

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 March 2023
Subject:	Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Monitoring Report
Report of:	Housing Services Manager
Head of Service/Director:	Head of Community Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Housing
Number of Appendices:	2

Executive Summary:

This report presents a monitoring plan to track delivery of objectives set out in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2022-26.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made against the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the strategy.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

Objectives included in the Housing Strategy include implications for climate change, decarbonisation and energy usage. Actions to improve these areas will be aimed at both strategic and operational/customer level.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

There are no direct resource implications. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed with no further assessment or actions required as a result.

Safeguarding Implications:

There are no direct implications in relation to the welfare and protection from harm of children and vulnerable adults.

Impact on the Customer:

Outcomes planned through the Housing Strategy will benefit customers in many ways. The action plan will help ensure these benefits are delivered.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Housing Strategy was approved by Council in April 2022. Production of the strategy was led by an evidence-based approach. Key to this was the Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020) which identifies the Council's requirements for affordable housing and highlights the need for social rent tenure properties. Four workshops were held with many key stakeholders, including a session attended by Members, and provided information on challenges and objectives. This stage was important to ensure our partners were fully included in the production process.

1.2 The strategy contains three key priorities:

- Increasing the supply of new homes, including affordable homes.
- Regenerating and making best use of existing housing
- Meeting the housing needs of homeless households and others with specific needs.

1.3 The objectives detailed in the strategy have been presented in an action plan to monitor progress. The plan will be monitored by Overview & Scrutiny Committee through bi-annual reports.

2.0 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

2.1 The action plan provides a framework to give direction to services contributing to the objectives in the strategy and enable monitoring of the progress. The actions under the three priorities have been taken directly from the strategy document that was approved by Council previously.

2.2 **Priority 1: Increase the supply of new homes, including affordable homes (For full details see action plan)**

2.2.1 The first year of the strategy has seen further increases in Social Rented properties being secured both through developers and Registered Providers. This include 30 Social Rented units (out of 47 total units) which are being supported by commuted sums. This work supports the objective, '*Prioritise the delivery of social rented properties to reflect the local evidence of housing need*'.

2.2.2 A particular focus for Year 1 will be around assisting customers with the impact of inflation including energy use. The schemes mentioned above will deliver 47 new units that will have high energy efficiency standards to help, '*Prioritise reducing fuel poverty through good design and encouraging a 'fabric first' approach*'.

2.3 **Priority 2: Regenerating and making best use of existing housing**

2.3.1 The condition of housing stock in the borough and bringing empty homes back into use will be two areas with actions under this priority with plans to, '*Analyse the findings of the Gloucestershire County Stock Condition Survey and put in place an action plan to address the findings for Tewkesbury Borough*' and '*Develop a complimentary strategy to reduce the number of empty homes, making use of legal powers available*'. The condition survey has not been completed as, although work has commenced across the county, Tewkesbury Borough will be the fourth or fifth district for the survey to cover. The Empty Homes Strategy was approved by Executive Committee in November.

2.3.2 Another focus has been on social housing stock and we will work with our Registered Provider partners and support them to deliver improvements to their current accommodation. Discussions have taken place with Registered Provider partners about the condition of their stock. They have provided reassurance about proactive improvement works and processes for dealing with cases that are brought to their attention.

2.4 Priority 3: Meeting the housing needs of homeless households and others with specific needs

2.4.1 *Actions to, 'Engage with key partners in exploring new ways of helping rough sleepers and other individuals with complex and multiple needs' and 'Engage with people with 'lived experience' of homelessness and other disadvantage in developing plans for the delivery of housing services'* will help give an understanding of difficulties faced by households experiencing homelessness and inform changes to the service. Linked to the item below, Care Leaver Ambassadors will be invited to support training on the new Care Leavers Protocol. Housing Services has recently worked with SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity, to ensure the housing aspects of the Armed Forces Covenant are being implemented and provide a single point of contact for cases to contact.

2.4.2 The Housing Services department is proud to be leading the work on a new Care Leavers protocol on behalf of the district Housing Teams across the County. Former Care Leavers have been part of the production of the protocol which centres on the support that young people require as the transition from care to live independently.

2.5 The activities of the services within the Council that will contribute to the Housing Strategy can vary greatly due to new pressures and can be subject to change. Any changes to the action plan will be made by Head of Community Services in consultation with Lead Member for Housing.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 None

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 None

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 The action plan will continue to be monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 The Housing Strategy is closely linked to the Council Plan and reflects the Council's commitment to:

- Put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, whilst treating people fairly and without bias.
- Work positively with others - recognising we cannot achieve our objectives by working alone.

The strategy will help support each of the six priorities in the Council Plan.

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2022-26
Appendix 2 - Action Plan with updates Year 1 March 2023