

## Policy and Resources Committee

17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**No**

### Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Full Council
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	John Littlemore
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Andrew Connors
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

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

1. That the Committee note the extensive research, analysis and consultation which has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders to inform the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020. A summary of this research, analysis and consultation process is included in this report.
2. That the Committee approves the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 attached at **Appendix A**, to full Council for adoption.
3. That the Committee approves a review in 2018 of the Action Plan within the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and can respond to future directions of travel both nationally and locally.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – By ensuring existing housing in the Borough is safe, desirable and promotes good health and well-being.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – By enabling and supporting the delivery of quality homes across the housing market to develop sustainable communities.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Community, Housing and Environment Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
Consultation	14 <sup>th</sup> October to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015
Community, Housing and Environment Committee	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Policy and Resources Committee	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2016

Council	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2016
Launch Event	April/May 2016

# Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the new Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 (attached at **Appendix A**) to present to full Council for adoption. This is following extensive research, analysis and consultation a summary of which is included within this report.
  - 1.2 The current Housing Strategy 2011-15 expires this year, so the council needs to put in place a new Housing Strategy post 2015. The Maidstone Housing Strategy is a fundamental and critical piece of work which helps to identify the main housing issues and key challenges for the local area that the council and its partners need to address over the next five years.
  - 1.3 By securing support for and promoting this strategy the council will set out the priorities and outcomes that it wishes to achieve with its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. It will provide clarity and certainty for investors and strengthen public/private sector partnerships in order to support its delivery, unlock third party investment, bring forward sites for development and extract external funding and inward investment.
  - 1.4 It is recommended that a review of the Action Plan within the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 is undertaken during 2018, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and can respond to future directions of travel both nationally and locally.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Purpose of the strategy

- 2.1 The Maidstone Housing Strategy is an overarching plan that guides the council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. It sets out the priorities and outcomes that the council wishes to achieve and provides a clear strategic vision and leadership in an uncertain economic climate. The Strategy contributes towards the council's corporate priorities for Maidstone '**to keep the Borough an attractive place for all and to secure a successful economy**'. The Housing Strategy is also intrinsically linked with other plans and strategies of the council shown within the Maidstone Housing Strategy at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the new strategy looks ahead for five years, covering 2016-2020. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement in 2014 included measures to extend capital investment to the current Affordable Homes Programme 2015-2018, for a further two years, up to 2019-20. It is unclear however as to what will be in place after 2019-20. The Council's Strategic Plan also runs from 2015-2020, so it is not considered appropriate to set a longer term than five years for the new Maidstone Housing

Strategy, so that future directions of travel both nationally and locally can be responded to.

- 2.3 The ambition behind this strategy is to ensure that all people in the Borough have access to good quality homes that are affordable for them and meet their needs. Every council has a responsibility to understand what matters most to its local communities and to respond to this through investment, service planning and delivery. It must also take into account national and regional aspirations and sometimes this requires a balance with local priorities.

#### Our Achievements 2011-2015

- 2.4 During the life of the previous Housing Strategy, much was achieved which made a real difference to peoples' lives, including:

- Delivering 871 new affordable homes, of which 63 were delivered on rural exception sites for local needs housing.
- In excess of £6.930m from the Homes and Communities Agency, providing 553 affordable homes.
- Grant allocation of £210,000 from the Homes and Communities Agency to bring 12 long term empty properties back into use as affordable housing.
- Completing the following policy and strategy reviews: Homelessness Strategy; Strategic Housing Market Assessment; Tenancy Strategy and Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Increased engagement with the private sector by hosting bi-annual Landlord forums and offering a new Homefinder incentive scheme to gain access to privately rented properties.
- Allocations policy implemented along with new eligibility criteria and 'banding' introduced to offer a fairer distribution of social housing properties to households on the housing register.
- Purchase and refurbishment of Aylesbury and Magnolia House to provide temporary accommodation for 20 homeless households.
- Obtaining Investment Partner and Registered Provider status with the Homes and Communities Agency.

- 2.5 More details regarding achievements against the stated priorities and outcomes from the previous Housing Strategy can be found within the new Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 (attached at **Appendix A**).

