

## **Report of the Assistant Director to the meeting of Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 26 September 2017**

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### **Subject:**

**HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - PROGRESS UPDATE**

### **Summary statement:**

*'A Place to Call Home: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019'* was agreed by the full Council on 25 March 2014.

This report updates the committee on progress made towards the strategy objectives.

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## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 'A Place to Call Home: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 2019' was endorsed by the Council's Executive on 11 March 2014, and agreed by the full Council at its meeting on 25 March 2014.
- 1.2 Members of this committee agreed to request future annual reports on the strategy. This is the third such report, and provides an update on progress made towards the strategy objectives.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Housing and Homelessness Strategy is partnership-led and jointly owned by the Council and the Bradford Housing Partnership, reflecting the reality of the role played by a wide range of organisations and agencies in delivering the housing and homelessness objectives contained within the strategy. This means that whilst the Council is a key delivery partner, it is not responsible for delivering all of the actions and relies on the co-operation of its partners for successful implementation.
- 2.2 The approach taken in the strategy is to set out some broad objectives which act as a framework and steering document to influence the Council and its partners' priorities, delivery programmes and business plans. Individual, more detailed action plans are then drawn up to sit underneath the overarching strategy framework, such as the Empty Homes Action Plan which was endorsed by this committee in February 2017.
- 2.3 This Strategy complements and sits within the Bradford Council Plan 2016 – 2020, providing focus and direction to the objective within that Plan which is 'Decent Homes that people can afford to live in'.
- 2.4 The Strategy has the following vision:-

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

- 2.5 The objectives in the Strategy are:-

***More Homes:*** new homes; better use of existing stock/empty homes; and appropriate infrastructure to support the growth

***Safe & Healthy Homes:*** housing which is free from hazards; support people to stay healthy; adaptations to stay independent; work with landlords and lettings agents; tackle blight of empty homes.

***Affordable Homes:*** Adequate supply of affordable homes to buy or rent in relation to incomes; affordable warmth and energy efficient.

***Support independence and prevent homelessness:*** support for people to live independently and prevent homelessness; raising aspirations and removing barriers to employment to sustain housing independence

2.6 The success measures in the Strategy, against which performance is measured, are:-

- Increase in net additional homes
- Reduction in number of long term empty homes
- Increase in number of private sector homes where housing conditions have improved through intervention
- More homes adapted
- Increase in number of new affordable homes delivered
- More energy efficient homes and fewer people in fuel poverty
- Increase in average incomes across the district
- Improvement in the number of housing advice cases which successfully and sustainably prevent people becoming homeless
- Reduction in the number of homeless people placed in Bed and Breakfast and shorter stays in Temporary Accommodation
- Targeting support at those who need it most and at the right time

### **3. PERFORMANCE AGAINST SUCCESS MEASURES**

#### **3.1 Increase in net additional homes**

In 2014/15 there were 1,134 homes delivered, 1,338 in 2015/16, and 1,448 in 2016/17. Despite a steady increase in recent years, current housing delivery is only around half the level required - the new Core Strategy demonstrates a requirement for 2,476 new homes per year.

#### **3.2 Reduction in number of long term empty homes**

The number of long term empty dwellings fell by 5% to 3,944 in October 2016 from 4,154 the year before. This represents a reduction in the number of long-term empty properties of 3,358 since 2009/10 which was the baseline figure for the Empty Homes Strategy. Bringing empty homes back into use also generates New Homes Bonus and has helped generate around 40% of the Council's £48.5 million new homes bonus in the seven financial years from 2011-2018.

#### **3.3 Increase in number of private sector homes where housing conditions have improved through intervention**

In 2016/17 947 private sector homes were improved following intervention. 342 of these homes had children living in them. In 2016/17 the way that this measure is calculated was changed so that this now just looks at the number of homes improved following intervention from the Council's Housing Operations team. Prior to 2016/17 the measure included other interventions, such as Government funded home energy schemes, which meant that the figure was higher (1330 in 2015/16 and 2167 in 2014/15). Therefore the measure had been previously largely dependent on the availability of Government funded initiatives, which were mainly outside of the Council's control. A direct comparison of the elements included in the figure for 2016/17 with the previous year, shows a 5.7% increase compared to 2015/16.

