

Report of the Strategic Director Regeneration and Culture to the meeting of Executive to be held on 11 March 2014.

Subject:

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‘A place to call home’: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 - 2019

Summary statement:

This report outlines the development of a refreshed Housing and Homelessness Strategy for the district. The strategy sets out the vision, priorities and approach for meeting the housing needs of the residents of the district, and for tackling and preventing homelessness. The refreshed strategy has been drafted as a high-level framework document, to influence the Council and partners’ policies and delivery programmes.

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Portfolio:

Housing, Planning and Transport

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Regeneration and Economy



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the development of a refreshed Housing and Homelessness Strategy for the district. The strategy sets out the vision, priorities and approach for meeting the housing needs of the residents of the district, and for tackling and preventing homelessness. The refreshed strategy has been drafted as a high-level framework document, to influence the Council and partners' policies and delivery programmes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The district currently has two separate housing and homelessness strategies, which were both approved in 2008. These are "Sustainable Homes and Sustainable Neighbourhoods in a Successful District: Joint Housing Strategy for Bradford 2008 – 2020", and "Bradford Homelessness Strategy 2008".
- 2.2 There have been significant economic, political and policy changes since the current Housing Strategy was adopted and it is therefore necessary to carry out a review of the strategy at this time. The review recognises the significant profile given to the scale of Bradford's housing and homelessness challenges and opportunities in recent years.
- 2.3 The local policy landscape has changed since the last Joint Housing Strategy was signed off, and there is a need to ensure alignment of housing and homelessness strategic priorities with these key local drivers, including the Local Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Child Poverty Strategy and draft revised Community Strategy.
- 2.4 There have also been changes in the funding landscape and a greater emphasis on partners working together, and the refresh of the district's Housing and Homelessness strategies has provided an opportunity to involve all key partners in identifying key shared priorities and a common purpose and sense of direction.
- 2.5 Given the current economic climate, there is greater need to ensure that housing supports the economic growth of the district – improving our housing offer attracts new people to the district and helps to retain skilled residents, encourages businesses to re-locate here and provides valuable investment, training and employment opportunities. Housing is also critical to the successful development and delivery of regeneration plans, helping to support mixed-use development by bringing confidence to areas which in turn encourages other types of investment.
- 2.6 There is also a fundamental need to continue to identify and respond to the housing and support needs of vulnerable people within the district, and to ensure that we target our efforts on tackling the housing instability which prevents people from leading independent lives and which undermines communities and seriously impacts on people's quality of life and wellbeing.



3. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 During the course of reviewing the previous housing and homelessness strategies, it became clear that it made sense to bring both together. This is in recognition that the two are inextricably linked – if we address our housing priorities, it makes a huge difference to homelessness. The draft new strategy therefore sets out the vision, priorities and approach for meeting the housing needs of the residents of Bradford district, and for tackling and preventing homelessness.
- 3.2 This strategy is a partnership-led strategy, being jointly owned by Bradford Council and by the Bradford Housing Partnership, recognising the value of many different agencies and organisations playing their part in responding to the housing and economic challenges faced by the District and its residents. This ensures that we are all working together to achieve a shared vision for housing and homelessness.
- 3.3 The strategy is intended to provide a framework to guide future business, service and policy decisions by recognising the key current and future issues facing the district in relation to housing and homelessness. The strategy articulates a clear vision for addressing these issues and a series of priority objectives. The aim of the strategy is to act as a steering document to influence the Council and partners' policies, delivery programmes and business plans, and to provide the structure and context to guide interventions over the coming years.
- 3.4 The development of this strategy helps the Council to fulfil its duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 which requires all local authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

4. APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

- 4.1 A steering group consisting of representatives from the Council and key partners was established to oversee the development of the new strategy.
- 4.2 A comprehensive review of evidence was undertaken in order to inform the development of the strategy. This included housing evidence, and evidence relating to policy areas which link closely to housing and/or homelessness. The group also reflected on the ongoing analysis of relevant housing trends which is undertaken periodically. A summary evidence base document was produced, which is included as an appendix to the draft strategy.
- 4.3 A wide range of partners, drawn primarily from the Bradford Housing Partnership, were involved in scoping out and informing the key issues highlighted in the draft strategy.
- 4.4 A draft vision and priority objectives were produced, which were then tested through consultation at the Housing Partnership's annual conference, where work was undertaken to identify key approaches to delivering against the priority objectives.



5. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT OF THE STRATEGY

- 5.1 The draft strategy has identified the following vision for housing and homelessness in the district:-

Everyone in Bradford District should have a place to call home which is suitable for their needs and in which they can thrive.

- 5.2 Four priority objectives have been identified as follows.

Objective 1 – More Homes

This recognises that we need to build sufficient new homes to meet the needs of a growing population, and that new homes need to be of the right type in the right location. There is also a need to make better use of existing housing to meet growth needs, by bringing empty homes back into use. Alongside the need to provide more homes there is also a need to ensure there is appropriate infrastructure to support that growth.