## Maidstone's Strategic Housing Role

- 2.6 The transfer of housing stock to Golding Homes (formerly Maidstone Housing Trust) in February 2004 has enabled the council to develop its strategic housing role. Over the past 15 years, central government legislation and guidance has encouraged local authorities to take a more strategic approach to the provision of housing, so encouraging better 'place-shaping', and developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between housing, planning and the economy. Thus, the council's remit is far wider than just 'housing'.
- 2.7 Poor housing or lack of a home has a detrimental impact on many areas including employment, crime, education, homelessness and health. Housing and support provides valuable help to enable people to achieve increased independence and health and well-being outcomes at times of difficulty and can prevent difficulties becoming a crisis.
- 2.8 In the 5 years since the last Housing Strategy was published, the housing sector has experienced a period of rapid change. A combination of policy change at national level, led by the shift in approach to subsidy and vast welfare and planning reform changes, has created opportunities as well as a climate of uncertainty and heightened risk.

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## **3. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The new Housing Strategy for 2016-2020 is supported by a number of key background evidence papers, documents and research and data analysis of which were undertaken to determine the key housing related challenges facing Maidstone. A research and analysis paper was prepared which contains an insight into the National Context for housing as well as a detailed analysis of the local issues affecting the borough including deprivation, demographic change, housing costs, need and supply, health and well-being and development pressures. Some of the key evidence based national and local documents and data sources used as part of the aforementioned research and analysis is as follows:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (January 2014)
- Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (November 2011)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – March 2012)
- National Quality Technical Standards
- Summer Budget 2015
- Preventing Homelessness to Improve Health and Well-Being (July 2015)
- Unhealthy State of Homelessness: Health Audit Results 2014
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010)
- Office of National Statistics
- Locata
- Help to Buy Agent
- Census 2011
- Statistical Data Return (2013-2014)
- Affordable Housing Development Programme

- Emerging Local Plan (2011-203)
  - Homelessness Strategy (2014-2019)
  - Health Inequalities Action Plan
  - KCC Social Care Accommodation Strategy
  - P1E Homelessness Data
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#### **4. EMERGING CHALLENGES**

4.1 From the analysis of the above documents and data sources and a review of national, county and local policy, the key housing challenges in Maidstone are identified as:

- Projected population growth from 2011 to 2031 shows a greater proportion of the population expected to be in age groups aged 60 and over (and even more so for older age groups) - in particular the oldest age group (85+) shows an increase of 142%.
- In order to meet the objectively assessed need in the Local Plan, ensure that new developments, which have been permitted, are built out in a timely manner, providing a sustainable flow of new homes onto the market.
- Evidence in KCC's Adult Accommodation Strategy clearly demonstrates that the majority of need arises from persons in older age groups: those 75-84 and particularly over 85. The needs of these groups range from support in adapting properties to meet changing needs and provision of care in the home through to specialist accommodation.
- There is an estimated total need for 3,620 specialist accommodation units for older persons from 2011 to 2031.
- The council has a net affordable housing need of 5,800 households from 2013 to 2031 equivalent to 322 affordable homes each year (which is 35% of the council's objectively assessed need of 928 dwellings p.a.).
- Across the borough as a whole, it is estimated that some 67% of affordable need is for social or affordable rent tenures, whilst around 33% is for intermediate housing.
- Across the Borough it is estimated that around 43% of households are unable to access market housing on the basis of income levels.
- The difference in life expectancy at birth in our most affluent wards compared to our most deprived is 8.9 years.
- Deprivation in the borough is lower than average, however 15% (4,300) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a larger difference in life expectancy of men and women; 7 years lower for men and 4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Maidstone than in the least deprived.

- The number of homelessness decisions made by the council has increased significantly since April 2011 from 80 to 604 last financial year, representing a 655% increase over the last 5 years. From April 2015 to January 2016, 511, decisions have been made, showing that numbers are not decreasing.
  - The use of temporary accommodation has resulted in a large increase in cost to the Council. The past five years have seen a near fivefold increase in the net cost of temporary accommodation from £118,620 to £584,055.
  - The Government will reduce rents in social housing in England by 1% a year for four years from April 2016. This will apply to both social rent and affordable, and the Government indicates this will result in a 12% reduction in average rents by 2020/21, compared to current forecasts. The rent reduction does not apply to shared ownership. Registered providers are already reviewing their business plans and viability of schemes, leading to requests to switch tenures in favour of more shared ownership.
  - Access to alternative funding and delivery sources to help maintain supply due to reductions to rental income and capital subsidy is of high importance.
  - Currently over 53% of applicants on the council's housing register have a 1-bed need and 24% have a 2-bed need. There is therefore a need to increase the delivery of new 1 and 2 bedroom affordable homes.
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## **5. CONSULTATION PROCESS AND FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The identified Key Priority Themes as well as suggested outcomes and actions were presented in a report to the Communities Housing and Environment Committee on 13 October 2015. The Key Priority Themes identified for the new Maidstone Housing Strategy were approved for consultation with key stakeholders and partners, in order to develop the Action Plan and stated outcomes for each Key Priority Theme.
- 5.2 A stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out to identify key partners, voluntary organisations and internal departments that needed to be consulted in order to develop the Maidstone Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- 5.3 Consultation with key stakeholders has been undertaken through two workshops held in December 2015 and via an online survey accompanied by supporting documentation on the council's website.
- 5.4 Invites were sent to key stakeholders to attend one of two workshops that were held in December 2015. Attendees to the workshops included officers from Housing; Planning and Commercial and Economic Development; Developers; Registered Providers; Architects, Consultants; Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce; the National Homebuilders Federation;

