

COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | Wednesday 14 th December 2022 |
| Report Subject | Housing Strategy and Action Plan |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) |
| Type of Report | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide Community, Housing & Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the annual update on progress towards meeting the priorities set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24.

The Housing Strategy has an action plan that sets out 3 priorities with key areas for action within in each priority:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | That Community, Housing & Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress against delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan October 2022 and provide feedback and comments. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN |
| 1.01 | Flintshire's Housing Strategy and Action Plan sets out the vision for how the Council with its partners, will deliver affordable housing, provide the relevant support to its residents and ensure it creates sustainable homes. |
| 1.02 | The Housing Strategy and Action Plan |
| 1.03 | <p>The Housing Strategy identifies 3 priorities with key areas for action within in each priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location • Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home • Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes |
| 1.04 | Priority 1 |
| 1.05 | Priority 1 aims to address the lack of supply of affordable housing to meet demand, which is evident on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) for social housing and on the Affordable Housing Register - Tai Teg. |
| 1.06 | The action plan sets out how we aim to ensure that the right type of homes to meet people's needs are provided in the right locations. |
| 1.07 | Priority 2 |
| 1.08 | Priority 2 aims to ensure we have the right type of housing related support in place to prevent issues that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless. |
| 1.09 | The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage their accommodation by assessing and developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independent a life as possible. The priority will focus on prevention and intervention, and complements the priorities set out in the Regional Homelessness Strategy and local action plan. |
| 1.10 | It is, however, broader than homelessness and the action plan identifies interventions for different vulnerable groups including people with specialist needs and older people. |
| 1.11 | Priority 3 |
| 1.12 | Priority 3 aims to improve the quality of existing housing stock and develop innovative, energy efficient new stock to contribute towards target of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases by 3% per year as set out in the Climate Change Strategy for Wales Delivery Plan for Emission Reduction. Decarbonisation is an evolving agenda and Welsh Government has recently revised the Welsh Development Quality |

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| | Requirements (WDQR 2021) that relates to all new affordable housing and that sets out space standards and aims to progress towards homes being carbon zero. A public consultation on proposals for an update to WHQS was open from 11th May to 3rd August 2022. The results are awaited. |
| 1.13 | Progress Action plan October 2022 |
| 1.14 | A progress report was last completed October 2021 and presented to COT and Informal Cabinet. |
| 1.15 | The Action Plan has been updated and responsible officers have provided commentary to explain how the actions are being developed and work is evolving. |
| 1.16 | <p>During 2020/21 and into 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to cause significant challenges in delivering Council services. More particularly serious disruption to the global supply chain and significant increases in labour, material and fuel costs has compounded the impact of Covid housing development. Additionally the emergence of 'the phosphates issue' in the drainage and planning approval process has further impacted on new development.</p> <p>As a result, as had been forecast, the last year has seen a hiatus in new build completions. This is highlighted in the reduction of completed dwellings well below the targets set in Housing Strategy Action plan. The report advises that completions remain below target in the current year but demonstrates how this will increase in future years as the Planned Development Programme (PDP) approved by Welsh Government gears up to around 560 new homes over the next three years.</p> |
| 1.17 | Notwithstanding the Action Plan demonstrates there has been progress and the Council has successfully adapted to new ways of working and achieved continuation of services for Flintshire residents during an unprecedented time of change. |
| 1.18 | The Action Plan will be presented annually to COT and Cabinet and Housing Association partners via the RSL Strategic Housing Group. |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | <p>Revenue: the Housing Strategy Action Plan is a strategic document, there are no implications for the approved revenue budget for either the current financial year or for future financial years.</p> <p>Capital: the Housing Strategy Action Plan is a strategic document, there are no implications for the approved Capital programme relating to the Strategy or Action Plan other than already approved borrowing by NEW Homes and through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing capacity.</p> |

