TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

18 July 2023

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 UPDATE AND DRAFT YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN

1.1 Summary

1.1.1 The Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027, adopted in July 2022, sets out our priorities and strategic approach to housing in the borough.

1.1.2 The Strategy outlines objectives for each priority, which will be delivered and monitored through annual action plans. This report provides a progress update about delivery of the year 1 action plan and a draft year 2 action plan for approval.

1.2 Year 1 action plan

1.2.1 A copy of the year 1 action plan is in **Annex 1** of this report, with a RAG rating to indicate progress.

1.2.2 A full review of the Housing Allocations Policy has been carried out with a new Policy implemented, this was an action for objective 1.1.

1.2.3 The Housing Assistance Policy has been amended, completing an action for objective 1.4.

1.2.4 The Housing Needs Research, an action for objective 3.1, has been completed with a report issued in August 2022. The research report has been included in the evidence for the local plan in September 2022 and staff and member briefings were held by arc4 consultancy in October 2022.

1.2.5 Actions currently showing as in progress or at risk of not being delivered (amber and red) have been considered for inclusion in the year 2 action plan.

1.3 Year 2 draft action plan

1.3.1 A draft year 2 action plan is provided in **Annex 2** of this report outlining actions for each priority of the Housing Strategy.

1.3.2 Key Actions in year 2 include:

- Development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan

- Develop and implement an Empty Homes Policy

- Investigate occupation levels (under-occupation and overcrowding) to inform projects to encourage and enable downsizing or mutual exchange

- Sustainable Temporary Accommodation delivery options project, through HAP (Housing Advisor Programme) funding and related development of a Temporary Accommodation Delivery Strategy.

1.4   Legal Implications

1.4.1   The Homelessness Act 2022 requires local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their district and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results every five years. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 delivery plan requires a rough sleeping element to be included in local authority homelessness strategies, with annual action plans. The draft year 2 action plan includes development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

1.5   Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1   Delivery of the action plan will be informed by budgetary considerations.

1.5.2   Priorities set out in the Housing Strategy and the agreed actions in the action plan to deliver objectives of the Strategy help focus resources.

1.6   Risk Assessment

1.6.1   Not having an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping could put TMBC at risk of challenge.

1.7   Policy Considerations

1.7.1   Policy work is included in annual action plans to ensure all necessary policies and supporting documents are updated or developed to deliver the strategic objectives of the Strategy. As part of delivery the year 1 action plan the Housing Allocations Policy was reviewed and a Housing Needs report completed.

1.8   Recommendations

1.8.1   It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **NOTE** progress on delivery of the year 1 action plan for the Housing Strategy as summarised in Annex 1 and recommend to Cabinet that the year 2 action plan in Annex 2 is **APPROVED**.

The Director for 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/Linda Hibbs

Nil

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