Letting/Estate Agents; Social Care Commissioning; Public Health and Family Support Officers of Kent County Council; Homes and Communities Agency and Action with Communities in Rural Kent.

- 5.5 A scene setting presentation was given at each workshop in order to give delegates a context and purpose for the new Maidstone Housing Strategy, including key challenges facing the Borough. Table discussions with delegates then took place on each of the Key Priority Themes. The discussions were used to identify what the potential barriers were preventing us from achieving the actions and outcomes, and collaborative ways of working together in order to overcome them.
  - 5.6 Feedback from the workshop sessions was very positive in what many saw as a diverse Action Plan for the Borough. There was general agreement over the Key Priority Themes that have been identified. Comments received have been organised according to the Key Priority Themes they address at **Appendix B**.
  - 5.7 An online survey was on the council's consultations webpage for six weeks ending on 31st December 2015. The survey was also advertised on the council's Facebook and Twitter pages and an email sent to all relevant stakeholders. A total of 106 responses were received. A summary of the responses to the main key questions asked are attached at **Appendix B**
  - 5.8 The majority of respondents agreed that the identified Key Priority Themes meet the challenges for Maidstone over the next 5 years. The majority of respondents also considered that the list of outcomes (what we plan to achieve to support the Key Priority Themes), were high priority for the council and its partners to address.
  - 5.9 Many residents highlighted issues that relate more to the Local Plan rather than the Housing Strategy, when answering: **Are there any important issues missing from the proposed Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 Action Plan?** The common topic was the importance of associated infrastructure to support all the new housing (i.e. roads, transport, schools, hospitals, doctors' surgeries etc).
  - 5.10 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule will set out the standard charges that the council will levy on specified types of development, in order to fund the infrastructure needed to support growth. The timetable for preparing the Charging Schedule will closely follow the local plan programme, and the schedule will be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will identify what, where, when and how the infrastructure is needed. Transport modelling is also taking place to consider future growth and congestion as well as potential measures to address this.
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## **6. KEY HOUSING PRIORITY THEMES / OBJECTIVES**

6.1 Following research, analysis and consultation feedback it is proposed that the new Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 is designed around the following key priorities:

- **Priority 1: Enable and support the delivery of quality homes across the housing market to develop sustainable communities**
- **Priority 2: Ensure that existing housing in Maidstone Borough is safe, desirable and promotes good health and well-being**
- **Priority 3: Prevent homelessness; secure the provision of appropriate accommodation for homeless households and supporting vulnerable people**

6.2 This new Housing Strategy for Maidstone gives the council an excellent opportunity to make a real difference for the residents of the Borough. The Maidstone Housing Strategy at **Appendix A** lists the outcomes and actions to help us achieve the above key priority themes. This includes working with partners to facilitate housing development, maximising investment opportunities, raising housing quality standards, promoting ways for residents to improve their health and wellbeing and preventative measures and services for homeless persons.

6.3 The council is being encouraged to demonstrate its community leadership through direct action and working in partnership with key organisations to deliver homes to meet our identified need in the emerging local plan. This will include initiatives like the creation of a Local Housing Company; redevelopment of Brunswick Street car park; and investment in the acquisition/purchase of suitable land for development and appropriate properties for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households.

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## **7. HOUSING AND PLANNING BILL**

7.1 It is important to note recent Government changes to National Policy, and how this impacts on the Maidstone Housing Strategy. On 13th October 2015, the Government published the Housing and Planning Bill, which sets out measures to boost house building and makes a number of changes to the planning system.