### 3.4 **More homes adapted**

Disabled Facilities Grants completions continue its upward trend with the total increase over 4 years of 79%. In 2013/14 there were 190 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) completed, which rose to 236 in 2014/15, to 280 in 2015/16 and then 340 in 2016/17. In 2016/17 the service received 561 new referrals for DFGs compared to 603 in 2015/16, 489 in 2014/15 and 357 in 2013/14.

### 3.5 **Increase in number of new affordable homes delivered**

In 2016/17, 184 affordable homes were delivered across the District and in addition, 18 specialist temporary accommodation units were completed. This number is a significant increase compared with 2015/16 (92) but still some way short of the total for 2014/15 (258). The dip in delivery in 2015/16 probably reflects a range of factors including investment decisions by registered providers during the economic downturn and uncertainties over viability due to the social housing rent reduction, fewer Section 106 agreements with developers, and the gap between national Affordable Housing Programmes. However, it is likely that the pace of delivery will continue as the 2015/18 affordable homes programme is rolled out.

### 3.6 **More energy-efficient homes and fewer people in fuel poverty**

Fuel poverty continues to be a significant issue in the Bradford District. The latest figures available from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy show that 30,380 households in the District were considered to be in fuel poverty in 2015, which at 15.0% is significantly higher than 11.0% nationally. The latest fuel poverty figure also shows an increase from 13.2% in 2014 which had fallen from 14.1% in 2013. Bradford has a relatively high level of fuel poverty due to the high level of deprivation in parts of the District, low household incomes and the poor quality of the dwelling stock.

### 3.7 **Increase in average incomes across the district**

The median weekly income for a full time worker living in Bradford in 2016 was £473.50 according to ONS data, which continues to be behind the regional and UK medians of £498.30 and £538.70 respectively. There has been a steady improvement compared to 5 years ago, as the Bradford average is now £19 closer to the Yorkshire and Humber median, and £15 closer to the UK figure than it was in 2011. In Bradford there are more people than national and regional averages employed in lower paid elementary occupations and fewer managers and directors than average, and there has been very little change in employment types in the District for over a decade.

### 3.8 **Improvement in the number of housing advice cases which successfully and sustainably prevent people becoming homeless**

There have been large increases in the number of homeless preventions and reliefs reported by the Housing Options team over the life of the strategy, almost doubling from 2013/14 to 2016/17 to 4,918.

10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
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Preventions and Reliefs	2,091	3,803	3,752	2,493	2,636	3,302	4,918
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Preventions and reliefs due to casework by Bradford MDC's Housing Options Team (Bradford MDC Data)

The number of households accepted as homeless with a full duty for the Council to assist has also increased over the life of the strategy to 413, a 19% increase from 2013/14 to 2016/17. Rising presentations and acceptances reflect to some extent the rise in all Housing Options case work, with the number of cases rising 28% to 8,176 over the life of the strategy so far (2013/14 to 2016/17).

### 3.9 Reduction in number of homeless people placed in Bed and Breakfast and shorter stays in Temporary Accommodation

The average length of stay in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation has reduced steadily, from 13 days in 2013/14, to 12 in 2014/15, 9.5 days in 2015/16 down to 8.6 days in 2016/17. The number of families placed in B&B reduced from 603 to 580 in the same time period, a decrease of 4%. For households placed in any type of Temporary Accommodation (TA), which is inclusive of B&B, the average length of stay rose from 19 in 2015/16 to 22 in 2016/17, however last year's figure is still a 58% reduction on the 53 days average stay in 2013/14. So far the success measure of reducing B&B placements and the average length of TA stay are both being demonstrably met over the life of the strategy.