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| | <p>Human Resources: there were some actions within the Action Plan in 2021 that referred to the potential for new posts to be recruited in order to assist in delivering additional services.</p> <p>Interviews for an additional Occupational Therapist to work across the DFG Adaptations and Housing Register Teams in order to work to improve opportunities for applicants on the Specialist Housing register and build links with other departments are due to take place before the end of October 2022 together with interviews in November for an additional Bond Officer. Challenges relating to the recruitment and retention of staff remain.</p> |
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| 3.00 | IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 3.01 | Impact Assessment |
| 3.02 | The Housing Strategy Action Plan is a progress report rather than a new policy, therefore an impact assessment is not deemed as necessary. |
| 3.03 | Risk Management |
| 3.04 | The impact of Covid-19 and the possibility of a combined Covid/Influenza outbreak continues to pose a risk to delivering the Local Housing Strategy actions. This is likely to continue for the remainder of 2022/23. It is difficult to mitigate this risk due to the level of uncertainty coupled with the interdependency on third parties such as Commissioned services, Developers and Contractors. However it is to be hoped that the current immunisation programme will help to mitigate this risk. |
| 3.05 | Post Covid the cost of living pressures, the economic impacts of global shipping disruption and the impacts of the War in Ukraine are seeing significant cost and availability pressures placed on labour and materials. |
| 3.06 | Many of the actions will require funding to progress and therefore should funding be unavailable this will impact deliverability. |
| 3.07 | Environmental impacts of phosphate on drainage systems is impacting in development viability and delaying the planning process. |
| 3.08 | The current cost of living crisis combined with economic and political instability is impacting on costs, confidence and leading to instability in the housing market which may lead to a reduction in house prices. |
| 3.09 | There is a potential risk of increased demand on homeless prevention services if repossessions and notices should start to rise which may also result in increased demand for 'Social' and 'Affordable homes'. |
| 3.10 | The ability to ensure that planned developments meet the standard viability models as required in order to access funding from the Welsh Government may be compromised. |

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| 3.11 | The additional costs of borrowing and servicing debt repayments may impact on RSL's ability to borrow. | |
| 3.12 | Scheme viability may be impacted by rising costs. | |
| 3.13 | Reduction in funding to LA's following more than a decade of austerity pre-COVID together with increases in pay and utility bills along with other existing and emerging cost pressures means Flintshire County Council is potentially facing a significant forecasted budget gap in 2023/24. | |
| 3.14 | The private rented sector has been adversely affected by the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 in addition to the above issues leading landlords to exit the market. | |
| 3.15 | Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact | |
| | Long-term | Positive - more affordable homes will be provided in the right location |
| | Prevention | Preventing - preventing people becoming homeless through ensuring there is relevant services and accommodation |
| | Integration | Positive – the delivery of a range of affordable homes will contribute to integration within communities |
| | Collaboration | Positive – the strategy's premise is on delivering in partnership with relevant stakeholders. |
| | Involvement | Positive - individual decision making will involve all partners with strategic oversight by the Strategic Housing Partnership. |
| | Well-being Goals Impact | |
| | Prosperous Wales | Positive - Providing good quality affordable homes, aiming for low / zero carbon. Also ensuring the homes are in the place that people need them and will meet their housing needs. Maximising local employment and training opportunities for local people. |
| | Resilient Wales | Positive - Developing low / zero carbon homes though adopting modern methods of construction and other relevant technologies. |

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| | Healthier Wales | Positive - Ensuring our homes are fit for purpose and will enable people to stay in their home for longer, and ensuring we have homes that meet the needs of all people in our society including those who are most vulnerable supporting their well-being. |
| | More equal Wales | Positive - Providing good quality and decent homes for the most vulnerable people in society including temporary, single household, adapted etc. |
| | Cohesive Wales | Positive - Contributing to attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities through promoting good design and collaborative delivery. |
| | Vibrant Wales | Positive - Ensuring our communities are diverse through good communication of housing opportunities and support. |
| | Globally responsible Wales | Positive - The outcomes of the strategy will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. |

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| 4.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT |
| 4.01 | Responsible officers who deliver services within the Action Plan have been consulted and asked to provide their feedback against the actions which has formed the basis of the responses in appendix 1. |
| 4.02 | The report is to be presented Community, Housing and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee. |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1 - Housing Strategy Action Plan Progress Report October 2022. |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | Flintshire Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2019 - 2024 Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022 - 2026 Flintshire County Council Prospectus Local Authority prospectus |

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| 7.00 | CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS |
| 7.01 | <p>Contact Officer: Marj Cooper, Housing Strategy Manager Telephone: 01352 70 3721 E-mail: : marj.cooper@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| 8.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 8.01 | <p>Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) Policy – the regional common policy for all major social landlords allocating social housing properties across Flintshire.</p> |
| 8.02 | <p>Social Housing Grant – Welsh Government funding that may be available to housing associations and developing Local Authorities. It is to help fund new affordable housing e.g. for social rent. To qualify for grant homes must comply with Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) and standard viability models.</p> |