7.2 On publication of the Housing and Planning Bill the Government said it would kick-start a "national crusade to get 1 million homes built by 2020" and transform "generation rent into generation buy." The supply-side measures in the Bill are primarily focused on speeding up the planning system with the aim of delivering more housing. There is also a clear focus on home ownership, with measures to facilitate the building of Starter Homes; Self/Custom Housebuilding; and the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants following a voluntary agreement with the National Housing Federation (NHF). A brief summary of these initiatives are set out below.

- 7.3 Starter Homes: The Bill puts into legislation the Government's commitment to provide a number of Starter Homes for first-time buyers under the age of 40. Starter Homes would be sold at a discount of at least 20% of the market value. Specifically, the Bill puts a general duty on all planning authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes, and provides a specific duty, which will be fleshed out in later regulations, to require a certain number or proportion of Starter Homes on site.
- 7.4 Concerns have been expressed about the impact on the number of affordable rented homes developed, whether the 20% discount would be deliverable, whether these homes would be genuinely affordable and about how this policy would interact with other planning policies on housing provision.
- 7.5 In addition, the Homes and Communities Agency has recently announced that Affordable Rent will not be grant funded post March 2018. The Government's approach is now very different from previous grant funded programmes. It will now only be promoting Starter Homes and Shared Ownership products. The greatest demand for affordable housing identified by the council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment is for affordable rented accommodation.
- 7.6 Self Build and Custom Housebuilding: The Bill adds to and amends the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, which requires local authorities to keep a register of people seeking to acquire land to build or commission their own home. The Bill specifically requires local authorities to grant "sufficient suitable development permission" of serviced plots of land to meet the demand based on this register.
- 7.7 Rogue landlords and letting agents: The Bill will give local authorities additional powers to tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector. They will gain the ability to apply for banning orders against private landlords. A database of rogue landlords and agents will assist authorities in England in carrying out their enforcement work. Landlords will benefit from a clear process to secure repossession of properties abandoned by tenants.
- 7.8 Voluntary Right to Buy: The Queens Speech 2015 confirmed the Governments' intention to take forward the extension of the Right to Buy for Housing Association Tenants. The Bill will not, as originally expected, introduce a statutory Right to Buy (RTB) for housing association tenants. Following the Government's acceptance of the National Housing Federation's offer to implement the RTB on a voluntary basis, the Bill provides for grants to be paid to associations to compensate them for selling homes at a discount.
- 7.9 Reforms to the Planning System: The Bill contains a number of different reforms to the planning system, with the aim of speeding it up and allowing it to deliver more housing. Powers are given to the Secretary of State to intervene in the local and neighbourhood plan making process. A new duty to keep a register of brownfield land within a local authority's area will tie in with a new system of allowing the Secretary of State to grant planning permission in principle for housing on sites identified in these registers.

7.10 This Bill represents a very bold step from Government. It is important that the council sets in place a strategy and framework in order to respond to the Bill's initiatives. Actions in order to achieve the Key Priority Themes and stated outcomes will be reviewed half way through the life of this new strategy to ensure there is a robust action plan in place. The Maidstone Housing Strategy provides a positive opportunity to work in partnership with key partners to achieve local priorities and as a vehicle to help promote and deliver many of the proposals put forward by government.

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## **8. MAIDSTONE HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN**

8.1 There are some first phase actions that support our Key Priority Themes of which the council can start to address within the first year of the new Maidstone Housing Strategy. To enable these proposals to succeed, work is already underway to help achieve local priorities, as well as to respond to Government initiatives announced in the aforementioned Housing and Planning Bill. A brief summary is provided below.

8.2 Promoting Starter Homes: - The council is keen to support and promote home ownership as part of wider plans to regenerate the town centre and promote town centre living as a key component of the five year Town Centre Strategic Development Plan for the county town. Starter Homes are being promoted by the Government as an alternative to other housing tenures, such as shared ownership and social/affordable rent. If successful, the initiative will enable first time buyers to come back into the market and alleviate pressure on other parts of the market, such as the rented and affordable housing sectors.

8.3 A £26m fund has been made available in support of this initiative for housebuilders to demonstrate a range of high quality homes that will be available for first-time buyers. In a further move to support aspiring homeowners the government has also made available up to £10m for local authorities to prepare more brownfield land for development of starter homes.

