

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 16 January 2018

BY: Deputy Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Consultative Draft Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the key elements of the Consultative Draft Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 and seek Cabinet approval of the consultation exercise.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the consultation of the Draft Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for their area, supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The Act also states that the LHS must be supported by an assessment of housing provision and related services, that it must be submitted to Scottish Ministers, and that local authorities must keep their LHS under review.

This LHS sets out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services across East Lothian from 2018-23. The LHS is the sole strategic document for housing in East Lothian, bringing together a wide range of housing related priorities into one place and enabling a co-ordinated response in terms of action. The LHS plays a number of important roles, including:

- Setting out the strategic direction of the Council and its partners to delivering high quality housing and related services, to meet identified need across the county.

- Outlining the Council's approach to meeting its statutory housing responsibilities i.e. in relation to fuel poverty, house condition and homelessness.
 - Summarising the response to national housing priorities i.e. the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS); town centre living; reduction in carbon emissions and supporting the development of sustainable communities, while also reflecting the needs and priorities of the local area.
 - Demonstrating how housing can contribute to improvements in health and wellbeing and influencing the effective integration of health and social care.
- 3.2 The Consultative Draft LHS has been developed in line with Scottish Government Guidance - *'Guidance for local authorities to assist in the preparation of Local Housing Strategies'* (August 2014).
- 3.3 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to consult on their proposed LHS. To inform preparation of this Consultative Draft LHS, a number of opportunities for consultation and engagement have been put in place from an early stage, to facilitate a co-production approach where possible, using the 'People's Voice' framework. This process commenced mid-2014 and a range of views have been captured and considered. The proposed strategic vision and corresponding priority outcomes were developed through early consultation. An options appraisal process subsequently enabled people to consider proposed actions to deliver priority outcomes and ensure the strategic vision is met. A comprehensive explanation of the engagement process is set out at Appendix 2: 'You Said, We Did' of the Consultative Draft LHS 2018-23.
- 3.4 The Consultative Draft LHS sets out key housing issues and challenges in themed chapters as follows:
- Sustainable and Vibrant Communities – Focuses on the concept of 'place-making', creating sustainable, well-designed places and homes which meet people's needs and support well-being. In accordance with Guidance, there is specific emphasis on town centres and rural areas.
 - Supply of Housing and Access to Housing – Focusses on increasing the supply of housing, particularly the delivery of affordable housing¹ and improving access to housing across all tenures.
 - Homelessness – Focusses on preventing and alleviating homelessness and the provision of support where appropriate.
 - Specialist Provision and Independent Living – Supports the integration of health, social care and housing, to enable people to remain in their own

¹ Significant numbers of affordable housing units will be developed in response to the LHS, of which social rented housing will be the priority.

homes where appropriate and sets out plans to support the delivery of specialist provision.

- Stock Condition, Energy Efficiency and Housing Management – Focusses on improving stock condition and energy efficiency across all tenures, in accordance with national targets.
- Fuel Poverty and Climate Change – Focusses on the housing contribution to climate change and reducing fuel poverty in accordance with national targets.

3.5 Taking account of the key housing issues identified; changing strategic planning framework; local context and feedback from local people and communities, the proposed strategic vision for housing is that by 2023, East Lothian will have:

‘Healthy, sustainable homes in vibrant communities, that meet increasing levels of need, reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing across all stages of people’s lives’.

3.6 To underpin this vision, six priority outcomes have been identified to guide activity:

Priority Outcome 1: Sustainable and vibrant communities are created and maintained.

Priority Outcome 2: The supply of housing is increased and access to housing improved across all tenures.

Priority Outcome 3: A wider range of specialist housing is provided to enable independent living where appropriate.

Priority Outcome 4: The condition, energy efficiency and where appropriate the management of existing stock is improved.

Priority Outcome 5: Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, with appropriate support in place to promote positive health outcomes and tenancy sustainment.

Priority Outcome 6: Fuel poverty is reduced and climate targets exceeded.

3.7 An action plan underpins these priorities, which will direct and target resource and activity over the period of the LHS. The proposed draft priority outcomes, key issues and challenges and corresponding actions are set out at Appendix 1 to this report. A full copy of the Consultative Draft LHS has been lodged in the Members’ Library.

3.8 Following approval from Cabinet, the proposed consultative Draft LHS will be formally consulted on for a six week period from 22 January to 2 March 2018.

3.9 The LHS is subject to a peer review process led by the Scottish Government. The Consultative Draft LHS will be submitted to the Scottish Government to trigger this process.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and where negative impacts have been identified, mitigating actions have been put in place.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Integrated Impact Assessment Form

AUTHOR'S NAME	Nicky Sandford
DESIGNATION	Senior Strategy Officer
CONTACT INFO	Ext - 7592
DATE	04 December 2017

Appendix 1: LHS Priority Outcomes; Key Issues and Challenges and Actions

<p>Priority Outcome 1: Sustainable and vibrant communities are created and maintained</p>
<p>Key Issues and Challenges</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centres present broadly similar issues i.e. mainly disrepair in private housing; poor stock condition; poor energy efficiency and high levels of fuel poverty, particularly in private rented housing and tenements in multiple ownership. • Most of the town centres contain empty buildings which pose potential opportunities for residential use, although in contrast North Berwick town centre has a relatively high proportion of second homes, with buildings generally in use. • The historic character of town centres means there are limited opportunities for new housing. • Building local capacity to regenerate areas is key. • Rural areas are characterised by high house prices, high demand for housing and higher levels of household expenditure on essentials. • Supporting sustainable and vibrant communities will be critical to enabling independent living for a range of groups i.e. older people, people with a learning disability and people with a mental health condition
<p>Actions</p>
<p>Theme 1: Strategic Approach to Sustainable and Vibrant Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage town centre growth, by supporting local economic development activity - Continue to support the town centre first principle - Ensure housing has a key role to play in regenerating town centres - Improve knowledge and understanding of town centre data, i.e. stock condition, energy efficiency, fuel poverty, empty homes etc. - Ensure housing plays a key role in relation to major proposed flood prevention work i.e. in the Musselburgh area to maximise opportunities for town centre living
<p>Theme 2: Delivery of Quality Sustainable Housing in Town Centres / Rural Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in affordable housing development in town centres via the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) - Bring empty town centre properties back into use for affordable housing - Increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas. - Bring empty rural properties back into use for affordable housing - Explore opportunities in relation to community land ownership and community led housing including custom build and self-build housing - Ensure housing plays a key role in the planned regeneration of Civic Square, Tranent in the Fa'side area, to maximise opportunities for town centre living

- Maximise opportunities to restore historic buildings including residential homes i.e. through Town Heritage Initiative funding

Theme 3: Supporting People and Communities

- Support community led activity that seeks to improve town centres / rural areas
- Improve digital infrastructure to support independent living for vulnerable groups via telecare / telehealth

Priority Outcome 2: The supply of housing is increased and access to housing improved across all tenures

Key Issues and challenges

- There are significant levels of need for housing of all tenures
- The HNDA is carried out at a regional level, however more detailed intelligence is required at a local level to ensure local need and demand is met and to promote sustainable and balanced communities
- Private housing is expensive and combined with limitations on borrowing, can make it difficult to access owner occupation, particularly for first-time buyers
- Legislative change in relation to homeless households and temporary accommodation puts increased pressure on affordable housing
- Rural areas face particular difficulties in relation to the delivery of affordable housing provision
- Infrastructure constraints exist around education and transportation
- The availability of land within the control of those delivering affordable housing, is a significant constraint in relation to increasing the supply of affordable housing
- House prices in rural areas can be higher than in the main settlements, exacerbated by households typically spending more on everyday requirements.
- House prices in the North Berwick Coastal area are significantly higher than other parts of the county. This impacts upon ability to purchase on the open market
- Legislative change, resulting in an increasingly regulated private rented sector may put pressure on the supply of private rented housing stock
- There are currently only a small number of mid-market rent properties in East Lothian, with increasing demand for this type of housing
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing has yet to be adopted as part of the Local Development Plan. This will provide more clarity for developers to enable the delivery of affordable housing

Actions

Theme 1: Clear strategic direction for housing investment

- Prepare a revised Housing Need & Demand Assessment (SESplan HNDA3) for the South-East Scotland (SESplan) area
- Agree Housing Supply Targets for SESplan HNDA3
- Develop a Local Investment Framework to improve knowledge and understanding of local areas.
- Complete Supplementary Planning Guidance for Affordable Housing
- Improve knowledge of housing need & demand in rural areas

Theme 2: Increase Housing Supply

- Deliver 189 units of affordable housing per annum as per Housing Supply Target
- Maximise opportunities to accelerate affordable housing
- Work with RSL partners to deliver affordable housing
- Develop a construction framework to help accelerate delivery on secured sites
- Explore alternative / innovative financial models
- Maximise Scottish Government subsidy in affordable housing in East Lothian
- Deliver the Councils own new build programme
- Take a strategic approach to bringing empty properties back into use including consideration of CPOs
- Explore opportunities for the effective support of community-led housing / self-build / custom build
- Ensure mainstream accommodation is future proofed as far as possible, built to a standard to accommodate wheelchair users & capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs

