

Notice of:	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX20/2018
Relevant Officer:	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing
Date of Meeting:	16 April 2018

HOUSING STRATEGY 2018- 2023

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This report seeks approval to adopt a new Housing Strategy 2018-2023 – ‘Building a Better Blackpool’ following public consultation.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To adopt the Housing Strategy 2018- 2023 – ‘Building a Better Blackpool’ as attached at Appendix 3a, to the Executive report.

2.2 Subject to 2.1 above, to delegate authority to the Head of Legal to enter into any legal documentation that may be required to implement the strategy.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Addressing housing issues in Blackpool is central to the delivery of the objectives of the Blackpool Council Plan, supporting economic improvement and helping to establish more resilient communities. The new Housing Strategy presents an ambitious approach to tackling the housing issues within the town and sets the principles that will guide investment and service delivery.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are:

“The Economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

“Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The new Strategy provides an up to date public statement of the housing challenges and priorities for action in Blackpool. While there has been a clear focus on the most important housing issues, the Council has not had a comprehensive public statement of housing priorities for a number of years. The development of the new Housing Strategy has enabled the Council to review priorities with partners. Having a new strategy in place will enable the Council to demonstrate a coherent approach and plan delivery more effectively. It is intended that the Housing Strategy will cover the approach for housing for the next five years but there is a potential for an earlier review in the event of changes in the situation.

5.2 The Strategy provides the overarching context for more detailed work, including:

- Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 that has been prepared alongside the new Housing Strategy
- The Housing Plan for an Ageing Population 2017 adopted last year but still in the early stages of delivery
- Further work on affordability and housing needs to be undertaken in 2018, updating the Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 and reviewing how we use capacity within the Housing Revenue Account business plan to maximise Council housing delivery
- Further development of regeneration plans for inner Blackpool for discussion and negotiation with Government
- Informing the production of the housing elements of Part 2 of the Local Plan

5.3 The new Housing Strategy sets out the challenges that continue to face the town and the priorities and opportunities for action. The Council and partners have delivered ambitious new housing initiatives and services improvements over the last few years, improving opportunities for Council tenants such as through Decent Homes investment and the re-development of Queens Park, intervening in the sub-standard

private rented sector, and developing a better housing offer in inner Blackpool through Foxhall Village and the work of My Blackpool Home.

5.4 However, major challenges remain with the greatest challenge the need to help create more sustainable neighbourhoods in inner Blackpool through the re-modelling of the building stock to a wider range of attractive homes, alongside the strengthening of communities in those areas. There is a wider need to improve the range and quality of homes available in the town and to help people to access high quality accommodation that they can afford on low average incomes. There remain high levels of homelessness driven by social issues and poor quality private rented housing, and a challenge to provide coherent support to help people with multiple and complex needs to turn their lives around. There is also a need to respond to growing numbers of older people by providing suitable housing and help for people to support themselves in their own homes.

5.5 The Housing Strategy sets out how the Council will now extend the impact through further bold action, under three priorities:

I. New Housing Supply

- Promote the further development of a high quality new housing offer at Foxhall Village / inner Blackpool through site acquisition and, where necessary, clearance
- Complete new development at Queens Park and facilitate new development at Grange Park
- Identify delivery routes for the Council to build more new quality housing for rent, inside and outside of the Housing Revenue Account
- Adoption of Part 2 Local Plan with site allocations and updated housing Supplementary Planning Document to encourage market investment
- Pro-active use of Council land to bring forward more high quality new housing development

II. Improving our Private Rented Sector

- Expansion of development activity, and establishing a strong management offer that is attractive to private landlords and investors by My Blackpool Home
- Continue strong enforcement activity to reduce the impact of unacceptably poor accommodation on local residents, using all available powers

- Push for reform of Housing Benefit / Universal Credit to incentivise private investment in higher quality homes for rent in inner Blackpool
- Further extend tenancy training, and help landlords to access high quality training and advice

III. Stabilising Lives

- Review of the Housing Options service to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, continue to get upstream of the issues, and coordinate with wider support services, as set out in the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018.
- Further develop a positive pathway for young people, providing effective housing with support.
- Strengthen opportunities for Council and private tenants to get into work.
- Build on the Transience programme to develop effective neighbourhood based service delivery that strengthens and stabilises embattled communities.
- Delivery of the Housing Plan for an Ageing Population
- Continue to be pro-active in accessing funding for affordable warmth / healthy homes measures

5.6 A further theme seeks to increase capacity between the Council, its housing companies, and external partners and better coordinate cross-cutting action between housing, health and social services. The agreement of the new Housing Strategy should help to establish a clear shared agenda.

5.7 The Strategy ends with contextual indicators that will be updated annually by the Housing Strategy team to track key measures of the local housing market, and activity indicators that will monitor the delivery of work by the Council and its companies to improve the housing supply, raise standards in the private rented sector, and tackle homelessness.

5.8 Is the Corporate Delivery Unit aware of this report? Yes

The Corporate Delivery Unit has been central in the development of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. It will be further involved in the development of a monitoring framework.

5.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.10 List of Appendices:

Appendix 3a:Housing Strategy 2018-2023 - Building a Better Blackpool

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 There is no statutory requirement to publish a housing strategy but a clear statement of housing issues and priorities underpins statutory work on homelessness and Planning.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 The work set out in the Housing Strategy will be delivered using existing human resources, with the structure and role of housing work by the Council and its housing companies kept under review.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 The Strategy seeks to improve access to high quality housing for all local residents and there are no adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The Strategy can be delivered within existing financial resources but also seeks to achieve more radical change by attracting additional funding from Government to address Blackpool's acute housing issues. Currently most capital funding for housing is directed towards areas with higher house prices but the Council is in constant dialogue with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England to find ways of delivering more investment to deliver the improvement in the quality of homes that is essential to the town's future prosperity.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no new risks associated specifically with the development of the new Housing Strategy. Risks around the delivery of new developments and policies, and the management of Council homes, are managed through corporate risk management frameworks.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The Strategy has been developed through consultation within the Council and with the Council's housing companies. Members of the public and stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on this strategy over the six weeks ending on 20 March 2018. The responses were generally supportive, emphasising the need to enable former guest houses to convert to sustainable family homes, commenting on the need to address the lack of affordability of housing for sale for many households in the town, and the need for more high quality affordable housing for rent through social landlords.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Full Consultation responses at summarised at Paragraph 12 above.

14.0 Key decision information:

- 14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 19/2017
- 14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

- 15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 6 April 2018 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1 None.

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1 The Executive agreed the recommendation as outlined above namely:

1. To adopt the Housing Strategy 2018- 2023 as attached at Appendix 3a, to the Executive report subject to the Director of Strategy being requested to change the strapline at all points to refer to “Making Blackpool Better” prior to publication.
2. Subject to 1 above, to delegate authority to the Head of Legal to enter into any legal documentation that may be required to implement the strategy.

18.2 Date of Decision:

16 April 2018

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

Addressing housing issues in Blackpool is central to the delivery of the objectives of the Blackpool Council Plan, supporting economic improvement and helping to establish more resilient communities. The new Housing Strategy presents an ambitious approach to tackling the housing issues within the town and sets the principles that will guide investment and service delivery.

19.1 Date Decision published:

17 April 2018

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1 Councillor Blackburn, in the Chair

Councillor Benson, Cain, Campbell, Cross, Jackson, Smith, I Taylor and Mrs Wright

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1 The following non-Executive member was in attendance: Councillor L Taylor.