

SUBJECT: HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-25 – RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DRAFT

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: KATE BELL, HOUSING STRATEGY OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Policy Scrutiny Committee on the results of the external consultation on the draft Housing Strategy 2020-25.

2. Background

- 2.1 A local authority strategy is an overarching cross-tenure document which identifies local housing needs and sets out how these needs will be met. Housing need is used in its broadest sense, it is not just the need for new affordable housing, but for all things housing including: growth; regeneration; and neighbourhood renewal, to ensure that a local authority has a balanced and sustainable housing market that meets the needs of its residents.
- 2.2 Member briefings took place on 3 and 4 July 2019 which sought to provide an update on the emerging housing needs evidence, Lincoln's current housing market, housing stock condition and the opportunities for delivering new homes. In order to ensure all Members had the opportunity to attend, both workshops followed the same agenda. In total, 28 Members attended both workshops. A key outcome of the briefings was the need to provide further information on demand and need for affordable housing.
- 2.3 A follow up Members' workshop took place on 8 January 2020 where officers discussed the following themes in more detail to understand Housing Strategy priorities over the next five years:
- Maximising the supply of affordable housing;
 - Maximising our existing housing assets;
 - Estate improvement and resident involvement;
 - Allocating council housing to those in greatest need; and
 - Enabling sustainable tenancies.
- 2.4 The feedback from this workshop has shaped the content of the draft Housing Strategy, which also considers empirical information, the existing local policy context, the emerging response to Covid-19 and the current recession.

3. Draft Housing Strategy 2020-25

- 3.1 To complement Vision 2025, Let's deliver quality housing, the objectives of the Housing Strategy for 2020-25 are:

- Providing housing which meets the varied needs of our residents;
- Building Sustainable Communities; and
- Improving Housing standards for all.

4. Consultation process and feedback

4.1 The Consultation for the draft Housing Strategy was launched on the 26th October and published on the council website www.lincoln.gov.uk/housingstrategy inviting people to submit their comments up until the 11th of December 2020. The Council's Communications team has supported the consultation by circulating a Housing Strategy graphic to promote the consultation via the council's social media platforms. In addition, an email was sent to the following contacts signposting them to the Housing Strategy web page and inviting comments:-

- City of Lincoln elected Members
- Developer, Agents and all Housing Associations operating and wishing to operate in the City
- Lincoln Tenants' Panel
- Sincil and Birchwood CLTs
- Equality and Diversity group contacts
- Greater Lincolnshire Affordable Housing group members
- Housing and Health contacts at Lincolnshire County Council.
- Homes England
- Residents' Groups
- University of Lincoln Facilities Management
- Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU)

4.2 Feedback has been very positive regarding the detailed evidence base within the draft Housing Strategy and the range of actions proposed to meet Lincoln's housing need over the next five years. Specific areas that were commented on are outlined in more detail below.

4.2.1 Provision of student accommodation.

Comments from residents have raised concern over the extent of student residential schemes that have emerged over recent years in the city centre. The draft Housing Strategy recognises the need for student residential schemes located close to the University of Lincoln and BGU in order to reduce the concentration of HMOs in city centre locations, such as Sincil Bank and the West End. The draft Housing Strategy acknowledges that purpose built student accommodation and student demand will mean that by 2026 the demand of HMOs from students will have greatly reduced, allowing for the reintroduction of family housing and more balanced residential neighbourhoods. Both the UoL and BGU have advised that, on completion of the Medical School, they currently have no plans for further expansion within the timeframe of the Housing Strategy and pipeline student residential sites will adequately meet demand over the next five years.

4.2.2 City Centre living and mixed use residential areas

Homes England has provided positive feedback on proposals for Rookery Lane, Hermit Street and Queen Elizabeth Road, along with the opportunities for mixed use, city centre housing sites for key workers such as the Hive, Tentercroft Street.

4.2.3 Community Land Trusts

The Sincil and Birchwood CLT have responded positively to the proposal in the Housing Strategy for CoLC to continue to work with them to help bring forward more affordable housing in the city.

4.2.4 Private Rental Accommodation

Comments suggest that there is limited scope in the draft Housing Strategy for improving the standard and provision of the private rental sector. The evidence base for private rental provision in the city could be explored further, this would be useful especially in relation to housing needs for key workers. The Housing Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated to reflect any changes to government policies or local housing need.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's drive economic growth

Housing is a key component of economic growth – the right housing attracts people to an area and housing development and regeneration supports the economy. The draft Housing Strategy recognises the importance of housing growth, city centre living, facilitating new build housing on Council land and housing renewal and regeneration to ensure sustainable communities.

5.2 Let's reduce inequality

The draft Housing Strategy has an underlying imperative to ensure all the City's residents have the opportunity to access housing which meets their needs, thus supporting equality of opportunity and seeking to tackle deprivation as residents have affordable, safe and suitable accommodation.

5.3 Let's deliver quality housing

The draft Housing Strategy is based on this priority.

5.4 Let's enhance our remarkable place

Urban regeneration to ensure our city centre remains vibrant and facilitating sustainable communities where people feel safe and want to live are key elements of the draft Housing Strategy.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

The consultation draft Housing Strategy has no direct financial implications. Subject to the strategy being approved, each development will be subject to a full options appraisal and individual Executive approval prior to funds being committed.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal or procurement implications of the consultation draft Housing Strategy as it is an overarching strategic document, for which it is considered best

practice to consult upon with a range of stakeholders including housing associations, developers and neighbouring local authorities.

6.3

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

6.4 **Significant Community Impact**

The draft Housing Strategy sets out the Council's overarching vision for housing for the City of Lincoln.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

- 1) To progress a new housing strategy which reflects the local policy context and considers the current and emerging housing needs.
- 2) To begin to produce a revised housing strategy in April 2021 as the current strategy expires in March 2022.

7.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

The preferred approach, option 1, seeks to mitigate the risks associated with option 2, which include the failure to respond to the current economic climate and emerging changes to social policy.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Policy Scrutiny Committee are asked for comments on the consultation responses following the external consultation and to recommend that the Housing Strategy proceed to Executive in February 2021 for approval.

How many appendices does the report contain?

None

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

Kate Bell, Housing Strategy Officer
Telephone (01522) 87393311