Theme 3: Improve access to housing

- Consider applying to Scottish Ministers for the designation of a 'rent pressure zone'
- Explore opportunities for increasing mid-market rent and other intermediate tenures
- Review existing allocations policy

Priority Outcome 3: Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, with appropriate support in place to promote positive health outcomes and tenancy sustainment

Key Issues and Challenges

- The decline in homeless presentations from 2010 has levelled off and appears to be moving into a position where applications are increasing.
- The level of demand for temporary accommodation is such that the Council remains dependent on B&B for temporary accommodation, with increasing use of such accommodation and households staying in B&B for longer periods.
- Despite high levels of housing allocations to homeless households, waiting times for re-housing are increasing significantly and as a result, the length of time spent in temporary accommodation is increasing.
- The Scottish Government's Unsuitable Accommodation Order is being amended to reduce the time that households subject to the Order (households with children or a pregnant family member) can remain in B&B accommodation from 14 to 7 days. This places greater pressure on the Council to ensure that families are moved on quickly from B&B accommodation
- The turnover in temporary accommodation has slowed down as homeless households await an offer of permanent housing
- The impact of the roll out of full service Universal Credit has significantly reduced housing opportunities for homeless households.

Actions

Theme 1 – Homelessness Prevention

- Deliver housing options training toolkit
- Create a media campaign around the benefits of Housing Options
- Increase prevention work, ensuring homeless households are targeted through joint working
- Conduct a scoping exercise to consider effective use of the private rented sector in preventing and alleviating homelessness, to include a review of rent deposit scheme and private sector leasing
- Continue monitoring the effects of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit, introducing mitigating measures where possible to ensure no-one becomes homeless as a result.
- Review protocol arrangements for young people leaving care
- Implement a homelessness awareness / training programme

Theme 2 – Support for Homeless Households

- Provide pre-tenancy checks to identify where applicants require additional support
- Maximise support available to homeless households living in temporary accommodation including assistance for Universal Credit claimants.
- Explore opportunities to link with local churches i.e. development of starter pack scheme
- Strengthen links between education and employability services for homeless people
- Explore opportunities for collaborative working with public health / East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership

Theme 3 – Temporary Accommodation

- Carry out a whole systems review of temporary accommodation (to include the efficiency and effectiveness of temporary accommodation useage and processes), exploring innovative / alternative forms of accommodation (including hostel provision) and prepare a temporary accommodation strategy
- Re-designate additional units of mainstream housing to be used as temporary accommodation via a combination of re-designation and open market acquisitions
- Explore opportunities for increasing temporary accommodation stock with RSL's
- Increase supply of larger family sized temporary accommodation units
- Closely monitor & evaluate demand & supply of temporary accommodation to avoid beaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order

Theme 4 – Permanent Accommodation / Tenancy Sustainment

- Explore 'Housing First' model to ensure appropriate specialist support is available for homeless people with complex needs
- Explore flat-share opportunities for young single people living in temporary accommodation
- Focus the allocations review on homelessness pressures i.e. removal of temporary accommodation points, review choice options (areas, house

types) & review the proportion of allocations to homeless applicants to ensure targets appropriately reflect demand and support balanced communities

Priority Outcome 4: A wider range of specialist housing is provided to enable independent living where appropriate

Key Issues and challenges – Older People

- There is a lack of consistent data collection which needs to be improved for strategic planning purposes
- The population of older people (pensionable age and over) is projected to increase by 41.9% by 2039
- The North Berwick Coastal area is projected to have significantly higher levels of older people aged 85+ relative to other areas
- For those older people for whom it is not appropriate to remain living in their own homes, it is evident that current levels of specialist accommodation are inadequate to meet existing needs
- There is a shift towards higher, more complex needs in sheltered housing, with some very frail older people with higher needs in sheltered developments
- A significant proportion of older people live in owner-occupied housing, which is often not future proofed, not built to a standard to accommodate wheelchair users and not always capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs
- Providing care to older people living in remote rural areas particularly in the East of the county poses issues in enabling people to live independently in the community (care force predominantly resides in the west with transport being an added complication)
- There is a growing need for adaptations for older people across all tenures. In 2015/16, £1.2 million was spent on council and private sector adaptations and with an ageing population, the demand is likely to continue to increase.
- Circa 2,000 older people aged 65+ are living in smaller rural villages across the county
- There are currently no specialist housing advice services targeted specifically at older people.
- It is recognised there is a need to reduce reliance on acute hospital provision, prevent unplanned hospital admissions and reduce delayed discharge.