## 4. COMMENTARY ON PROGRESS

### Objective 1: More Homes

- 4.1 The Council is committed to ensure that the District meets its need for homes. In this respect the new Local Plan Core Strategy for the District (adopted 18 July 2017) makes clear that the Council will be ensuring sufficient land is identified to meet the district-wide requirement for at least 42,100 new homes in the period up to 2030. This figure includes the backlog for under-delivery in recent years. The Core Strategy sets out a range of policies to support development in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and sets out clear policies to support well designed dwellings with a mix of houses which meet the various needs of the community to 2030 including provision of affordable housing. Further information on the Core Strategy can be found at: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/core-strategy-dpd/>
- 4.2 During 2016 and early 2017 there was a general upturn in the number of planning consents given for new housing developments with keen interest in areas such as Silsden, Steeton and West Bradford. Further consents have been given in the Applerley Bridge area following the opening of the new railway station and a number of sites have been promoted on land previously held for other uses such as employment purposes. Outline consent was previously given by the Secretary of State for over 400 houses in Bingley (Sty Lane) and reserved matters applications are expected for this key site later in in 2017. Reserved matters applications are also expected for the substantial housing site at the former Fagley Quarry with joint house builders having agreed to take this site forward for circa 550 houses. In July 2017 the second phase of the Canal Road Urban Village housing project was submitted for reserved matters (145 houses). In Shipley at Crag Road 85 new

houses have been consented in July 2017 with an anticipated start date before the end of the year.

- 4.3 A number of new housing schemes are well under way in Queensbury, Denholme, Cullingworth, Wyke, Allerton and Apperley Bridge where sales values continue to offer developers reasonable returns and some previously stalled sites have become more viable. There continues to be interest in sites in Bradford City Centre and the urban areas of Bradford but land values and developer viability issues still provide challenges limiting the number of consented schemes generating further interest and resulting in starts on site.
- 4.4 In the New Bolton Woods (NBW) area, the Council's joint venture company Canal Road Urban Village Ltd. (CRUVL), established with private development partner Urbo Regeneration Ltd., have already delivered a first phase of residential development providing 50 new homes (including 20 Affordable Rented units). It is expected that the second phase of development will commence in 2017 and will provide some 3,000 sq m of retail/commercial space off Stanley Road that will anchor the new Local Centre element of the scheme. Following securing an outline planning permission for the NBW Regeneration Masterplan, CRUVL submitted an application for full planning permission in July 2017 for 145 homes to be built by Keepmoat, as part of 500/600 expected in total for the second phase.
- 4.5 As part of the Homes & Community Agency (HCA) Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) 2015-18 Registered Providers in the district have successfully secured funding to deliver 766 homes. This includes 157 homes for rent that the Council will deliver on various sites in its ownership across the district. Work on delivering the 2015/18 programme is progressing with 43 properties that the Council has been developing being completed in August.
- 4.6 The Council has also secured HCA grant to improve the housing offer for people threatened with homelessness and to help older people with care or support needs to live independently. A Homelessness Change Fund 2015-17 bid was successful, and this is being used to refurbish specialist hostel accommodation delivered by Bradford Cyrenians. A Care and Support Specialised Housing fund bid to deliver a 69 unit extra care facility in Oakworth, Keighley, was also announced as successful in 2016. Further HCA funding has been secured by the Council through the HCA's Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing programme 2016/21 to develop 50 units of affordable housing on a Rent to Buy basis by 2021.
- 4.7 The Council's Development Partner, promoting the residential elements of the Crag Road, Shipley redevelopment scheme, received consent in July 2017 following a Detailed Planning Application for a 'Phase 1' development that will provide 85 new homes including the 50 'Starter Homes' that are the subject of funding assistance received by the Council from the HCA. Preliminary site investigation and remediation works have been commenced on the site, and it is hoped that construction works could commence by the end of the year.
- 4.8 Demand for the Empty Homes service continues to be high with 700 service requests being responded to in 2016/17, increasing 18% from 595 in 2015/16. The work of the Empty Homes Team is a mixture of this reactive and proactive work, the latter generated from the Council's own data and surveys of the district. The team are dealing with approximately 1,000 empty properties at any one time, and

influences a large number of owners to bring empty homes back into use. For the year 2016/17, 134 properties were brought back into use through direct intervention by the Empty Homes Team which is a 17% increase on the previous year.

