

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 January 2017
Subject:	Housing Strategy Review Report
Report of:	Housing Strategy Review Working Group
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Cllr D M M Davies, Lead Member for Built Environment Cllr R E Allen, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing
Number of Appendices:	2

Executive Summary:

The Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 was developed by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and it was adopted by Council in September 2012. The Overview and Scrutiny Working Group requested that outcomes identified in the strategy action plan be monitored and regular updates presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report presents Committee with a summary of the key activities that have been achieved in the last 18 months (2015/16 financial year and, where datasets allow, Q1 and Q2 2016/17) against the action plan. A more comprehensive update of actions achieved against each of the action plan targets can be found at Appendix 1. The strategy reaches end of life this year.

A further strategy covering 2017-21 has been developed by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group. The Housing Strategy 2017-21 will include the Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Action plans for each year of the strategy will be produced annually and taken to the Executive Committee for approval. The strategy and action plans will be monitored by the Lead Members together with bi-annual reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Housing Strategy 2017-2021 can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendations:

- 1. To CONSIDER the achievements made to date in respect of the outcomes identified in the Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2016 Action Plan as set out at Appendix 1.**
- 2. To ENDORSE the Housing Strategy 2017-2021 and first year action plan as set out at Appendix 2 and RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that it be ADOPTED with effect from 1st January 2017.**
- 3. To ENDORSE the arrangements in respect of future action plans arising from the strategy and monitoring as set out in Paragraph 4.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Homelessness Act 2002 and Local Government Act 2003 require all District Councils to develop a strategy that sets out the Council's policies, commitments and programme for a wide range of housing matters.

Following development of the Council's Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16, the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group requested that outcomes identified in the strategy action plan be monitored and regular updates be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Council is required to have an up-to-date five year homelessness strategy and therefore has developed, through a further Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, an overarching housing strategy that includes the homelessness strategy.

Once adopted by Council, the new Housing Strategy 2017-21 will be regularly monitored in accordance with the arrangements set out at Paragraph 4 of this report.

Resource Implications:

Staff and Member time. Resource implications will be met from existing budget allocations and, where they cannot, will be subject to a growth bid within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and a separate report to Members.

Legal Implications:

The Council is required to have a housing and homelessness strategy in place so that its duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Homelessness Act 2002 and Local Government Act 2003 can be met.

Risk Management Implications:

The review of activities against the strategy action plan has identified that the aims and objectives of the strategy are being delivered in a timely way. This significantly reduces the risk of not meeting statutory housing and homelessness duties. The strategy should be reviewed in approximately 12 months to ensure that the strategy and associated action plan continues to be relevant in the future.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 reaches end of life at the end of December 2016.

A new Housing Strategy 2017-21 has been produced. The Strategy will include the Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention Strategy and will be monitored in accordance with the arrangements set out at Paragraph 4 of this report.

Environmental Implications:

There are positive environmental implications in the delivery of the strategy objectives e.g. the strategy supports the delivery of new energy efficient homes and energy efficiency improvements in the existing housing stock across the Borough. The development of more affordable homes, especially those to be developed in rural areas, may have a negative impact upon the environment, however, the level of environmental impact and measures to mitigate them will be assessed as part of a formal planning application.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 (as amended) and Local Government Act 2003 require all District Councils to develop a strategy that sets out the Council's policies, commitments and programme for a wide range of housing matters. The Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 was developed by an Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and was adopted by Tewkesbury Borough Council in September 2012.

2. HOUSING, RENEWAL AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2012-16 UPDATE

2.1 The current Housing, Renewal And Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 reaches the end of its life in December 2016. The Housing Services Team has presented annual updates to this Committee each year as required. The annual update for 2015-16 can be found at Paragraph 3 of this report and the action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

3. 2015-16 ACTION PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1 New Affordable Homes

3.1.1 There were 229 new-build affordable homes completed during 2015/16. This exceeds the Council Plan target to achieve 150 new homes and 35-40% affordable housing was secured on qualifying sites over the last three years. There was a mix of property types and tenures across all of the sites and this supports the housing need of a range of client groups with different incomes. During the lifetime of the Strategy, 100% of the affordable housing delivery has been built to Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) Level 3 or higher. CSH level 3 is now the minimum standard for all new housing as part of updated Building Regulations 2015.

3.1.2 During the first half year of 2016/2017, 111 affordable homes have been completed with a projected total of 197 for the whole year; once again exceeding the Council Plan target.

