and signposting is high quality and responsive to the range of individual needs *(e.g. Older, Disabled, Hospital/ Prison leavers, Young People)*.

Work jointly with HSCP and housing providers to ensure information resources are accessible to the range of staff delivering advice and support.

Consider providing enhanced digital capacity and access in new Council and housing association developments to support vulnerable tenants *(e.g. WIFI, Tele healthcare capacity)*.

Champion the principle of 'Prevention' locally through roll out of our 'housing options approach' to the delivery of advice services.

Consider options for responding to identified demand for advice on "affordable fuel" in line with national and local priorities for tackling poverty.

Explore the potential for improving access to available housing options for local people.

4.2 Residents feel included and empowered to make a valuable contribution to their local communities, in the way that suits them best.

Develop our local approach to tenant and service user scrutiny, in line with the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter Review.

Work jointly to ensure housing priorities for local areas are reflected in the new Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans

Agree a programme of action to support ongoing 'community conversations' on housing issues.

Explore with partners, the opportunities for involving interested residents in scrutinising delivery of the LHS.

Develop and deliver on a new 'customer engagement' service standard for the Council's Housing Service.

Review service user feedback mechanisms to ensure they allow customers to influence the full range of housing services provided locally.

Deliver on improvements identified in the review of local pathways to participation.

- Priority 4 - Required Delivery Partners**
- Money Advice & Rights Team
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Prevention Team
 - Community Planning Team
 - Housing Associations
 - Health & Social Care Partnership
 - National Housing Options HUB
 - Community Councils
 - Tenants & Residents
 - Private Landlords
 - Home Owners