- 4.9 Officers in the Housing Service will utilise appropriate products from the full range of options available to them to try to encourage owners to bring their empty homes back into use, however in some cases officers need to utilise the highest sanction against uncooperative owners which is compulsory purchase. Since 2010, the service has voluntarily acquired 30 properties and compulsorily purchased 20 properties. 15 cases are currently on-going of which 11 are Compulsory Purchase Orders and 4 are voluntary acquisitions.
- 4.10 The Housing Operations service continues to work in partnership with external organisations to provide the opportunity to purchase empty properties and bring them back into use as rented accommodation for young and vulnerable people in addition to providing support to those young people. These organisations currently include the Bradford Youthbuild Trust, Centrepoint, Arise Yorkshire and other smaller charities.
- 4.11 The Bradford Youthbuild Trust have purchased a cluster of 4 empty properties from the Council (acquired through a combination of Compulsory Purchase and Voluntary Acquisition) in a deteriorating street of 10 properties, and have used their renovation as a training facility for young people learning construction / repair trades. This project has transformed the street and provided a solid and sustainable future, whereas without intervention the road would have otherwise continued to decline and potentially been abandoned.
- 4.12 Prior to 2015 the only indicator relating to empty homes reported on the 'snap shot' number of long term empty homes in the district. The indicator did not easily illustrate how many empty properties were no longer empty in the district or allow us to appreciate the scale of the 'churn' of empty properties and the impact this would have on communities. Consequently, in 2015, the Council introduced an additional performance indicator relating to empty homes. The additional indicator reports on the total number of long term empty properties that have ceased to be empty. The figure is reported on a monthly basis as a rolling 12 month figure. The July 2017 outturn for the indicator is 4,774, meaning that in the year June 2016 to July 2017, just under five thousand long term empty properties became occupied.

## **Objective 2: Safe and Healthy Homes**

- 4.13 In July 2015 the Building Research Establishment Ltd (BRE) completed a stock modelling exercise for Bradford Council which is intended to support the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and enable a targeted intervention approach to improving housing. BRE identified that 18% of all private sector housing and 27% of properties in the private rented sector have the highest level of health and safety hazards and that the estimated cost of mitigating these hazards is £78 million.
- 4.14 The Council continues to tackle disrepair issues in the private sector and in 2016/17 took action to deal with 4,710 specific health and safety hazards, which is 13.8% higher than in 2015/16. This increase reflects increasing levels of demand and also proactive work to tackle areas or types of property which pose significant health and

safety risks. In January 2016 the Housing Standards team was successful in securing £45,000 of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to carry out intensive enforcement inspections of flats above commercial premises along three main arterial routes into Bradford; Leeds Road, Manchester Road and Great Horton Road, and to target properties with outstanding Housing Act Notices on a district wide basis.

- 4.15 The Council provides adaptations to support people with disabilities to live in their homes. The number of completed grants has continued to increase significantly in 2016/17, completions 21% higher than the previous year. Generally, the number of initial enquiries is also increasing (although there was a fall of 7.5% in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16) - increasing demand, linked also to a perceived increasing complexity of adaptations needed, is putting significant pressure both on the adaptations team and the Council's capital resources
- 4.16 For DFGs the Council offers an in house agency service which over 80% of clients choose to use. The agency service appoints a contractor and takes responsibility for managing all works on site. On completion of works a 12 month defects liability is provided. The service has a framework of contractors to deliver agency work at more competitive rates resulting in 20% more cases being delivered for the same budget than before the framework was used. During 2015/16 the Council has completed a procurement process for the contractors on the DFG framework. The new framework is now in place for the next 2 years (with an option to extend it for another year).