8.4 Promoting starter homes ties in with the following action points on the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

- Promote home ownership products e.g. Starter Homes, Help to Buy, and Shared Ownership in Maidstone.
- Monitor and respond to the changing social housing market
- Explore opportunities for funding investment with a range of partners including the Local Enterprise Partnership, Homes & Communities Agency, institutional investors that will contribute towards the delivery of housing across the market.

- 8.5 The council is already starting to engage with developers about the supply and building of starter homes within the Borough. Officers are also actively involved in discussions with the Homes & Communities Agency (who administers the funds for Starter Homes) regarding securing investment for the supply of starter homes on brownfield town centre sites.
- 8.6 The council however understands the potential impact the introduction of Starter Homes may have on the supply of traditional affordable housing. The requirement to deliver a particular number or proportion of Starter Homes to be granted planning permission and the ability of developers to use Starter Homes to meet their section 106 affordable housing obligations, risks having a significant impact on the delivery of traditional affordable rented housing.
- 8.7 The council will look to promote and support Starter Homes where appropriate, but in accordance with Local Plan Policy. Wherever possible they should be in addition to, not at the expense of much needed homes for affordable rent and shared ownership. As the Bill progresses, there are a number of issues the council will continue to raise and gain clarity on such as how the general duty to promote Starter Homes interacts with local policy and requirements to get local plans in place.
- 8.8 Increasing Supply of Accommodation for Homeless Households: - The council in the last couple of years has purchased two properties (Magnolia House and Aylesbury House) to assist with reducing the rising cost of providing temporary accommodation for homeless households. But more still needs to be done and the council is keen to build upon the success of these schemes. Officers are looking to purchase two more properties to increase the supply of accommodation for homeless households in a cost effective way.
- 8.9 Property A – This 6 bedroom shared facilities property is looking to be purchased potentially for use as shared accommodation to discharge the main housing duty for single homeless persons under 35. This client group has trouble accessing the private rented sector, especially those in receipt of housing benefit and therefore subject to the Shared Accommodation Rate, which limits how much housing benefit people under 35 can claim.
- 8.10 Property B – This property is looking to be purchased and developed into 6 self-contained flats. It is proposed that this property would be suitable for use as self-contained temporary accommodation for homeless households. It is in a town centre location within easy reach of local amenities, public services, transport links and the council's Gateway.
- 8.11 In addition, the council is in the process of negotiating access arrangements to properties in Maidstone with existing temporary accommodation providers to help maximise availability of suitable accommodation for homeless households and reduce temporary accommodation costs.
- 8.12 Properties being targeted are those in or close to the town centre, with good access to public transport, schools, shops and local amenities. These include flats and houses across a range of property sizes.

8.13 Increasing the availability of suitable accommodation for homeless households ties in with the following action points in the Maidstone Housing Strategy Action Plan.

- To build/acquire new affordable and private homes to meet the commercial and housing objectives of the council.
- Enable the delivery of new affordable housing, particularly 1 and 2 bedroom homes to meet the identified need.
- Consider on a site by site basis joint venture and partnership models to share expertise, income, resources and risk.
- To expand on the success of Aylesbury and Magnolia House by investing in the acquisition/purchase of additional temporary accommodation within Maidstone to house homeless and vulnerable households.
- Secure shared housing for under-35s single homeless people.

8.14 Building new affordable and private homes: - Evidence is that councils are most successful when working in partnership with others and where they actively use their own assets to promote housing development opportunities. This was highlighted in the Elphicke-House Report recently commissioned by Government, which reviewed local authorities' role in housing supply. The key recommendation is that council's change from being statutory providers to being Housing Delivery Enablers.

8.15 The Brunswick Street Car Park is viewed as an underperforming asset by the council and its potential use is now under review for complete or partial redevelopment for housing with retained car parking provision. The main objectives for the proposed development of this site is to maximise revenue income for the council, regenerate the surrounding area and delivering affordable housing. The council is considering options for the redevelopment of the site. This could be achieved by entering into a joint venture partnership with an existing Registered Provider partner.

8.16 Building new affordable and private homes to meet commercial and housing objectives ties in with the following action points on the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

- To build/acquire new affordable and private homes to meet the commercial and housing objectives of the council.
- Bring forward Brunswick Street car park to deliver a quality housing scheme to meet housing and commercial objectives
- Enable the delivery of new affordable housing, particularly 1 and 2 bedroom homes to meet the identified need.
- Explore opportunities for funding investment with a range of partners including the Local Enterprise Partnership, Homes & Communities Agency, institutional investors that will contribute towards the delivery of housing across the market.

