

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

**25 February 2020**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 HOUSING STRATEGY PROJECT PLAN**

**This report outlines the proposal for TMBC to have a Housing Strategy outlining our strategic approach to Housing delivery in the Borough. This report provides a project plan for a TMBC Housing Strategy for members review and approval.**

**Future financial implications may include commissioning costs for research related to the strategy but these are not yet known.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Currently TMBC has a West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2016-2021) in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. This Strategy outlines four key ambitions to guide work over the life of the strategy:

- Ambition 1 – Improving the availability of housing for all and preventing homelessness
- Ambition 2 – Improving housing supply
- Ambition 3 – Improving the standard of housing
- Ambition 4 – Improving the health and wellbeing of our residents.

1.1.2 Members endorsed the West Kent Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 in November 2017. With the current West Kent Strategy running to 2021 it is timely to develop a TMBC Housing Strategy, to reflect local priorities.

1.1.3 Sevenoaks District Council launched their Housing Strategy 'Wellbeing Starts at Home' in 2017.

**1.2 Reasons for a Tonbridge and Malling Housing Strategy**

1.2.1 A Housing Strategy for Tonbridge and Malling will set out the Council's priorities and approach to housing in the Borough. Recent legislative and policy changes have created a challenging housing context to which we need to respond appropriately for our level of need and changing demand profile.

Adopting a Strategy will help shape our strategic response to focus limited resources efficiently and establish priorities in a local context.

- 1.2.2 Having a housing strategy will give the opportunity to establish our housing priorities, plan for meeting current and future need and govern the effective delivery of housing related services. A Strategy will also mean we develop an action plan and can monitor delivery against priorities and targets.
- 1.2.3 **Annex 1** shows the Housing Strategy Project Plan for approval.
- 1.2.4 The Housing Strategy will be an overarching document setting TMBC's priorities and approach to housing. Officers have an ongoing programme of updating and developing a range of policies and procedures to deliver on strategic objectives.
- 1.2.5 TMBC will continue to work with local authority partners including Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council through joint projects.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

- 1.3.1 The Strategy will be produced in pursuit of the delivery of our mandatory and statutory functions under the Housing Acts.
- 1.3.2 There is a requirement for TMBC to have a Homelessness Strategy and a Rough Sleeper Strategy; these elements will be incorporated into the Housing Strategy.

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

- 1.4.1 It is intended that the majority of the work required to produce a Housing Strategy be delivered in house. Where specific pieces of work are required, these will be built into budget processes, as the Housing Needs research was in the 2019/20 budget.
- 1.4.2 Having a robust Housing Strategy in place that focusses on local need can help with future funding opportunities.

### **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 Not having an up to date Strategy could, in the case of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in particular, put TMBC at risk of challenge.

### **1.6 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.6.1 An EqIA will be undertaken to accompany the production of the strategy document.

### **1.7 Policy Considerations**

- 1.7.1 Communications – the Housing Strategy will reflect the requirements of the Corporate Communications Guidelines.

- 1.7.2 Equalities/Diversity – an EqlA will help us consider how this policy applies to the Housing Strategy work.
- 1.7.3 A policy and procedure programme will ensure all necessary policies and supporting documents are updated or developed to deliver the strategic objectives of the Strategy.
- 1.7.4 Having a Housing Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on delivering aims of existing policies such as:
  - Healthy Lifestyles
  - Health and Safety.

## 1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the Housing Strategy Project Plan [**Annex 1**].

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

Background papers:

contact: Gillian Aylett

Nil

Eleanor Hoyle  
Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health