

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 June 2018

BY: Deputy Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Proposed East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Proposed East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 for approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Proposed East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023, to agree the priority outcomes identified in the Proposed Strategy and to support the work towards achieving these outcomes.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Proposed Strategy is updated annually as required, following a review in August of each year during the period 2018-23 and any changes reported through the Members' Library Service.

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 Proposed 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, 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; 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 influence the effective integration of health and social care.
- 3.2 A Consultative Draft East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018-23 was approved by Cabinet on 16 January 2018 and formal consultation subsequently took place from 19 January to 9 March 2018. All 87 responses to the draft LHS have been systematically considered and where appropriate, influenced the Proposed LHS. Changes made to the draft LHS arising as a result of formal consultation are set out in full at Section 7.2 of this report.
- 3.2.1 In parallel with consultation, a formal peer review process was undertaken by Scottish Government Policy Teams; The Scottish Government More Homes Division Area Team and Glasgow City Council. The peer review process highlighted specific strengths of the draft Strategy, with formal feedback including the following:
- **Local Context** - The draft LHS is considered to provide a good summary of the area, with maps, along with a helpful summary of each of the main settlements with information on the area, location and urban/rural split and population. Particularly helpful are the issues and challenges impacting across East Lothian and these have been clearly stated. This could be seen as Good Practice.
 - **Preventing and Addressing Homelessness** - This section has been clearly articulated with reasons well evidenced and the LHS clearly demonstrates how the Council intends to continue to provide a service where customers are successfully accessing a more diverse range of rehousing outcomes than is the case across Scotland.
 - **Specialist Provision and Independent Living** - This is a good comprehensive summary of the issues and it covered all the points being asked. A number of actions have been described, including a comprehensive review of sheltered housing, adopting a more proactive, preventative approach to adaptations, community health, day activities, befriending services and housing health checks.

- **Equalities** - The LHS is strong on equalities. There is an equalities statement reflecting the Equality Act 2010 and an EQIA as an appendix, informed by focus groups covering BME, ex-offenders, Gypsy / Travellers, homeless people, older people and carers, and identifies issues / challenges and outcomes.

The peer review process also highlighted suggested areas for development as follows:

- **Private Rented Sector** - This section may benefit from further information about recent changes to legislation; HMOs; regulation and enforcement and support for private rented sector tenants (e.g. inspection, statutory repairs, factoring standards, letting agent regulation, lack of maintenance in mixed tenure blocks; and how work with partners will help to tackle issues).
- **House Condition - Private Sector** - The Council's Housing Renewal Area policy needs to be updated, and this should be included as a key priority in the final LHS.
- **Fuel Poverty & Climate Change** - This section provided a lot of detail on what the issues are but not so much detail on how the Council proposes to address them. It would be helpful if the final LHS identified the actions required to be taken, and the timeframe to do so.

Cognisance has been taken of suggested areas of development and the draft LHS amended accordingly, to the satisfaction of The Scottish Government. A full summary of suggested areas of development highlighted through the peer review and subsequent changes made in response, is available at Section 7.6 of this report.

3.3 The Proposed LHS sets out a strategic vision for housing, 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'*.

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

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

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

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

- 3.5 A five-year action plan underpins these priorities, which will direct and target resource and activity over the lifetime of the Proposed LHS. Key actions in relation to priority outcomes are set out at Appendix 1 to this report. The action plan includes baseline positions, milestones, indicators and targets to enable monitoring of performance against individual actions. Many actions are wide and / or shared responsibilities and are accordingly incorporated or aligned to other business plans as appropriate.
- 3.6 Following approval, the LHS will be updated annually as required, following a review completing in August of each year during the period 2018-23 and any changes reported through the Members' Library Service.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 East Lothian Council is required to publish a set of priority outcomes, with corresponding actions in the Proposed LHS, which it considers will help to meet an overall strategic vision for housing over a five-year period. These priority outcomes complement and / or align with the wider objectives of the Council Plan 2017-22 and the East Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-27. A number of the actions set out at Appendix 1 of this report are likely to have policy implications. Any significant policy change or policy implications arising due to implementation of actions will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

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 – There are no direct financial implications associated with approval of this Proposed Strategy although achievement of the actions and priority outcomes will impact on the detailed financial planning arrangements of services over the Strategy term, both in relation to required interventions and anticipated realisation of future financial efficiencies for the Council.

- 6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Proposed East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2018-23, lodged in the Members' Library (MLS reference 82/18)

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27328/proposed_east_lothian_local_housing_strategy_2018-23

7.2 Supporting Paper 1: Proposed East Lothian LHS 2018-23 – Consultation and Engagement

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27332/proposed_supporting_paper_1_east_lothian_local_housing_strategy_2018-23_-_consultation_and_engagement

7.3 Supporting Paper 2: Proposed East Lothian LHS 2018-23 – Key Achievements of the LHS 2012-17

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27331/proposed_supporting_paper_2_local_housing_strategy_2018-23_-_key_achievements_local_housing_strategy_2012-17

7.4 Supporting Paper 3: Proposed East Lothian LHS 2018-23 – Integrated Impact Assessment

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27330/proposed_supporting_paper_3_local_housing_strategy_2018-23_-_integrated_impact_assessment