3.1.3 The percentage of affordable homes that met the Lifetime Homes Standard (against a Council target of 10% per year) over the lifetime of the strategy is as follows:

2012/13 = 33%

2013/14 = 15%

2014/15 = 10%

2015/16 = 7%

2016/17 (Quarters 1 and 2)= 38%

3.1.4 A total of 13 new rural exception affordable properties were delivered using the cross-subsidy model in Winchcombe and Badgeworth. Further to this, three rural exception developments are in the planning system for the Parishes of Minsterworth, Norton and Sandhurst. Minsterworth has planning permission for 13 affordable homes which is due to commence development by spring 2017.

3.2 Housing Advice Team Assistance

3.2.1 The Housing Advice Team provided assistance to over 1,500 customers at the Borough Council Offices during 2015/16, of which, 1,350 received housing advice and assistance for housing difficulties/homeless prevention. This was a marked increase on the numbers recorded in 2014/15 where 600 customers were assisted.

3.3 Supported Housing

3.3.1 The young person's supported accommodation within Tewkesbury Borough has been improved by G3/Rooftop this year. The housing association has replaced its outdated provision at Tolsey House, Tewkesbury with a redevelopment of accommodation High Street, also in the town. The new units provide high quality self-contained accommodation for young vulnerable adults on a single site with Jubilee House.

3.4 Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention

3.4.1 In 2015/16 there were 172 preventions, up from 94 in 2014/15. These prevention interventions impacted positively on homelessness and the use and cost of emergency/temporary accommodation use.

3.4.2 A greater emphasis on homelessness prevention has been successfully implemented within the Borough in line with the DCLG's criteria for 'GOLD Standard'. The Standard means a pledge to strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services through 10 challenges.

3.4.3 The first stage is for the housing service to have its peer review; this will be completed by two other districts within Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. This is timetabled for late spring 2017 where 60% is to be achieved.

3.4.4 If achieved, the Council will be able to proceed with meeting the 10 challenges; upon reaching our first challenge we will achieve the Bronze Standard, meeting five challenges would obtain silver and all 10 Gold.

3.4.5 For more information on the Gold Standard and the requirements of Tewkesbury Borough Council you can visit <http://home.practitionersupport.org> or discuss with the Housing Services Manager.

3.5 Supporting people experiencing domestic violence

3.5.1 The six District Councils in Gloucestershire and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) pilot sanctuary scheme to offer target hardening and sanctuary room measures to residents wanting to remain in their homes and at risk of domestic violence was very successful and has been extended until March 2017.

3.5.2 13 households from Tewkesbury Borough accessed assistance through this scheme during 2015/16 and all continue to remain in their homes. All 13 received target hardening measures (lock changes and minor adaptations) which were funded by the PCC; no households required sanctuary measures which would have been part funded by the Council. All those who benefited were female households.

3.5.3 'Places of Safety' funding, to provide safe self-contained emergency accommodation for those fleeing domestic abuse, has enabled 12 properties to be made available across the County for this purpose. Tewkesbury Borough's first place of safety was made available at the end of November 2016 through partnership with Severn Vale Housing.

3.6 Financial Assistance

3.6.1 Following on from the presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2015 regarding the re-deployment of financial housing options, the Housing Advice Team has successfully assisted the first applicants with deposits and rent in advance to move to alternative accommodation in areas where they want to live near to existing support (i.e. families and schools).

3.6.2 In the 12 months October 2015-September 2016 35 households were assisted to avoid homelessness through opportunities into alternative homes in the private rented sector. A further 16 households have been assisted to remain in their current accommodation as, following help, it was reasonable and sustainable for them to remain. This work has alleviated homeless pressure on the households, demands on homelessness, and social housing within the area.

3.7 Anti-Social Behaviour Diversion Work

3.7.1 The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Youth Diversion Worker has continued to engage with young and vulnerable members of the community aged 11-19 years. At present the Officer is working with 15 young people. These cases cross over from anti-social behaviour to Families First and also to projects such as sexual exploitation work.

3.8 Rough Sleepers

3.8.1 The rough sleepers estimate for Tewkesbury Borough in 2016 was zero. Whilst there is a low prevalence of rough sleeping within the Borough, it does continue to occur and cause concern.