### **Objective 3: Affordable Homes**

- 4.17 As well as undertaking developments itself, the Council works with a number of partners to deliver new affordable housing. Both the Council and its partners were particularly successful in securing grant support under the HCA's Affordable Housing Programme for 2015 – 2018 (AHP2) for 766 affordable homes. The Council will be delivering a total of 157 units on 7 sites as part of the programme, including 18 supported temporary accommodation housing units for homeless households at Clergy House and Jermyn Court, which were completed and occupied early this year. In addition the Council will be delivering 69 extra care units for the elderly and 49 market sale units.
- 4.18 Work to deliver domestic energy efficiency retro fit programmes to homes within the Bradford District has been significantly affected in the past few years by changes to national policy and the resulting reduction of funding available from the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. However, Bradford Council has been successful in obtaining additional funding to deliver various initiatives to provide domestic home energy efficiency measures to private sector households. These have included:
- **Green Deal Fund Community Scheme-** Working with the WYCA Better Homes Yorkshire programme, funding was obtained for external cavity wall insulation to treat 'Right to Buy' private sector homes, with 197 measures completed since 2014, along with 31 inner city households experiencing fuel poverty receiving energy efficiency measures (mainly 'roof in the roof insulation').



- **Central Heating Fund Project-** Funding obtained to provide 46 households experiencing fuel poverty with central heating, along with practical assistance to use the system efficiently and source a competitive energy supplier.
- **Tackling Fuel Poverty Programme-** The Better Homes Yorkshire Partnership successfully bid for £5 m from the Local Growth Fund in July 2016. Phase 1 includes £1.2 m of external wall insulation to tackle fuel poverty in deprived areas of Bradford, with 62 measures completed in the Thorpe Edge area, 43 in the Bierley locality, 5 in Delph Hill, 5 in the Parkside area and a further 23 measures due in 2017/18.

4.19 Bradford Council is part of the Leeds City Region (LCR) Better Homes partnership, set up by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority in April 2015, consisting of 10 LCR local authorities, the WYCA and a private sector partner, Keepmoat collaboratively with Fortem. This partnership delivers the Better Home Yorkshire programme which exclusively offers Local Authority backed domestic energy efficiency measures to private sector households throughout the LCR. The Council has also worked with Public Health to support the local voluntary sector through the Warm Homes Healthy People Partnership to offer free home energy advice to households at risk of fuel poverty. Bradford Council is also working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to deliver further initiatives to address fuel poverty and promote affordable warmth in the district. These include:

- **White Rose Energy-** In January 2017, the Executive approved Bradford Council to enter into a partnership with Leeds City Council to promote White Rose Energy, a not for profit energy services company providing fair energy prices to residential properties across the region. 'Low cost' energy tariffs will be offered to all residents, including those on pre-payment meters by enabling them to switch to the fairest pre-payment tariff or credit meter.
- **Energy Repayment Loans-** The Council has been working on a regional basis to develop an Energy Repayment Loan (ERL), which was approved by the Executive in December 2016. ERLs are interest free and target homeowners who may struggle to access loan finance, to enable them to benefit from energy efficiency measure through national and regional programmes.

4.20 The Government has abandoned the Zero Carbon Homes building regulations that were due to come into force in 2016. This will significantly hamper the delivery of higher energy performance standards in new homes, particularly where developers already experience significant viability issues due to depressed retail prices.

#### **Objective 4: Support Independence and Prevent Homelessness**

4.21 The No Second Night Out (NSNO) service, commissioned in October 2015, provides holistic support for rough sleepers, including street outreach, emergency accommodation and assistance into settled housing. In the first year of the NSNO service, 439 clients accessed the service, of which 325 were provided with temporary accommodation and 169 moved on to more secure accommodation. Within its first year the NSNO service also provided specific cold weather provision for 161 clients when the temperature was forecast to fall to 0°C or lower during the night.

