

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 16th June 2020

Report by: Claire Bennett

Report title: Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 –
Action Plan Progress Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- To report to members on the progress made in 2019/20 in delivering the Strategic Objectives stemming from the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-2021 and to enable consideration and comment on proposed new actions for 2020/21.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

- a) Members to note progress in delivering the objectives stemming from the Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan 2016-2021**
- b) Suggestions regarding actions for 2020/21 that contribute to the overall Strategic Objectives be passed to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Head of Housing and Health for consideration.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 The purpose of this report is for members to consider progress on the Housing and Health Strategy 2016-21 and to seek members' views for proposed future actions to be included in the updated Action Plan for 2020/21.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Housing and Health Strategy 2016-2021 was published in 2016 and since then the council and its partners have been working to deliver the associated Action Plan.

2.2 The Housing and Health Strategy 2016-2021 is a high level

strategy and has four Strategic Objectives and a number of actions under each Strategic Objective that have been undertaken and monitored by the Housing Service and its partners.

2.3 **Action Plan Delivery in 2019/20**

This report details progress on the Housing and Health Action Plan in 2019/20 and highlights key achievements against each Strategic Objective.

2.4 *Strategic Objective 1: Enable affordable housing delivery through partnership working and maximise suitably located and constructed development opportunities, whilst ensuring the best use of existing stock.*

- The Housing and Planning teams have worked closely on ensuring that new affordable housing is delivered effectively in the District and a total of 292 new affordable homes were completed in 2019/20. This is the highest number of affordable homes ever delivered by housing associations in East Herts.
- Consultation on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been completed. The responses have been considered and incorporated into the document which was approved by Council on 13th May 2020.
- Thirty Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) have been inspected and improvement action initiated during 2018/19 and 33 during 2019/20 – significantly exceeding the target of 10 each year.
- Funding through the Healthy Lifestyle Programme was granted to Network Homes to provide the 120 new residents on the Ridgeway development with planters and welcome boxes to encourage healthy eating and the growing of their own fruit and vegetables
- The Housing Service organised and facilitated a Shared Ownership Fair at Wodson Park, to promote and raise awareness of affordable home ownership, in May 2019

which was attended by over 100 residents and 10 Registered Providers.

2.5 *Strategic Objective 2: Focus on meeting the housing needs of active and frail older persons.*

- There has been ongoing joint working with Hertfordshire County Council to improve the provision of accommodation for older people across the district including the assessing the feasibility of additional Extra Care accommodation.
- A Policy on specialist housing for older and vulnerable people and on accessible and adaptable homes has been included in the adopted District Plan.
- Dementia awareness training for all East Herts Council staff has been completed and refresher training continues to be provided.
- A discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant policy for use by the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA), which allows for some dementia adaptations, has been approved by the HHIA partners, including East Herts Council.

2.6 *Strategic Objective 3: Work to meet the needs of vulnerable people in the housing market.*

- Two fully wheelchair adapted new build dwellings for affordable rent were delivered, in Ware, by Network Homes.
- Three of the self-contained flats at the council's Homeless Hostel had works undertaken to make them more accessible including one which is now fully wheelchair accessible.

2.7 *Strategic Objective 4: Seek to support rural communities in meeting their local housing needs:*

- The Housing Service has provided advice and information in support of Neighbourhood Plans for Stanstead Abbots, Much Hadham, Standon and Braughing.

2.8 Proposed actions for 2020/21

Some actions in the Housing and Health Action Plan will be rolled over into 2020/21 but new actions are proposed that will continue to deliver on the overall four Strategic Objectives.

New proposed actions are:

- to develop a standard Section 106 template including agreed Affordable Housing clauses for all new affordable housing development in East Herts
- to conduct a detailed piece of research into the options for delivering affordable housing, of all types and tenures, in East Herts as requested by Councillor Peter Boylan, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and to seek member approval to act on any recommendations
- the Housing Service to draw up and manage a database on all affordable housing properties in East Herts
- the Housing Service to provide input into the Gilston Garden Town Board to ensure that the development meets the needs of East Herts residents, particularly with regards to affordable homes
- the Housing service to participate, along with Planning colleagues, in the Hertfordshire Growth Board's work to ensure opportunities for accelerated development and access to funding streams to unlock developments are maximised.

2.9 The proposed updated Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan has been provided at Appendix A. Members views are sought for consideration by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the Head of Housing and Health prior to finalisation.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 The Housing and Health Strategy is a five year document running from 2016 to 2021 and has an associated action plan that is monitored and updated annually by the Housing Service and partners to ensure it remains relevant to current housing needs and obligations.

4.0 Options

4.1 Do not review the action plan – NOT RECOMMENDED as it has always been envisaged that the as the Strategy covers a five year period it is imperative that the action plan is reviewed annually to ensure it is addressing the most pressing housing issues for that year.

4.2 Update the action plan based on the proposals in Appendix A, including any additions or amendments suggested by members of Overview and Scrutiny following consideration by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the Head of Housing and Health – RECOMMENDED.

5.0 Risks

5.1 There is no legal obligation to produce a Housing and Health Strategy but it is seen as good practice to do so and forms a document that partners often look to when working in partnership with the council to identify and seek to address the council's current housing priorities.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 Not applicable

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Yes – the Strategy and action plan both specifically seek to address

the needs of a number of groups with protected characteristics, notably, though not solely older people.

Environmental Sustainability

Yes – the Strategy seeks to maximise affordable housing delivery in line with the District Plan which sets out policies regarding environmentally sustainability.

Financial

No – there are no additional revenue or capital requirements arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Housing and Health Strategy Action Plan is attached at Appendix A.

7.2 The Housing and Health Strategy itself is available on the council's website at https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/East_Herts_Housing_and_Health_Strategy_Final_Web_2.pdf

Contact Member

Councillor Peter Boylan – Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

peter.boylan@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Jonathan Geall - Head of Housing and Health, Tel: 01992 531594.

jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Claire Bennett – Service Manager Housing Services,

Tel: 01992 531603. claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk