

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 17th May 2024

Report by: Cllr Mione Goldspink, Executive Member for Neighbours

Report title: 2024/25 Housing Strategy action plans

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

- The action plans to deliver to the strategic priorities in the council's Housing Strategy 2022-2027 are updated on an annual basis to reflect progress on existing actions and the need for new or amended actions. This report covers progress on delivering the action plans since Council approval of the Housing Strategy in July 2022 and the end of 2023/24. The report then proposes updated action plans for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION: That:

(A) The 2024/25 Housing Strategy action plans included in Appendix A be approved.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 To approve updated action plans relating to the four strategic priorities in the council's Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027.

2.0 Background

2.1 At the Executive meeting of 8th February 2022, authority to determine action plans to deliver the objectives in the Housing Strategy, pending its approval by Council was delegated to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health. The Housing Strategy was subsequently approved by Council on 27th July 2022.

2.2 This report records the decision of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health, to approve the action plans for 2024/25 that relate to

each of the four strategic priorities in the Housing Strategy. The action plans are included at Appendix A.

3.0 Reason

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy action plans guide the council's strategic housing activity. There has been much progress on deliver of the action plans since the Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027 was approved by Council in July 2022.
- 3.2 Appendix B presents a detailed update on progress on every action up to the end of 2023/24. The appendix makes clear where an action has either not been met and thus needs to be translated into the 2024/25 or, alternatively, an action needs to be amended in light of work to date or changing evidence and circumstances. In this way, members will be able to see how the 2024/25 action plans build directly on the council in delivering the existing action plans.
- 3.3 It is now imperative to update the action plans in order to maintain focus on delivery of the council's Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Retain the 2023/24 action plans without amendment – NOT RECOMMENDED as many of the constituent actions have been achieved and, without review and amendment, the existing action plans would not reflect new and varied housing pressures.
- 4.2 Dispense entirely with the need for Housing Strategy action plans – NOT RECOMMENDED as this would leave the council – both members and officers – without the ability to determine which housing issues to address and prioritise and would risk the council being unable to meet the most pressing housing needs in the district.

4.3 Approve the updated 2024/25 action plans – RECOMMENDED so as to allow the council to address the most pressing housing needs and pressures.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Failure to keep the Housing Strategy action plans up-to-date could put the council at risk of addressing, or at least not adequately prioritising, the most pressing housing needs and issues in the district. This would have the effect of potentially not addressing the needs of the arguably the most disadvantaged members of the community, notably homeless people, those inadequately housed and those facing debt due to housing costs.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 Authority to determine and approve Housing Strategy action plans has been delegated by the Executive to the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, acting in consultation with the Head of Housing and Health.

6.2 In order to update the existing action plans, the Executive Member brought together a cross-party group of members to review progress on the action plans and suggest any amendments or additions for her consideration. This group met on 23rd October 2023. The Executive Member consider the views raised when subsequently updating the action plans.

6.3 Prior to finalisation of the updated action plans, the Executive Member invited by email any further comments from all the members of the group.

Community Safety

Individual actions in action plans have implications which will be fully addressed as the actions are delivered.

Data Protection

None arising directly.

Equalities

Individual actions in action plans have implications which will be fully addressed as the actions are delivered.

Environmental Sustainability

Individual actions in action plans have implications which will be fully addressed as the actions are delivered.

Financial

Individual actions in action plans have implications which will be fully addressed as the actions are delivered.

Health and Safety

None arising directly.

Human Resources

None arising directly.

Human Rights

None arising directly.

Legal

Individual actions in action plans have implications which will be fully addressed as the actions are delivered.

Specific Wards

None arising directly.

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendix A – 2024/25 Housing Strategy action plans.

Appendix B – Housing Strategy Action Plans progress update at March 2024.

Contact Member

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