

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

26 March 2013

Joint Report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for 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 were consulted and an updated version of the Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2012 and by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2013.

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 will be 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 Consultation 2012

- 1.2.1 Consultation took place between July and September 2012 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 were received from four partners: Russet Homes; The Bridge Trust; Kent Youth Offending Service and the Kent County Council Strategic Housing Advisor. The concise approach was welcomed and the priorities within the strategy unanimously supported. Some minor clarifications were made as a result of some of the comments, but there were no significant amendments to the original draft.
- 1.2.3 Since the Cabinet meeting in October, some further minor amendments have been made to the draft strategy to reflect the most recent developments to the welfare reform agenda. The need to respond to this agenda is also reflected in the draft action plan at **[Annex 2]**.

1.3 Next Steps

- 16 April 2013 – draft housing strategy 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. A first (and as yet incomplete) version of the 2013 action plan is attached as background information at **[Annex 2]**.

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 refer the Housing Strategy 2013-2016 at [Annex 1] for **APPROVAL** by the **COUNCIL**.

Background papers:

contact: Janet Walton

Nil

John Batty
Director of Health and Housing

Councillor Mrs Jill Anderson
Cabinet Member for 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. Individual equalities implications will also be identified in the annual housing strategy 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.