Objective 2 – Safe and Healthy Homes

This objective aims to ensure that all housing is free from the worst hazards, and that homes support people to stay healthy. There is a need to adapt homes so people can stay independent, and to encourage all landlords and letting agents to provide safe and healthy homes. This objective also recognises the need to tackle the blight of empty homes.

Objective 3 – Affordable Homes

This acknowledges that we need to ensure an adequate supply of affordable homes to buy or rent that match household incomes. There is a need to ensure that people can affordably heat and sustain their homes by helping them make their homes more efficient.

Objective 4 – Support Independence and Prevent Homelessness

There is a need to provide support and advice to help people to live independently and to prevent homelessness. This needs to be accompanied with raising aspirations and removing the barriers to employment so that households can sustain their own housing independence.

- 5.3 In addition to the four priority objectives, the strategy has identified four 'golden thread' objectives, which the delivery of the strategy will directly contribute towards. These are broader, cross-cutting objectives shared by a wide range of partners across the district.



Golden Thread objectives

High quality services – recognising the need to provide efficient, client-focused and cost-effective housing and housing-related support services

Reducing inequalities – housing has a big part to play in promoting equality of access and support, and in tackling inequalities. In particular, health and financial inequalities can be significantly improved through the provision of good quality affordable housing options.

Supporting the economy – a successfully functioning housing market is essential to the regeneration and economic growth of the district. A quality housing offer will help to attract and retain businesses and residents, which in turn will fuel the economic recovery.

Sustainable neighbourhoods – housing makes a direct contribution to creating safe, welcoming and sustainable neighbourhoods. Work to deliver new homes, tackle empty housing and make homes more sustainable all contributes to creating sustainable neighbourhoods.

- 5.4 For each priority objective, the key issues affecting Bradford district are summarised, along with the aspirations of what we want to achieve and how. A summary of the delivery approaches which will be taken is also provided under each objective, along with a small number of key ‘success measures’ which will be monitored annually by the Housing Partnership in order to measure progress.
- 5.5 The final version of the strategy which is ultimately adopted by the Council and the Bradford Housing Partnership will be signposted on the Council and key partner websites.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 During the course of reviewing and developing the new strategy, consultation has been undertaken as follows:-
- Bradford Housing Partnership – scoping session, email briefings, discussions with Executive Group, Annual Conference
 - Bradford Housing Association Liaison Group – presentation and discussion
 - Other partnership bodies and working groups – presentation and discussion – including Homelessness Core Group, Child Poverty Board, Gypsy and Traveller Working Group, Race and Ethnicity Strategic Group, Older People’s Partnership Board
 - Political briefings
 - Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 13 Feb 2014
- 6.2 To facilitate public feedback, a consultation draft of the new strategy was published online on the ‘Consultations’ page of the Council’s website. Members of the public and a wide range of partners were signposted to this draft, and comments were invited during a month-long consultation period (Dec – Jan). Feedback from this



consultation has been reviewed and incorporated where appropriate. A number of consultation responses were received in relation to concerns about the scale of housing growth in Holme Wood and Tong. These will be considered as part of the ongoing process to finalise the Local Plan Core Strategy. From all the consultation responses received, there were no objections to the overarching vision and priority objectives identified.

7. APPROVAL, IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW PROCESSES

- 7.1 Following consideration by Executive, this strategy will then be submitted to full Council. The strategy was also submitted to the Bradford Housing Partnership's Strategy Group Annual Meeting in February for formal endorsement.
- 7.2 The Bradford Housing Partnership will review the success measures for the strategy on an annual basis, and will agree any significant new focus for partnership action. As the strategy is by design a high-level framework, its success will depend on actions and interventions planned and delivered by a wide range of delivery partners. The business plans of key partners will therefore be the key tools for implementing the vision and objectives of the strategy. In addition, there is a need for specialist partnership sub-groups to develop and review specific programmes of delivery which sit beneath this strategy. These sub-groups include the Strategic Homelessness Core Group, Supporting People Provider Forum and Bradford Housing Association Liaison Group.

8. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 This strategy is closely linked to a number of district and Council-wide plans and strategies. In particular, it supports the vision for the district outlined in the Community Strategy. Delivering this strategy will also help to support the business and economic growth outlined in district's Producer City Strategy, and the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 8.2 As the overarching high-level strategy for housing and homelessness across the district, this strategy will set the context and key principles for future reviews of housing-specific policies including the district's Tenancy Strategy and the district's Social Housing Allocations Policy.
- 8.3 All of the priority objectives identified in the strategy will make a direct contribution to meeting a wide range of objectives from other key partnership strategies, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Child Poverty Strategy and the Supporting People Strategy.

9. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the strategy sets out a number of potential delivery approaches some of which will utilise the resources of the Council. All Council-led implementation measures which contribute towards this strategy will be subject to approval via the Council's annual budget process.



9.2 The strategy puts an emphasis on taking a flexible approach to how resources are sourced and used, and highlights the importance of working in partnership to deliver programmes of activity. The strategy will be used as an influencing document, to seek to secure maximum value from internal and external support to deliver measures and actions which contribute to the strategy's vision and objectives.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

10.1 A reputational risk would arise if the Council failed to update its housing and homelessness strategies to take into account significant changes since the last strategies were approved. The approach to delivering and owning the strategy supports the Council's community leadership and place-shaper role through effective partnership working and delivery of joined-up services to the people of the district. Risks associated with Council-led projects and programmes relating to this strategy will be managed through the corporate risk management process.

11. LEGAL APPRAISAL

11.1 The Council has a duty under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a new homelessness strategy based on the results of a homelessness review at least every five years. This strategy must be taken into account in the exercise of the Council's functions.

11.2 The aim of this strategy must be to prevent homelessness, to secure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless, and to secure the satisfactory provision of support for such people, or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent a recurrence.

11.3 In formulating this strategy, the Council must have regard to the 'Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities', published in July 2006, and to the Council's current Housing Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Strategy. Appropriate public or local authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons must be consulted before the strategy is modified.

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

12.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The strategy sets out an explicit commitment to reducing inequalities, and recognises that housing has a big part to play in promoting equality of access and support, and in tackling inequalities. The delivery approaches outlined under each priority objective in the strategy aim to take people's differing needs into account including those who experience discrimination or exclusion, and those who are most vulnerable and have the greatest needs. The strategy also highlights the needs of particularly vulnerable sections of the population in terms of housing and support. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the strategy and will be published on the Council's website.



12.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The strategy seeks to support the sustainability of the district and its communities through prioritising the provision of suitable, affordable housing to meet the needs of our growing population and by retrofitting existing dwelling stock to improve its long-term viability. Through promoting effective housing solutions, the strategy will support personal, neighbourhood and community wellbeing, and aims to provide long-term solutions to housing and homelessness issues. The strategy also aims to underpin the economic and employment vision for the District and by doing this contribute towards a sustainable and equitable economy which all can benefit from. The strategy directly recognises the role that housing can play in creating safe, welcoming and sustainable neighbourhoods, and in promoting sustainable use of environmental and energy resources.

12.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency are key features within the strategy. The strategy aims to address the need to improve energy efficiency within the district's housing stock, and to promote the adoption of low and zero carbon technologies in new homes. Through its support for these measures, the strategy aims to have a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

12.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

No direct community safety implications, however the strategy does seek to support the creation of safe, welcoming and sustainable neighbourhoods, and the delivery of new homes and supporting infrastructure across the district will help to alleviate housing pressures and create thriving communities. The specific aim to tackle long-term empty homes can make a big impact on alleviating crime and anti-social behaviour in the areas surrounding those empty homes.

12.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Implementation of the strategy will be conducive to the fulfilment of the Convention Rights and Freedoms under schedule 1 to the Human Rights Act 1998.

12.6 TRADE UNION

There are no trade union implications identified.

12.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific ward implications identified, as the strategy will apply district-wide. However, the development of many programmes and projects relating to housing development, housing improvements, housing support and neighbourhood development will be focused on specific localities. The successful implementation of the strategy will generate social and economic benefits for all wards across the district.



13. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

14. OPTIONS

Option 1 – to endorse ‘A place to call home’: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019

This is the preferred option, as the draft strategy fits with the overarching aims and vision for the Council, and provides an updated framework within which the Council and its key housing partners can develop their delivery programmes over the coming years.

Option 2 – to reject ‘A place to call home’: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019

This option is not recommended as it would leave the current separate Housing and Homelessness Strategies in place, both of which are in need of updating to take into account significant economic and political changes since 2008.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 15.1 The Executive endorses ‘A place to call home: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019’ and recommends the strategy to full Council for approval.
- 15.2 The Executive notes the support provided by partners in developing the strategy, and acknowledges the significant contribution that will be provided by housing and other partners in implementing this strategy.
- 15.3 The Strategic Director for Regeneration & Culture, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, is delegated authority to undertake monitoring and implementation of this strategy.

16. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: ‘A place to call home’ Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019 (DRAFT)

Appendix 2: Evidence Base summary for Housing and Homelessness Strategy

17. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Previous Joint Housing Strategy - Sustainable Homes and Sustainable Neighbourhoods in a Successful District: Joint Housing Strategy for Bradford 2008 – 2020](#)



[Previous Homelessness Strategy - Bradford Homelessness Strategy 2008](#)

[Bradford District Tenancy Strategy 2013 – 2018](#)

Bradford District Housing Allocations Policy 2014 - 2017



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