7.5 Supporting Paper 4: Proposed East Lothian LHS 2018-23 – Health Impact Assessment

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27329/proposed_supporting_paper_4_local_housing_strategy_2018-23_-_health_impact_assessment

7.6 Scottish Government East Lothian LHS 2018-23 Peer Review and Council Response

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27333/scottish_government_lhs_peer_review

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Appendix 1: LHS Priority Outcomes and Key Actions

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

- Continue to support the town centre first principle
- Prepare an East Lothian Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
- 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
- Invest in affordable housing development in town centres via Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP)
- Bring empty town centre properties back into use, where appropriate, for affordable housing
- Increase 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 & community led housing including custom build and self-build housing
- Maximise opportunities to restore historic buildings including residential homes i.e. via Town Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Funding
- Support community led activity that seeks to improve town centres and rural areas
- Improve digital infrastructure to support independent living and self-help for vulnerable groups via technology enabled care

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

- 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 & understanding of local areas. This information will be used to ensure a balance of affordable tenures / house types is delivered on all new proposed developments
- Complete Supplementary Planning Guidance for Affordable Housing
- Improve knowledge of housing need & demand in rural areas
- Deliver 189 affordable units per annum as per Housing Supply Target
- Maximise opportunities to accelerate affordable housing
- Work with RSL partners to deliver affordable housing
- Explore alternative / innovative financial models
- Deliver the Councils own new build programme
- Prepare / implement a survey in relation to empty homes, analyse responses and provide recommendations
- Take a strategic approach to bringing empty properties / land 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 and capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs
- Consider making an application to Scottish Ministers for the designation of a 'rent pressure zone'
- Explore opportunities for increasing mid-market rent and other intermediate tenures
- Review existing Council Housing 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.

- 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.
- 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
- 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 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order
- 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.

Older People

- Develop 300 units of specialist housing for older people over a five-year period to 2023 (60 units per annum). This could include care homes, extra care housing or retirement housing, which could be purpose built or remodelled from existing provision & developed by the public or private sector¹
- 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 and dementia friendly as far as possible, built to a standard to accommodate wheelchair users & capable of being adapted to suit a range of needs
- Target resources more effectively in relation to the provision of practical assistance & low-level interventions / support
- 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, or where a diagnosis of dementia is made (to include information for carers)
- 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.

Mental Health

- Make available 8 units of core & cluster housing per annum primarily for people with a learning disability, to also accommodate people with a mental health condition / people with autism / people with a physical disability where appropriate²
- Link core & cluster housing to place-making on a small scale i.e. promoting health & well-being, resilience & employability

¹ For clarity, work has been undertaken at time of LHS publication (June 2018) to assess the requirements for hospital re-provision in East Lothian and public consultation is ongoing in relation to this. The 300 units specified as being required in the LHS have been identified on the basis of detailed analysis of demographic change / projections. Any requirement for accommodation arising as a result of hospital re-provision will be over and above the requirements set out in the LHS 2018-23.

² For clarity, the 8 units per annum (40 in total over the lifetime of the LHS) is proposed for a range of vulnerable groups including people with a learning disability; people with a mental health condition; people with autism and people with a physical disability. It is likely that people may have a combination of the above.

Learning Disabilities and Autism

- Make available 8 units of core & cluster housing per annum for people with a learning disability and / or autism & mental health conditions / physical disabilities, where appropriate)³
- 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 & / 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
- Link core & cluster housing to place-making on a small scale i.e. promoting health & well-being, resilience & employability
- Develop a practical guide to housing needs of people with autism for housing staff
- Establish a flagging system within the Council's Housing unit to alert staff to people with autism, to link to health impact assessment & enable reasonable adjustments to be made

Domestic Violence

- Provide an additional 8 units of refuge accommodation (to ensure a total of 14) as a matter of priority
- Implement a programme of training and awareness raising sessions, with a focus on MARAC, in conjunction with the Public Protection Partnership
- Review housing procedures to ensure a more efficient and effective response to women experiencing domestic violence
- Make formal consideration of the wellbeing needs of accompanying children, using a trauma informed approach
- Explore best practice models of accommodation for women presenting with co-occurring substance misuse and domestic abuse and women presenting with co-occurring complex mental health issues and domestic abuse, as part of a wider temporary accommodation strategy

People with a Conviction

- Establish formal joint working arrangements & develop a housing protocol with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to ensure smooth transitions from custody to release
- Work with Reducing Re-offending Group and the SPS to implement the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards

Refugees and Asylum Seekers; Gypsy / Travellers and Travelling Show-people

³ For clarity, the 8 units per annum (40 in total over the lifetime of the LHS) is proposed for a range of vulnerable groups including people with a learning disability; people with a mental health condition; people with autism and people with a physical disability. It is likely that people may have a combination of the above.

- Explore options around the third sector assisting with the integration and support of refugees
- Carry out agreed physical improvements to the existing Gypsy / Traveller site, in accordance with revised standards
- Review the provision of information and advice relating to Gypsy / Travellers & make recommended changes
- Develop a protocol for unauthorised encampments, which reflects Scottish Government Guidance for Local Authorities

Veterans

- Work with SVGCA to develop six new build units for veterans

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

- Carry out a full stock condition survey 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 Council Housing Asset Strategy
- Review the East Lothian Scheme of Assistance
- Review Policy on Housing Renewal Areas
- 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
- Prepare a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
- 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 targets exceeded.

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