- Consider on a site by site basis joint venture and partnership models to share expertise, income, resources and risk.
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## **9. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 9.1 The council could choose not to adopt a new Housing Strategy for Maidstone and instead continue to refresh the 2011-15 strategy, or not have one at all post 2015. However, to not agree a new Housing Strategy would mean a diminution of the council's community leadership and strategic housing roles and would make effective engagement with partners much more difficult. It would also mean that the Homes and Communities Agency and other potential investors would be much more likely to direct funds away from Maidstone if they could not clearly see an up to date and coherent vision for the area.
- 9.2 The adoption of a new Maidstone Housing Strategy will clearly set out the council's priorities in tackling the housing challenges in the Borough, and provides strategic vision and leadership in an uncertain economic climate. It will help to improve clarity and certainty for investors and strengthen public/private sector partnerships in order to support its delivery.
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## **10. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is considered that the best course of action to take is for the council to adopt a new Housing Strategy for Maidstone for the next five years (2016-2020). The Maidstone Housing Strategy is a fundamental and critical piece of work which helps to identify the main housing issues and key challenges for the local area that the council and its partners need to address over the next five years.
- 10.2 The council's Strategic Plan also runs from 2015-2020, so it is not considered appropriate to set a longer term than five years for the new Maidstone Housing Strategy, so that future directions of travel both nationally and locally can be responded to.
- 10.3 Following local elections, together with the development of many national and regional policy initiatives, it is considered appropriate to review the Maidstone Housing Strategy during 2018 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- 10.4 The Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 will launch in April 2016, and thus this review would take place half-way through the life of the strategy. The review will focus on the Action Plan to ensure that it can respond to future directions of travel both nationally and locally.

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## 11. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 11.1 The development of the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 has involved extensive research, data analysis and consultation with Corporate Leadership Team, Community Housing and Environment Committee as well as key stakeholders and partners. A summary of the consultation feedback is attached at **Appendix B**. The Action Plan (including the Key Priority Themes and stated outcomes and actions) for the Maidstone Housing Strategy has been developed taking into account the consultation feedback.
- 11.2 Feedback from the consultation process was generally very positive in what many saw as a diverse Action Plan for the Borough. The majority of consultees agreed that the identified Key Priority Themes meets the challenges for Maidstone over the next 5 years. They also considered that the list of outcomes (what we plan to achieve to support the Key Priority Themes), were high priority for the council and its partners to address.

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## 12. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 12.1 Following the Committee's approval to the recommendations in this report, the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 will be presented to full Council for adoption on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.
- 12.2 There will then be a launch of the Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020 during April/May 2016.

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## 13. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The adoption of the Maidstone Housing Strategy will assist in the delivery of the council's corporate priorities of Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all and Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services.
<b>Risk Management</b>	The delivery of this strategy will depend upon the effectiveness of the partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sector and through listening to and involving service users. Housing is a	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services.

	cross-cutting issue and new partners need to come on board and recognize the importance of tackling the challenges identified. The way forward will require an effective strategic partnership that focuses on delivery of successful outcomes across services, combined with robust risk analysis.	
<b>Financial</b>	Some of the projects and actions set out in this report will require resources from the Council's capital programme. Developed project proposals will be considered as part of the medium term financial strategy.	Paul Riley, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	Appropriate staffing resource will need to be put in place to deliver the outcomes and actions established for the strategy.	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services.
<b>Legal</b>	N/A	
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The Maidstone Housing Strategy potentially affects all population sections and groups. A preliminary EQIA has been carried out (attached at <b>Appendix C</b> ) and the Strategy will be subject to a full EQIA before adoption by full Council.	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	New developments will incorporate sustainable design standards and mitigating environmental impact measures in accordance with Local Plan policy.	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	The creation of joint ventures and other partnerships will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract procedure Rules, as will the procurement of Consultants and Contractors in connection with the acquisition of land and any associated	Property & Procurement Manager

	construction contracts.	
<b>Asset Management</b>	Acquisition, management and disposal of the council's property assets will support the Housing Strategy.	Property & Procurement Manager

#### **14. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-2020
- Appendix B: Consultation Feedback
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

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#### **15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Maidstone Housing Strategy Research and Analysis Paper