

**Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Consultation**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	CHE COMMITTEE
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	William Cornall Director of Regeneration and Place
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	ALL

**Executive Summary**

To provide members with a summary of responses to the recent consultation with stakeholders and the public on the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2025, which was undertaken between October and December 2021.

**Purpose of Report**

Noting

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To note the outcome of the consultation and next steps towards adopting a new Housing Strategy.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
CHE Committee	01-03-2022

# Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Consultation

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> <li>• Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the Homes &amp; Communities priority.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Risk Management</b>	Not applicable	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services

<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no legal implications arising from the report.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation will not impact on the personal information the Council processes.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Equalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Public Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation will have a neutral impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Procurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.</li> </ul>	Head of Housing & Community Services

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2021 the CHE Committee approved a draft Housing Strategy for consultation. The survey was carried out by the Council's Consultation & Engagement Team and was open between 12<sup>th</sup> November and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The questionnaire was promoted online through the Council's website and our social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation.
- 2.2 The responses from residents were weighted and the unweighted response includes other stakeholders e.g. Housing Providers and Partners, Businesses and Parish Councils. The total including unweighted responses were 709 and weighted responses 664.

- 2.3 Overall, the stakeholder respondents were more likely to answer positively when asked if the draft priorities for the Housing Strategy were appropriate and relevant (with 82% answering this way), compared to 64% of resident respondents.
- 2.4 Residents and Stakeholders differed in what they thought of as the most important priority. Stakeholders placed 'Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support' as the most important. While residents placed 'Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality and support residents' health and wellbeing' as first.
- 2.5 When asked what was missing from the priorities, the most common theme that came up was infrastructure with respondents feeling that this needs to be improved to cope with additional housing.
- 2.6 The top element for residents on delivering new homes was 'increasing the number of homes which can be purchased via low-cost home ownership schemes'. Stakeholders placed 'increasing the number of homes that can be rented below market rent as first and placed the element on home ownership as third.
- 2.7 In exploring ways to make more homes available both residents and stakeholders rated 'identifying and bringing back into use empty homes' as the most important element; and 'building larger homes (4+ bedrooms) as the least important element.
- 2.8 When asked about building new homes residents rated 'improving the design of housing and neighbourhoods through the creation and maintenance of open space areas, energy efficiency and parking standards' as the most important element. Stakeholders placed this element second and rated 'providing attractive and energy efficient homes' first. Both stakeholder and residents ranked 'building larger homes (4+ bedrooms)' as last in importance.
- 2.9 When asked about making the best use of existing homes residents ranked 'bringing empty homes back into use' as the most important element while stakeholder ranked 'ensuring homes are warm and energy is affordable' as most important. Both residents and stakeholder ranked 'do more to address property conditions in the private sector'.
- 2.10 In relation to supporting communities and creating neighbourhoods' residents ranked 'green space' as being the most important element. Stakeholders ranked this element as third placing 'parking provision' as most important.
- 2.11 Working with partners - both residents and stakeholder ranked 'ensuring services are joined up with others who support the health and wellbeing of residents as most important. Both groups also ranked 'identifying more land for Gypsy and Traveller site to be developed as part of the Local Plan process' as least important in this section of the survey.
- 2.12 The response from the 18 to 34 years group was low and the views of minority groups deviated the most from the overall result. This group

account for 4.2% of survey respondents – less than the proportion of minority groups in Maidstone overall. Although weighting brings the representation of this group in the survey data up to 8.5%.

2.13 Only three responses were received from Housing Association Partners. Due to the important relationship between the Council's Housing Strategy and the delivery of affordable housing by our key housing partners, it is proposed to undertake a further round of consultation with stakeholders through a focus group.

2.14 The information gleaned from the consultation will be considered for inclusion in the final draft of the Housing Strategy 2022-25.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

3.1 The report is for noting.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Members are asked to note the outcome of the Housing Strategy consultation.

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### **5. RISK**

5.1 The consultation is an important part in the development of the new Housing Strategy and will help inform the production of the final document.

### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

6.1 The full detailed outcome of the consultation is over 40 pages in length and to avoid unnecessary printing an digital version is available upon request.

6.2 It is proposed to consult in more detail with our housing association partners to help further inform the delivery of affordable housing in the context of the recently produced government White Paper on 'levelling up'.

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 Once the further discussion has taken place with key stakeholders, and officers have had the opportunity to fully understand the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper, it is intended that the draft Housing Strategy is presented in June via the new governance arrangements, to then be recommended for adoption by the Council thereafter.

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft Housing Strategy for Consultation, presented to the CHE Committee October 2021.