- 4.22 The Housing Options service has improved its private rented sector offer via the introduction of a Private Sector Lettings Scheme, to enhance the range of affordable, decent quality private rented homes available for people in housing need. Since the Private Sector Lettings Scheme was established in November 2015, over 1,470 households have been referred onto the scheme, and nearly half of these have been offered private rented accommodation resulting in 287 new tenancies created.
- 4.23 The 18 new units of temporary accommodation for homeless households which were completed in January 2017 using HCA grant funding, are now fully occupied. The accommodation, at Clergy House and Jermyn Court in the city centre, gives the Council enhanced capacity and flexibility to better meet the short term accommodation needs of homeless households, providing a suitable offer to meet a range of needs.
- 4.24 Bradford has been successful in increasing the rate of homelessness preventions and reliefs over the past three years. Compared to the total number of households in the District, the Council's Housing Options team managed over 23.9 preventions and reliefs per 1,000 households in 2016/17, rising from 16.1 per 1,000 in 2015/16, and 12.3 per 1,000 in 2013/14. The prevention and relief rate for England was 8.6 per 1,000 in 2016/17 falling slightly from 8.7 in 2015/16 and 10.2 in 2013/14.
- 4.25 The re-commissioning of housing related support (HRS) was undertaken throughout 2016 in line with key budget decisions made by the Council. HRS provides a number of critical services which target homelessness, including accommodation based support and floating support for key client groups. Contracts have been awarded for the provision of services for clients with multiple needs, high risk ex-offenders and young people at risk including teenage parents. These re-commissioned services have now all commenced. An innovative 'Gateway' to HRS was launched during 2016, this now provides all clients with a single point of access to housing advice, homelessness and housing-related support, all delivered through a single assessment undertaken by Housing Options. All accommodation and support placements are now co-ordinated and administered through this one system.

## 5. KEY FUTURE CHALLENGES

There has been demonstrable progress towards the objectives in the strategy, which has resulted in holistic improvements to the housing offer in the district. Despite these improvements, the Council and its partners face a number of significant future challenges in relation to housing and homelessness. These include:-

- 5.1 The **Housing and Planning Act** was approved in Parliament in 2016 and key elements of this will be implemented in 2017/18. This is a wide-ranging piece of legislation that will have significant impacts on a number of housing and planning activities including housing enforcement in the private rented sector. In particular, the Council will now be expected to impose civil penalties (fines) for non-compliance with housing enforcement notices and impose banning orders on rogue landlords (who will then be recorded on a national database). There has been little detail on what these powers will entail and the lead-in time for implementation is expected to be short, even though this may involve significant changes in the way

that housing enforcement is currently conducted.

- 5.2 The **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**, which received royal assent, will place new duties on councils to prevent homelessness regardless of whether or not the household is considered to be in 'priority need'. The new legislation is expected to significantly increase both the number of customers that the Housing Options teams will deal with, and also the volume of casework undertaken to deal with a typical case. There will also be increased pressure to source a wider range of accommodation options for people in housing need. The new act is expected to be implemented from April 2018.
- 5.3 Continued **welfare reform** measures will have a greater impact on Bradford compared to the country as a whole due to Bradford's higher proportion of larger households. The lowering of the benefit cap to £20k per year will affect most families that have 3 children or more, and Child Tax Credits will be limited to 2 children from April 2017 for children born from that date. Other major reforms include measures to peg rents in the social sector to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate from April 2019, and under 35 year old single people being only entitled to the shared accommodation rate of LHA. These reforms will impact adversely on both families and single people caught within the new rules. The roll out of Universal Credit to all households over the coming years along with the package of welfare reform measures, will compound housing affordability issues for many households, and also make it more difficult to find sustainable housing solutions for many of the households affected.
- 5.4 In relation to the '**More Homes**' objective, there remains a real question about whether current market conditions, coupled with rising construction costs and a lack of construction skills will give developers the confidence to develop the additional new homes that the district needs. The Housing White Paper seeks to address issues fettering housing supply, however there is little detail provided about changes to planning policy, and it is not yet possible to predict its likely success.
- 5.5 In relation to **affordable homes**, the proposed 10% affordable home ownership policy on new sites with 11 or more dwellings would reduce the number of new affordable homes delivered through s.106 agreements, and it is the affordable rent tenures that better meet the district's housing needs currently. Viability for developers has been a longstanding issue in Bradford, and in terms of affordable housing delivery, the lack of certainty over future rent income streams and the LHA cap compromises the supply of new affordable rented housing.
- 5.6 Despite sizeable reductions in the number of long term **empty homes**, Bradford still has comparatively high levels compared to regional and national averages. Therefore there needs to be a continued focus on bringing long term empty homes back into use, as they are not only a wasted resource, but can also have a detrimental impact on our neighbourhoods. To assist with this, the Empty Homes Action Plan has been formally reviewed and updated and now sits under the Housing and Homelessness Strategy – see <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3793/empty-homes-action-plan-feb-2017-final.pdf>.
- 5.7 Whilst **owner occupation** is still the preferred tenure for many, low income households struggle to access mortgages. The housing market across the district is

