

Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for Consultation

Final Decision-Maker	COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Best practice encourages local housing authorities to publish a Housing Strategy to set out its key housing objectives and how they will be achieved. This report provides the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for review by the Committee and to approve for consultation with key stakeholders.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee approves the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 attached at Appendix A to the report for consultation, and that the results are reported back to the Committee later this year.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
CHE Committee	05-10-2021

Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for Consultation

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve its 'Homes and Communities' and 'Thriving Place' priorities. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievements of the above cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered in the risk section of the report' 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Housing Strategy accounts for a significant element of the Council's overall revenue and capital resources. The revenue budget for housing, net of grants and rental income, amounts to £1.6 million, and there is provision in the capital programme for £79 million of new investment in housing development and regeneration, along with the acquisition 	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	of properties for temporary accommodation.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the Council's Constitution at part 1.10, 2.2 and 2.3 	Team Leader (Contentious)
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will have no direct impact on the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, an equalities impact assessment will be completed following the consultation process. 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and align with Action 5.2 to '<i>Ensure Local Plan review considers level of current and future flood risk and developments are planned accordingly</i>' of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Implications for consideration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sourcing sustainable building materials and audit and management to reduce building materials waste and carbon reduction for sustainable housing. ii. Sustainable housing for future expected impacts of climate change eg. Heatwaves, heavier rains, flooding. iii. Increase tree coverage, biodiversity and environmental protection where possible. iv. Align with Climate Adaption needs, as well as energy and water efficiency goals. 	
--	---	--

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Good practice dictates that the Council produce and maintains a Housing Strategy that sets out the local housing authority’s vision for housing in its area. The Strategy describes the objectives, policies and targets for how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role and provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy will reflect both national and local policy, as well as the on local market conditions. In developing our Housing Strategy close liaison has taken place with our Policy Team and Spatial Planning Team to ensure synergy between it and both the Council’s overarching Strategic Plan (2018-2045) and other key Council policies.
- 2.3 Following best practice guidelines, the Housing Strategy should:
Analyse the housing needs locally that illustrate the challenges that the Strategy is seeking to solve. This analysis could include, for example, data on:
 - Mismatches between the supply and demand for housing
 - Address affordability across different sub-groups
 - Comparison of recent growth in rents and incomes
 - Vacancy rates, housing standards including physical conditions
 - Impact on health and wellbeing of residents linked to housing
- 2.4 **Define the policy objectives the local authority hopes to achieve through the strategy.** The Strategy will identify overarching priorities that will form the basis for developing an action plan in the next iteration of the Strategy.
- 2.5 **Develop a comprehensive approach to meeting these objectives using the full array of resources available to the local authority and key partners.** This approach should draw on the broad set of resources and policy tools available to the local authority, including:

- Central government and local authority grants
- Direct intervention by delivering new housing either through MBC or Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd
- Supporting housing association partners to deliver new affordable housing
- Ensuring that existing housing meets with the statutory and local policy housing standards and enforcement processes
- Providing supported accommodation and services to assist the vulnerable members of our community
- Delivering initiatives linked to addressing fuel poverty and climate change & energy efficient homes

2.6 **Identify funding sources and contingencies.** Funding sources might include one-time grants, such as through Homes England, the use of the Council's capital receipts, or long-term borrowing through the Public Loans Board or other reputable source. Opportunities to accrue external grants for both capital and revenue will be explored and fully exploited.

2.7 **Develop a plan for implementing the recommended approaches.** Following the consultation period with our key stakeholders, an action plan will be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Committee that will set out how the Council will achieve the objectives set out in the Strategy, to be delivered over a 5-year plan period. The action plan will identify key stakeholders that will assist the Council to deliver those objectives and where necessary identify funding sources.

2.8 The action plan will be developed with the Council's Policy and Information Team and be complemented by a dashboard of metrics that will allow the Committee to track progress of key policy objectives on a regular basis. This will highlight bottlenecks that can be addressed in a timely manner including with more resources or policy modifications.

2.9 Included in the report appendix is a summary of the excellent progress that was made against the previous Housing Strategy's Action Plan. Many of the objectives have been achieved or are making good progress towards their delivery. An up to date commentary is provided against each action to enable the Committee to see how these actions have progressed.

2.10 The draft Housing Strategy sets out three key areas:

- Priority 1: Enable the delivery of high-quality new homes that meet local housing need
- Priority 2: Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality, and support residents' health and wellbeing
- Priority 3: Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support

2.11 These priority areas not only reflect the continuation of the existing Housing Strategy but also flow from the evidence gathered from a number of sources, including the developing Strategic Housing Market Assessment and statutory homelessness activity returns (HCLIC).

2.12 The consultation will focus on whether internal and external stakeholders agree that these are the correct priority areas; whether any other key

priority needs to be included and how the action plan will reflect delivering against these key areas of activity.

2.13 The final document will include the Housing Strategy presented to ensure that it is appealing and easy to digest and the action plan developed from the consultation.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The Committee is requested to note the progress against the Housing Strategy 2016-20 and approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for consultation. The outcome of the consultation to be presented to the CHE Committee together with an updated Strategy that includes an action plan for consideration.

3.2 The Committee could choose not to begin the process of adopting a new Housing Strategy but this is not recommended, as the Council is under a requirement to maintain an up to date Housing Strategy and this will support the Council's key priority to deliver its aims expressed in the Strategic Plan.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The preferred option is Paragraph 3.1 for the reasons set out within the report.

5. RISK

5.1 The council's risk associated with the draft document are in line with the Council's risk appetite and any mitigating actions proposed if needed.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 A communication strategy is being developed to support the consultation process and will also adapt to promote the launch of the final document once this has been approved by the CHE Committee and adopted by Council.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Housing Strategy 2016-20