Actions

- Develop 300 units of specialist accommodation for older people over a five-year period to 2023 (60 units per annum). This could include care homes, extra care housing or sheltered housing, which could be purpose built or remodelled from existing provision & developed by the public or private sector.
- Carry out a comprehensive review of sheltered housing
- Explore potential models of rural care provision to enable more effective delivery of care
- Investigate the implications of significant projected numbers of older couple households for specialist housing
- Ensure mainstream accommodation is future proofed as far as possible, built to a standard to accommodate wheelchair users & capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs

- Embed a culture change in relation to a more proactive, preventative approach to adaptations i.e. early identification of aids required to prevent delayed discharge.
- Target the provision of housing information and advice at younger older people, with housing health checks carried out from age 55 across all tenures
- Target resources more effectively in relation to the provision of practical assistance & low-level interventions / support
- Increase capacity building within communities to support older people to remain in their own homes for longer & live independently i.e. community health; day activities; befriending services; respite care & support for carers.

Key Issues and Challenges – People with a Physical Disability

- Existing levels of adaptations are insufficient to meet need and demand
- Behaviour change in relation to early consideration of health and housing requirements can be challenging

Actions

- Ensure mainstream accommodation is future proofed as far as possible, built to a standard to accommodate wheelchair users & capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs
- Increase levels of adaptations across all tenures
- Improve information and advice in relation to early consideration of aids and adaptations among homeowners
- Review existing adaptations processes to ensure they are efficient and effective

Key Issues and Challenges – People with a Mental Health Condition

- A lack of one-bedroom affordable housing is impacting upon people with a mental health condition, causing blockages in supported accommodation
- Difficulties are evident in encouraging people to engage with care packages
- A very small number of challenging & complex hospital discharges present challenges for community living
- Circa 10 units are required over a 5-year period to meet existing need & projected demand in the form of small-scale core & cluster accommodation

Actions

- Develop 8 units of core & cluster housing per annum primarily for people with a learning disability, to also accommodate people with a physical disability, mental health condition / people with autism where appropriate
- Link core & cluster housing to place-making on a small scale i.e. promoting health & well-being, resilience & employability

Key Issues and Challenges – People with Autism

- Anxiety exists around young adults with autism being able to live independently
- Place-making and the environment is critical to positive housing outcomes
- Small-scale core & cluster accommodation is required to meet high level needs

Actions

- Develop a practical guide to housing needs of people with autism for housing providers

-Establish a flagging system within the Council's Housing unit to alert staff to people with autism, to link to the health impact assessment and enable reasonable adjustments to be made

Key Issues and Challenges – People with a Learning Disability

- Numbers of adults with a learning disability are increasing at a faster rate than the population overall
- Increasing numbers of older adults with a learning disability & a marked increase in young people with a learning disability & very complex needs are evident
- A very small number of challenging & complex hospital discharges present significant challenges for community living
- Anxiety exists around adults with a learning disability being cared for at home by ageing parents & their inability to cope as they become increasingly old & frail
- Limited housing choices & difficulties navigating the housing system can be intensified for people with a learning disability
- Considering a move out of the parental home can be stressful without the facility to initially trial independent living
- There is an ageing generation of carers & lack of strategic planning around this area
- Circa 40 units are required over a 5-year period to meet existing need & projected demand in the form of small-scale core & cluster accommodation

Actions

- Establish a strategic approach to planning for housing for people with a learning disability to include developing procedures & protocols
- Prepare a housing information & advice handbook covering all tenures for people with a learning disability and / or autism
- Carry out a detailed health impact assessment on existing housing policies where appropriate
- Investigate the feasibility of developing short-stay accommodation to enable people with a learning disability to gain independent living skills
- Develop 8 units of core & cluster housing per annum for people with a learning disability (to also cover people with a physical disability, autism & mental health conditions where appropriate)
- Link core & cluster housing to place-making on a small scale i.e. promoting health & well-being, resilience & employability

Key Issues and Challenges – Women at risk of Domestic Violence

- Refuge accommodation is insufficient to meet need and demand

Actions

- Increase current levels of refuge accommodation by an additional 8 units

Key Issues and Challenges – People with a Conviction

- Unstable accommodation following release, can contribute to chaotic lifestyles, which may lead to an individual committing further offences
- There is a lack of temporary accommodation provision across the county
- Accommodating people with a conviction can present challenges with regard to meeting the needs of other client groups
- The current protocol for an individual leaving custody to present as homeless on release presents a lack of continuity & potential route into repeat homelessness

- Where there is a lack of household furniture & material possessions, this can make a tenancy inhospitable, affecting long-term tenancy sustainment