3.9 Lettings of Affordable Housing

3.9.1 409 social housing properties were let in the Borough in the financial year 2015/16. A breakdown of the housing need of successful applicants indicates that 79% of these lettings were to households in emergency, urgent or significant housing need.

3.10 Working with the Private Rented Sector

3.10.1 At September 2016, there were six landlords with nine properties awarded 'Fit to Rent' status.

3.10.2 Between April and September 2016 a total of 30 Disabled Facilities Grants were approved to a total value of £174,458.

3.10.3 Between April and September 2016, the Warm & Well Scheme received 217 enquiries. The total number of measures installed and properties improved through the Warm & Well Scheme in the period was 20.

4. HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-21

4.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 July 2016, it was agreed that a Member Working Group be set up to produce the next strategy which is required over five years in order to meet the statutory requirements of the homelessness strategy element. Seven Members volunteered and the Lead Member for Built Environment Chaired the meetings

4.2 The Working Group met monthly with the first meeting on 18 August and the final meeting on 12 December 2016. Officers presented the housing and homelessness evidence base to Members to inform them of the whole picture of needs and

challenges in Tewkesbury Borough. Members agreed priorities and objectives for public and stakeholder consultation which ran for a six month period commencing on 7 September 2016.

4.3 Members were presented with the draft Housing Strategy at its last meeting in December and agreed the documents set out at Appendix 2.

4.4 The Housing Strategy 2017-21 is an overarching strategic document that takes into account the principle national and local issues that are likely to affect Tewkesbury Borough in the foreseeable future. It sets out the housing and homelessness challenges and explains how the Council intends to address these issues through four key priorities:

- Priority 1 - Increase the supply of housing
- Priority 2 - Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention
- Priority 3 - Meeting the housing needs of those who need it most
- Priority 4 - Improving the health and well-being of local people

4.5 Key objectives are detailed within each of the priority areas where targets and outcomes for delivery will be detailed in the annual action plan. Our targets and outcomes for delivering the objectives will be shaped annually in order to be pro-active as well as re-active to the changing needs of our community and the challenges facing us when new government policies are implemented. The Action Plan is to be as flexible as possible so that the Council can continue to take action where necessary and start new actions when appropriate to do so over the five year strategy period.

4.6 Included in the strategy documents are the evidence base, the Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017-21 and the Tenancy Strategy 2017-21. The Strategy and associated documents to be endorsed by this Committee can be found at Appendix 2. Members are asked to recommend the strategy to Council for adoption at its meeting on 24 January 2017.

5.0 MONITORING AND FUTURE ACTION PLANS

5.1 It is anticipated that action plans for each year of the strategy will be produced annually and taken to the Executive Committee for approval.

5.2 The strategy and action plans will be monitored by the Lead Members together with bi-annual reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 A six week public consultation on the evidence base for the Housing Strategy 2017-21 commenced on 6 September 2016 and asked all stakeholders for their input, to identify gaps and support for the priorities.

7.2 The Housing Services Team held a stakeholder event for partners and an open public session on 12 October 2016.

7.3 The results from the consultation were publicised and responses considered as part of the development of the Housing Strategy 2017-21.

8.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

8.1 Council Plan 2016-20

Emerging Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan

Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16

Housing Strategy 2017-21

9.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

9.1 The main documents driving government housing policy and legislation are:

- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Homelessness Act 2002 and Housing Act 1996 (as amended) (Housing Standards)
- Local Government Act 2003
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (Housing grants, loans and home improvement assistance)
- The Future Home Improvement Agency (CLG 2009)
- Equality Act 2010
- Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011
- Localism Act 2011
- The Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
- The Housing and Planning Act 2016

9.2 Forthcoming relevant legislation:

- Homelessness Reduction Bill

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

10.1 None directly associated with this report other than staff and Member time. Any resources associated with the actions in the strategy will form part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Asset Management Plan. Resources implications will be met from existing budget allocations and, where they cannot, will be subject to a growth bid within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and a separate report to Members.

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/Economic/ Environment)

11.1 The strategy includes considerations of sustainability and energy efficiency in addition to the social and economic implications.

12.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

12.1 Housing is a basic human need and, through consultation and the Member Working Group, all relevant groups have been considered.

13.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

13.1 The Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16 has been approved and adopted by Council in September 2012.

Background Papers: Existing strategies and policies are available on the Council's website.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Housing, Renewal and Homelessness Strategy 2012-16
Action Plan Update

Appendix 2 - Housing Strategy 2017-21