

7 December 2016

Environment & Housing Management Committee

Housing Strategy 2017-2020

Report of: *Angela Williams, Acting Head of Housing*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The current policy document 'Housing Strategy 2013-16' is due to expire at the end of the year. To forward the aims of the Service and Council a new document is required to outline in strategic terms proposed service provision.
- 1.2 The new 'Housing Strategy 2017-2020' will include revised versions of both the 'Homeless Prevention Strategy 2013-2018' and 'Tenancy Strategy 2013'. Upon ratification of the final version of the Housing Strategy those documents will be formally superseded.
- 1.3 The draft version of the 'Housing Strategy 2017-2020' outlines a transparent and ambitious approach to the provision of housing services.
- 1.4 The core elements of the new Housing Strategy recognises current housing needs and requirements; reflected against current and future challenges and demands.
- 1.5 Subject to Committee approval, the draft Housing Strategy will be put to an online public consultation for residents and partner agencies. The consultation will allow for a final version of the Housing Strategy to be completed for ratification at the next Committee in 2017.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee formally approve the draft Housing Strategy 2017-2020.**
- 2.2 That the Committee formally approve the merger of the Homeless Prevention Strategy; Tenancy Strategy and Housing Strategy.**
- 2.3 That the Committee formally approve the use of a public online consultation concerning the draft Housing Strategy 2017-2020.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 It is a legal requirement that the Tenancy Strategy and Homeless Prevention Strategy are produced and updated. As both documents are due to expire, and given radical changes and challenges post their implementation it is now service critical to review these documents.
- 3.2 The Tenancy Strategy presents and directs the relationship with Housing Associations and other Registered Providers.
- 3.3 The Homeless Prevention Strategy demonstrates the Council's plans for how to deal with homelessness and the causes of homelessness.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that the proposed Homelessness Reduction Bill currently laid before Parliament will introduce more rigorous prevention duties upon Local Authorities and housing providers. It is therefore timely to produce a revised approach.
- 3.5 The draft Housing Strategy fully outlines the confirmed, proposed and potentialities of future service provision. It is intended in both format and scope to enable a transparent and rigorous approach to the challenges within the contemporary housing market.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The provision and renewal of both the Homeless Prevention Strategy and Tenancy Strategy are statutory requirements. The proposed combination with the Housing Strategy will allow for a single document which will clearly evidence the combined strategic planning of Housing Services in an open and transparent manner.
- 4.2 Economic and social imperatives require continual re-focussing and re-consideration of homelessness prevention options. Embedding the homelessness strategy within the Housing Strategy puts this at the very core of service provision.
- 4.3 The proposed Housing Strategy focuses on key priorities, such as homeless prevention, and outlines those mechanisms through which to improve our service offer. The anticipated benefits of this will include:
 - Providing a targeted housing service; offering a range of housing solutions to differing household types and needs.
 - Outlining new accommodation provision, as per the Building Programme previously recommended to, and approved by, Committee.
 - Creating an effective and practical document for 'real life' use and reference by the Council, residents, tenants and partners alike.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

The proposed Housing Strategy will allow the Council to:

- Meet its legal requirements
- Target housing solutions within the Borough.
- Broaden the housing range for residents.
- Highlight to tenants and residents the forthcoming challenges which both the Council and they themselves will face.
- Support the implementation of the Welfare Reform agenda (which Brentwood Borough Council is committed to, particularly within existing written policy)
- Structure the Council's approach to housing, in particular as relevant to the Local Development Plan.

6. Consultation

6.1 Staff, tenants and member consultation events were conducted on the 1st September, 8th November and 16th November 2016 respectively. A further online public consultation (December 2016 - January 2017) is also proposed for recommendation by Committee.

7. References to Corporate Plan

7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan aims to:

- Find new ways of working with partners and embrace support of communities.
- To deliver safe and comfortable homes which are efficient and sustainable
- Develop effective partnership arrangements with key agencies
- Manage our stock to recognise the limited resources available and supporting those in greatest need.
- Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.

7.2 The draft Housing Strategy feeds directly into each of the aims listed above and will serve to provide clear guidance to all in strategic terms as to how those aims will be achieved.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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8.1 None.

Legal Implications

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8.2 The Government is supporting the Private Member Bill, the Reduction of Homelessness Bill. The eventual new legislation will lead to an amended Statutory Code of Practice in the assessment of Homelessness applications.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

8.3 None.

9 Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

9.2 None.

10 Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Draft Housing Strategy 2017-2020

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