

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

**7 November 2011**

**Joint Report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for  
Housing**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken  
by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 HOUSING STRATEGY 2012**

**Summary**

**This report summarises the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan that was approved by the Board in November 2010.**

**It also recognises that the Housing Strategy is due for review during 2012 and proposes that this be deferred until after the enactment of the Localism Bill and the publication of the Government's Housing Strategy which is scheduled for autumn 2011.**

**1.1 Housing Strategy 2009-2012: Action Plan – progress update**

1.1.1 Progress against each objective in the action plan is summarised at **[Annex 1]**.

1.1.2 The following points are of particular significance:

- a further 169 new affordable homes were delivered in the borough during 2010-11 (objective 1)
- a further planning application has been submitted to Kent County Council for the expansion of the Coldharbour gypsy and traveller site which will be determined in November(objective 7)
- The Local Investment Plan (LIP) process was completed during 2011 (objective 11)
- The West Kent Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 was approved in July 2011 and is now being implemented (objective 14)
- despite the growing pressures on the service, the number of households in temporary accommodation has been kept to a minimum, with a total of 15 at the end of September (objective 22).

## **1.2 Housing Strategy - 2012 onwards**

- 1.2.1 The 2009-2012 Housing Strategy was approved during autumn 2009 and sits within the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.2.2 Ordinarily, the strategy would be due for a review and update in time for the early part of 2012-13. Prior to final approval it would be the subject of a full public consultation.
- 1.2.3 However, this is a time of significant change to social housing policy, which will inevitably influence the direction that the next housing strategy will take. It would be imprudent to develop a new strategy in advance of the enactment of the Localism Bill, the launch of the Government's national housing strategy (due in the autumn) and also before the Welfare Reform Bill becomes law.
- 1.2.4 Consequently it is proposed that the review of the housing strategy be deferred until later in 2012, and a clearer set of timescales will be presented to the Board at its meeting in February 2012. A reviewed action plan has been developed to cover the interim period, and is attached at **[Annex 2]**.
- 1.2.5 It is expected that the reviewed strategy will be developed in a very similar format to the existing version, i.e. brief and succinct with a separate and detailed action plan which will be reviewable annually. However, it is likely that that the reviewed strategy will be a separate document as opposed to part of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is because local authorities are expected to be relieved of their duty to develop a community strategy in the near future.

## **1.3 Legal Implications**

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

## **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 None arising from this report.

## **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 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 necessary funding for that purpose.

## **1.6 Equality Impact Assessment**

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

## **1.7 Recommendations**

- 1.7.1 **CABINET is RECOMMENDED to:**

**NOTE** the progress update at **[Annex 1]**.

**ENDORSE** the approach that is being proposed at section 1.2 of this report with regard to the development of the 2012 Housing Strategy

**ENDORSE** the interim housing strategy action plan that is attached at **[Annex 2]**.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Janet Walton

Nil

John Batty  
Director of Health and Housing

Councillor Jean Atkinson  
Cabinet Member for Housing

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
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 currently Housing Strategy is unchanged at this point in time, but when reviewed, will be subject to a full equality impact assessment.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	See comment above.
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.*