Actions

- Establish formal joint working arrangements & develop a housing protocol with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to ensure smooth transitions from custody to release
- Inform a review of MAPPA processes where appropriate
- Extend the Tenancy Support Service to temporary accommodation for people with a conviction

Key Issues and Challenges – Looked After Children

- Knowledge and understanding of scale of the housing needs of looked after children requires to be improved

Actions

- Carry out a housing needs assessment of looked after young people
- Review existing housing protocols for looked after young people
- Ensure appropriate accommodation is available for looked after young people

Key Issues and Challenges - Refugees

- Ensuring housing, education, health & social care, befriending etc. is co-ordinated effectively to enable positive experiences and outcomes for refugees

Actions

- Explore options around the third sector assisting with the integration and support of refugees

Key Issues and Challenges – Gypsy Travellers

- There is no full-time staff presence at the Gypsy / Traveller site & security is minimal, with residents expressing safety concerns
- The site is in need of physical improvement i.e. amenity blocks, which should meet an energy efficiency rating of band E or higher & fly tipping is common
- There is no protocol for unauthorised encampments
- Information & advice handbooks require updating

Actions

- Carry out agreed physical improvements to the existing Gypsy Traveller site to meet minimum standards
- Review the provision of information and advice and make recommended changes
- Develop a protocol for unauthorised encampments, which reflects Scottish Government Guidance for Local Authorities

Priority Outcome 5: The condition, energy efficiency and where appropriate the management of existing stock is improved.

Key Issues and Challenges

- A lack of information about the condition of properties, makes it difficult to proactively identify properties in disrepair in the private sector
- A Council Housing Asset Strategy is required to provide strategic direction to decision-making
- Continuing to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard while also meeting ESSH is a priority for all social landlords

- Poor stock condition and low levels of energy efficiency are particular issues for the private rented sector, owner occupiers living in rural areas and in some town centres
- A private household that has a low income or is headed by someone aged over 65 is more likely to live in a property which is below tolerable standard (BTS)² in need of extensive repair or has low energy efficiency. These households are least likely to be able to afford to repair or improve their property
- Homeowners and private landlords do not always recognise the need to improve property conditions and energy efficiency. Encouraging owners to recognise this can be particularly challenging
- Further investment is required to improve energy efficiency in existing stock

Actions

Theme 1 – Strategic Approach

- Carry out full stock condition surveys of existing Council stock by 2020 to inform capital and investment programmes
- Improve knowledge and understanding of stock condition in the private sector, with a focus on town centres and rural areas
- Develop a Housing Asset Strategy
- Review the East Lothian Scheme of Assistance
- Review Policy on Housing Renewal Areas

Theme 2 – Stock Condition

- Continue to invest in improvement programmes for existing stock
- Provide suitable adaptations to support independent living for people with specific housing needs
- Ongoing compliance with Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- Review the East Lothian Strategy for Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) dwellings

Theme 3 – Energy Efficiency

- Meet Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020
- Maximise funding opportunities for energy efficiency measures across all tenures

Priority Outcome 6: Fuel poverty is reduced and climate change targets exceeded

Key Issues and Challenges

- The number of households is projected to increase, with average household size reducing. A combination of this together with ambitious housing supply targets, means it is likely that there will be significantly more homes across the county by 2023. More households will mean more energy use.
- It will be critical to change behaviour in relation to the use of energy across all tenures although tacking behaviour change is challenging
- The rate of improvement of energy efficiency in the private sector requires to be accelerated while at the same time, maintaining rates of improvement in social housing, to improve both climate change and levels of fuel poverty

² The tolerable standard is the minimum standard for housing to be considered habitable.

- National climate change targets and fuel poverty targets are becoming more ambitious and increasingly challenging to meet
- Vulnerable older people tend to be more at risk of fuel poverty relative to other household groups
- Households living in rural areas and town centres (particularly those living in the private rented sector and in tenements with multiple owners) have a high correlation with fuel poverty

Actions

Theme 1 – Exceeding Climate Change Targets

- Prepare a Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy including local targets, to ensure national targets can be met
- Embed a culture of behaviour change across the county with regard to climate change, i.e. via training and awareness raising

Theme 2 – Reducing Fuel Poverty

- Improve knowledge of the levels, extent and nature of fuel poverty and energy efficiency of housing, with a focus on town centres, rural areas and hard to treat stock
- Continue to provide / facilitate services to maximise household income / reduce household debt
- Continue to target energy efficiency advice at households most at risk of fuel poverty
- Reduce the cost of fuel to households and communities where practical via a range of measures

Theme 3 – Energy Infrastructure

- Develop an integrated energy management framework
- Investigate the feasibility of district heating systems, biomass and PV