

SUBJECT: CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-25

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: DAREN TURNER, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To request the Executive to approve the draft Housing Strategy 2020-25 (attached at Appendix I) and recommend its adoption by full Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 A local authority housing 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.

3. Development of the Housing Strategy 2020-25

- 3.1 The review of the Housing Strategy was initiated in July 2019 with the delivery of Member workshops 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. This resulted in the Council undertaking further housing needs research. A follow up Members' workshop took place in January 2020 where officers discussed the following themes in more detail to inform the Housing Strategy's 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.
- 3.2 The feedback from the workshop held in January 2020 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.
- 3.3 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 Prior to external consultation the draft Housing Strategy was presented to Policy Scrutiny on 6 October 2020 (the minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix II). One housing management question was raised, the other question related to City centre which is reflected in the draft Housing Strategy.
- 4.2 Consultation on the draft Housing Strategy was undertaken from the end of October to mid-December 2020. A range of stakeholders were consulted, this included housing associations, Homes England, developers, residents' and tenants' groups, the Lincoln Tenants' Panel, Birchwood CLT, Sincil CLT, the County Council and neighbouring district councils and local universities.
- 4.3 Written consultation responses were limited, with the vast majority of feedback received verbally. Very positive feedback was received on the Strategy's evidence base and the range of actions it proposes to meet Lincoln's housing need over the next five years. However, concerns were raised as to the extent of city centre student accommodation, including HMOs, that has emerged over recent years. Other feedback requested that the draft Housing Strategy needed to do more to improve the standard and provision of the private rental sector, especially in relation to meeting the housing needs for key workers.
- 4.4 Further to external consultation the draft Housing Strategy was presented to Policy Scrutiny on 12 January 2021 (the minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix III). The majority of questions related to homelessness and operational housing management. Members were keen to ensure that the draft Housing Strategy sought to deliver sufficient three and four-bedroom family homes, and were reassured that the draft Housing Strategy is based on the outcome of a comprehensive housing needs survey, which will be subject to review.

5. Changes and updates to draft Housing Strategy

- 5.1 In response to specific consultation feedback, the draft Housing Strategy now includes the below additions:

Paragraph 3.11, "It is recognised that the private rented sector has a vital role in meeting housing need. However, the current offer in the City is both limited and not always affordable to households on low incomes. There are a number of city centre locations where a quality affordable private rented housing offer would provide accommodation for a range of households, including key workers. Therefore, the Council is to actively promote and facilitate opportunities for the provision of a quality private rented housing offer which is affordable to households on a range of incomes".

Paragraph 3.22, "The development of purpose built student residential schemes located close to the University of Lincoln and Bishop Grosseteste University is essential in order to reduce the concentration of HMOs in city centre locations. Both the University of Lincoln and Bishop Grosseteste University have advised

that, further to the 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”.

- 5.2 In addition to responding to consultation feedback, the draft Housing Strategy’s evidence base has been updated to ensure it reflects the latest statistical datasets.

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1 The Housing Strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis and will be subject to an annual review. This will ensure progress is made in delivering priorities and allow the Strategy to reflect the changing policy agenda and to respond to meeting housing need.

7. Strategic Priorities

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 Let’s deliver quality housing

The draft Housing Strategy is based on this priority.

7.4 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.

8. Organisational Impacts

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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

An Equality with Human Rights Analysis has been undertaken, this is attached at Appendix IV. In addition, an accessible version of the Housing Strategy has been produced.

8.4 Significant Community Impact

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

9. Risk Implications

9.1 (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.

9.2 (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.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 The Executive to approve the draft Housing Strategy 2020-25 and to recommend its adoption by full Council.

How many appendices does the report contain?

Four

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

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