

Subject: Progress on deliver of the Housing Strategy

Report to: ELT, 18th February 2019

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee, 28th February 2019

Report by: Housing Director

SUBJECT MATTER / RECOMMENDATIONS

This report provides an update on the progress against delivery of the Housing Strategy approved in 2018.

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee are recommended to note the progress to date and request a further report in 12 months.

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee approved the strategic aims of the Great Yarmouth Borough Council Housing Strategy in January 2018. The Strategy has four priorities:

- New homes: ensuring there are enough good quality new homes
- Our homes: improving the quality and use of the council's housing stock
- Decent homes: providing a good mix of decent homes across all tenures
- Healthy homes: meeting the needs of vulnerable households.

The Housing Strategy is supported by a Housing Strategy Action Plan which contains a number of strategic objectives designed to deliver against the four priorities of the Housing Strategy. It was further agreed to provide the committee with a progress report at a later meeting against the actions within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

2. PROGRESS

The strategy included a number of measures for each priority. The outturn for these measures as of Quarter 3 of 2018/19 is shown at Appendix 1 together with

comparable data, where available, for 2017/18. Some additional measures have been provided to provide additional context to the progress of the delivery of the Housing Strategy.

Some key outcomes of delivery against the Housing Strategy to date are:

New Homes

- Focus on housing delivery through the Housing Growth Group's oversight of Local Plan Process, progression of Housing Deal for Great Yarmouth and monitoring of housing delivery rates.
- New focus on enhancing the housing enabling function and bringing forward stalled sites for development.
- In 2018/19, the trend is that the number of new housing starts and completions is increasing with 144 completions at end of December 2018, compared to 172 in 2017/18.

Our Homes

- During 2018/19 all works to resolve health and safety issues in properties will be completedⁱ.
- The average time to complete minor voids has reduced following the successful work to review procedures and the adoption of the revised Voids Policy from 16 days in 2017/18 to 8.83 days at the end of quarter 3 of 2018/19.
- To the end of quarter 3 – 99 replacement kitchens and 77 replacement bathrooms had been installed as part of the planned capital works programme.
- The number of applicants in the Allocation Pool has increased with 347 households in the pool at the end of quarter 3 compared with 259 at the end of 2017/18. The number of applications is expected to continue to increase following the adoption of the new Allocation scheme which came into force from November 2018 which introduced a low / no need criterion.

Decent Homes

- The Selective Licensing Scheme for Nelson Ward went live on 7 January 2019.
- Adopted a new Empty Homes Policy and approach to empty homes intervention.
- Approved 106 Disabled Facilities Grants in 2017/18 and 112 by the end of quarter 3 of 2018/19.

Healthy Homes

- Reduction in the number of households accepted as statutory homeless following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 from 110 in 2017/18 to 31 by the end of quarter 3 of 2018/19. In 2017/18, prior to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act the Council relieved 74 homelessness cases, whilst by the end of quarter 3 in 2018/19, 105 homelessness cases were relieved.
- 12 applications for a Warm Homes grant to install first time central heating have been processed.

In reviewing the status of each action within the Housing Strategy Action Plan the following categories were used to assess whether actions are on track or slipping:

Complete, this includes the following actions:

- The Housing Market Bulletin is being produced quarterly.
- The implementation of new processes (including IT system) required by the Homelessness Reduction Act have been completed.
- The Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been approved by Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee.

In progress, this includes the following actions:

- Work programme for Community led Housing is making good progress with three Community Land Trusts established.
- Decent Home works to the Council's housing stock, the programme of works (mainly kitchen and bathroom replacement) is making progress, however, there has been some slippage in 2018/19 which will be addressed over the remaining years of the programme.
- The feasibility study for the Middlegate estate is in hand and is being reviewed following the removal of the Housing Revenue Account debt cap.

Further action needed, this relates to actions where progress has been unable to be made and includes those cases where circumstances outside the control of the Council has prevented work on an action starting, for example where revised government guidance is awaited. Actions with this status include:

- Updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Appraisal – this is not a priority currently, but other workstreams are addressing the lack of developer activity across the Borough.
- Review of the Tenant's Compact – this specific action is on hold until clearer requirements for tenant engagement are announced, although wider work to strengthen tenant engagement will be actioned.

- Building on the Housing First Model to support rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping – the initial funding bid was unsuccessful and bids for alternative funding will be submitted.

No actions are currently out of tolerance.

3. KEY CHALLENGES FOR 2019/20

During 2019/20, the key challenges in relation to the delivery of the Housing Strategy are:

- The completion of the Local Plan
- Increasing housing delivery of all tenures to meet housing need and demand
- Tenant engagement
- Ensuring value for money on spend on the Council's housing stock through Great Yarmouth Norse.

The Housing Strategy Delivery Group will continue to drive progress on delivering the actions which will address the four priorities of the Housing Strategy and will ensure that there is appropriate and timely focus on the key challenges shown above.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

When the Housing Strategy was approved, it was envisaged that resource implications will be identified in the Action Plan and will be assessed on a case by case basis by the responsible lead officer for each action. Delivering the strategic aim – “Our Homes” – will continue to have significant financial implications for the Housing Revenue Account particularly in relation to ensuring that the Council's housing stock meets (and continues to meet) the Decent Homes Standard and in relation to the replacement of homes sold through the Right to Buy. These implications will be managed through regular monitoring of the Housing Revenue Account and Housing Capital Programme budget.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Strategy is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that any risks are managed. The main risk relates to the capital programme of works to the Council's housing stock which has experienced some slippage, whilst it is expected that this position will be recovered by the end of the five-year Decent

Homes works programme it will remain under review. Additionally, the loss of housing stock through the Right to Buy remains a risk to the Council in terms of the numbers and types of homes sold and the ability of the Council to meet housing need and the impact of the cost of delivering replacement homes. This reflects the fact that in 2012/13, 20 homes were sold through the Right to Buy, in 2017/18 this increased to 47, with 34 homes sold by the end of quarter 3 of 2018/19.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The actions required to deliver the strategic aim and the four priorities of the Housing Strategy are largely progressing as expected at this time. In 2019/20 there are a number of key challenges for the delivery of the Housing Strategy and these challenges will be a particular focus for attention of the Housing Strategy Delivery Group to ensure that appropriate progress in these areas is made over the next financial year.

The relevant measures which underpin the monitoring of the effectiveness of the delivery against the strategy along with progress against specific actions will continue to be monitored and reported to Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee on an annual basis.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee note the progress to date and request a further update in 12 months.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

GYBC Housing Strategy

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Management Team/ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Management Team/ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan
Financial Implications:	Covered in report

Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	Covered in report
Equality Issues / EQIA assessment:	Focus of Housing Strategy will improve equality as a result of specific actions regarding housing condition and supply.
Crime & Disorder:	As above
Every Child Matters:	As Above

ⁱ This excludes properties where the tenant refuses works (in which case the Housing Tenancy teams will liaise with GYN to help secure access) or where interim works have been taken pending a longer term solution.