

## **Cabinet**

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 April 2018

**Report Title:** Housing Strategy 2018-2023

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Ainsley Arnold, Housing & Planning

**Senior Officer:** Frank Jordan, Executive Director - Place

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning Regeneration made a decision on 16 November 2017 to consult on a draft Housing Strategy for the Borough. This report provides a summary of the consultation responses that have been received and how they have been reflected in the final version of the Housing Strategy. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Housing Strategy.
- 1.2. To inform this decision, this report includes a summary of the consultation feedback and the Equalities Impact Assessment which provides an assessment of the impact of the final strategy.

### **2. Recommendation/s**

- 2.1. Cabinet are recommended to approve the Housing Strategy (Appendix 1).

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation/s**

- 3.1. The Housing Strategy is a significant contributor to achieving the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan and the resident focused outcomes. There can rarely have been a more important time to set out our distinctive vision for the future of homes in our Borough and to outline the steps we are determined to take to achieve this vision.
- 3.2. The Housing Strategy:
  - Articulates the vision, aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy 2018-2023
  - Supports the delivery of the right home in the right place across the Borough, in accordance with the ambitions of the Local Plan
  - Supports the delivery of Cheshire East Council's Mid-term Financial Strategy 2018-2020
- 3.3. The Strategy provides a robust and comprehensive picture of housing needs and priorities. It provides a clear vision for our key partners who develop, own and manage existing or new housing to meet a diverse

housing need. We will explore further opportunities to work with our partners in stimulating the housing market to provide new or existing housing in our communities.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. There are no alternative options considered. The existing Housing Strategy which ran from 2011 to 2016 now requires updating to align with the Council's aspirations in delivering the right home in the right place.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1. Cheshire East is committed to meeting the needs of its local communities and providing the infrastructure, services and facilities required to create sustainable and stronger communities. Part of this is ensuring that we have the right housing offer to meet our ambitions for the Council's jobs-led economic growth, but also that they are of the right mix to meet the diverse housing needs across the Borough.
- 5.2. Since the publication of our previous Housing Strategy in 2011, there have been significant changes to the local and national political, policy and funding landscape. This new proposed Housing Strategy reflects these changes, and is underpinned by our Local Plan, supportive policies and strategies which will enable us to achieve our priorities for housing within the Borough.
- 5.3. The proposed Housing Strategy for the period 2018-2023 has been developed within the context of national, regional and sub-regional strategies and policies, which support the overall aims and objectives to align with the Council's aspirations as outlined in the key Communities Outcomes, the ambitions represented within the Local Plan and to enable us to keep up with the pace of change in the housing sector.
- 5.4. To ensure the Strategy links with associated Council services, extensive dialogue and exchange of ideas have continually taken place with Public Health; Spatial Planning and Cared for Children and Care Leavers, which has facilitated important strategic links with key decision making processes for such services.
- 5.5. Furthermore, the housing strategy has emerged and been shaped by a number of informal engagement exercises over the past 18 months with our key stakeholders, culminating in a formal engagement event jointly hosted with our colleagues within Spatial Planning, with housing developers, private landlords and registered housing providers in the summer of 2017,

in which we provided a clear steer of our approach to housing need in Cheshire East and how we can all work together to provide solutions.

- 5.6. The proposed Housing Strategy has been considered by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2017. The Strategy was welcomed by the Committee, as was the opportunity to provide some comments during the consultation stage. Committee members highlighted a number of considerations;

- Ensure access to affordable housing, by reflecting on differing house prices within the Borough and affordability
- Direct involvement of the Council in respect of building new affordable homes
- Assurance was sought in terms of private rented sector and improved relationships with private sector landlords, including Houses of Multiple Occupation
- Highlighted their support for increased housing options for the our ageing population

- 5.7. These issues have been broadly covered across the Strategy and will be taken forward through the development of the Delivery Plan and associated policies and projects.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

- 6.1.1. The Deregulation Act 2015 Section 29 removed the legal requirement for a local authority to have a housing strategy. However preparation of such a strategy is deemed as good practice.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

- 6.2.1. The eventual implication of the Housing Strategy does not envisage that there will be a major financial investment required by Cheshire East, however if funding was required for individual projects, a full business case would be compiled which would consider all financing options (both internal and external) and any potential risks to the Council. Such business cases will follow the established route for ratification including gateway approvals at the appropriate points in accordance with the Council's project management protocols.

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

- 6.3.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 2) has been carried out for the development of the draft Housing Strategy. It has been determined that there are no groups who will be negatively impacted by the Strategy. It was assessed that a full Impact Assessment was not required.

### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

- 6.4.1. There are no direct Human Resources implications.

### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

- 6.5.1. As the Housing Strategy is a high level document that sets out the Council's direction of travel for policies and services related to all tenures, it reflects a series of existing policies and approaches, which have already been the subject of separate Equality Impact Assessments' (EIA) . These are not therefore also covered in the EIA that accompanies the Housing Strategy. The same is true of the negative impacts that may arise from national policies or from possible policy directions that are to be set by further assessment and consultation. In such circumstances the Council will undertake EIAs as part of future policy development.

### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

- 6.6.1. Rural communities will positively benefit from the introduction of the Strategy, as it aims to address how we can provide access to affordable housing with a mix of tenures in all neighbourhoods of Cheshire East.

### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

- 6.7.1. Through the development of this Strategy, Strategic Housing have engaged with colleagues within Cared for Children and Care Leavers to ensure appropriate measures are in place for the provision and access to support and housing options.
- 6.7.2. The Cheshire East Local Offer for Care Leavers contains the vision and supportive information for the provision of care leavers within the Borough. The policy gives guidance for Social Workers and Personal Advisors to what each care leaver is entitled to and the allocated worker should ensure that the entitlements are recorded in the young person's Pathway Plan.

## **6.8. Public Health Implications**

- 6.8.1. Comprehensive dialogue has taken place with Public Health to ensure the Housing Strategy priorities meets the wider aims and objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which are duly reflected within the Strategy's Delivery Plan.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. All wards and local ward members.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. The Council obtained Portfolio Holder approval on 16 November 2017 to formally consult on a proposed new Housing Strategy for the period 2018 to 2023, the consultation was conducted between 27 November 2017 to 08 January 2018.
- 8.2. In addition to the formal consultation, the Strategy was considered by the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2017, in which members were provided with an inclusive overview of the Strategy, together with the stages of consultation and democratic approval for the final strategy.
- 8.3. Through the wider public consultation exercise and invitation for comments from the Digital Influence Panel, we obtained 173 respondents to the draft consultation strategy, which is detailed within the consultation report as Appendix 3.
- 8.4. As our consultation report summary and our responses details (Appendix 4), while there are varying comments and suggestions, there are some central principal themes from the consultation, which have duly informed the development of the final Strategy.
- 8.5. Central to making this Housing Strategy a success is to ensure we effectively plan, measure and monitor how we will deliver the priorities detailed within this document, which will be achieved through an agreed Delivery Plan, a tool to help us deliver our strategy. The Delivery Plan will be subject to annual reviews during the lifetime of the Strategy, ensuring the priorities remain relevant and their delivery is continually monitored.

## **9. Access to Information**

- 9.1. Appendix 1: Cheshire East Council Housing Strategy 2018-2023
- 9.2. Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment: Cheshire East Council Housing Strategy 2018-2023
- 9.3. Appendix 3: Consultation Report
- 9.4. Appendix 4: Consultation Feedback Summary

## **10. Contact Information**

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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