

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

10 October 2012

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 HOUSING STRATEGY 2013-2016

Summary

In July 2012 the Strategic Housing Advisory Board endorsed the draft Housing Strategy for the purposes of consultation. Key partners and stakeholders have now been consulted and this report presents an updated version of the strategy for approval and a draft action plan for noting.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Housing Strategy 2013-2016 has been developed in the same format as the 2009-2012 strategy, i.e. brief and succinct. However, unlike the 2009 version, which sat within the Sustainable Community Strategy, this is a stand-alone document.

1.1.2 Despite the considerable challenges that lie ahead, the four key priorities have remained largely unchanged, and we are confident that they will provide a sound framework for the next three years:

- Provision of affordable housing
- Tackling homelessness
- Private sector renewal and energy efficiency
- Assisting vulnerable households.

1.1.3 Detailed objectives that underpin each priority have been identified in a separate action plan, which will, as with the 2009-2012 housing strategy, be reviewed and updated annually; with progress updates submitted to the Strategic Housing Advisory Board.

1.2 Summary of Consultation Responses

1.2.1 Consultation took place between July and September when the draft housing strategy was shared with key partners and stakeholders. It was also made

available on the Council's web site during this period and shared widely with colleagues internally.

- 1.2.2 Comments have been received from four partners: Russet Homes; The Bridge Trust; Kent Youth Offending Service and the Kent County Council Strategic Housing Advisor. The concise approach has been welcomed and the priorities within the strategy unanimously supported. Some minor clarifications have been made as a result of some of the comments but there have been no significant amendments to the original draft.

1.3 Next Steps

- 29 January 2013 – housing strategy and draft action plan to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - 28 March 2013 – housing strategy and draft action plan to Cabinet
 - 16 April 2013 – housing strategy and draft action plan to Council
 - 20 May 2013 – 2013 action plan to Strategic Housing Advisory Board for endorsement; and update on progress against objectives in the 2011 interim action plan for information.
- 1.3.2 It should be noted that since the housing strategy will not be considered by Council until into April 2013, it has been re-titled from Housing Strategy 2012-2015 to Housing Strategy 2013-2016. The accompanying draft action plan is still very much work in progress and it will be finalised in the coming months to take effect from April 2013. The current interim action plan (approved November 2011) will remain the focus of our priorities until that point.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 The Housing Strategy is a statutory requirement under section 7 of the Local Government Act 2003.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None arising from the decision sought in this paper, although as with all Council services, key priorities and associated action plans will need to be kept closely under review in terms of the funding available.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Failure to develop an effective and forward-looking housing strategy and action plan will compromise the Council's ability to meet identified housing need, and to attract the funding necessary for that purpose.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 **CABINET** is **RECOMMENDED** to:

APPROVE the Housing Strategy 2013-2016 at **[Annex 1]**

NOTE the draft action plan at **[Annex 2]**.

Background papers:

contact: Janet Walton

Nil

John Batty

Director of Health and Housing

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The Housing Strategy 2013-2016 has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment on two separate occasions during the course of its development. Firstly, in June 2012 as a pre-consultation draft; and secondly in September 2012, following the close of the consultation period. Furthermore, individual equalities implications are identified in the accompanying action plan.

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment has identified the following positive impacts within the draft housing strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A commitment to ensuring an adequate provision of suitable move-on accommodation for young people leaving accommodation-based support. 2. A commitment to meeting the housing needs of people with a disability. 3. A commitment to supporting the delivery of a scheme for women fleeing violence. 4. A further assessment of the housing needs of the gypsy and traveller community. 5. A commitment to supporting the delivery of new accommodation-based support for people who misuse drugs and alcohol.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.