complex – in some areas there isn't enough of the right type of accommodation, particularly affordable housing and homes suitable for our ageing population, but there are also some areas with a concentration of poorer quality, lower demand private housing.

- 5.8 There continues to be insufficient investment in ageing **private sector housing** stock, either privately rented or owner occupied. While the Council has been actively promoting the availability of Home Appreciation Loans for eligible low income owner occupiers, there is an on-going need to better co-ordinate resources between health and housing agencies, in recognition of the cost to NHS services of people living in homes which are hazardous for health – e.g. properties with hazards associated with damp, excess cold and falls.
- 5.9 The Government is making big changes to the way **funding for supported housing** is administered from 2019. Supported housing rents will be capped at the LHA rate from April 2019, but where care or support is provided, making the rent often much higher than LHA rate, the difference will then be covered by a grant administered by the local authority. There are no details available yet on how the 'top-up' grant will be calculated or administered, and as a consequence there is great uncertainty within the supported housing sector, and the potential that new schemes will be shelved, or existing schemes wound down, if there is no certainty over long-term funding. The supported housing sector in the district provides a huge amount of essential accommodation services, including sheltered housing, and housing for many other vulnerable groups including homeless people, people with learning disabilities and people fleeing domestic violence.
- 5.10 There is continued demand for **adapted properties**, and homes suitable for people with learning disabilities and other complex needs. With the over-65 population estimated to increase by 59% from 2014 to 2039 (ONS subnational population projections), these upward trends are unlikely to diminish.

## **6. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 7.1 There are no significant risk or governance issues arising from this report.

## **8. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 8.1 There are no significant legal issues arising from this report.

## **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **9.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

The Housing and Homelessness 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.

### **9.2 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.

### **9.3 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.

### **9.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

No direct community safety implications, however the strategy does seek to support the creation of safe, welcoming and sustainable neighbourhoods

### **9.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

The Human Rights dimension of housing is recognised in the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which includes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate housing. The United Kingdom is legally bound by this treaty. The Council also has regard to good practice in housing particularly those that adhere to guidance contained in: 'Deciding Rights - Applying the Human Rights Act to Good Practice in Local Authority Decision-Making' (LGA).

### **9.6 TRADE UNION**

There are no trade union implications arising from this report.

### **9.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **10. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

## **11. OPTIONS**

There are no options being presented in this report.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 That Members note progress made towards the objectives of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

12.2 That Members continue to receive an annual review of progress against success measures outlined in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

**13. APPENDICES**

None

**14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

'A Place to Call Home: Housing and Homelessness Strategy for Bradford District 2014 – 19' - see:

<http://www.bradford.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/06C952E8-DA02-4E79-A9F3-AD1DDF02365F/0/HousingandHomelessnessStrategy.pdf>

'Tackling Empty Homes in the Bradford District - Action Plan 2017 – 2019' see:-

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/3793/empty-homes-action-plan-feb-2017-final.pdf>