

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4th July 2016

Report Title: Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016/19

Report By: Andrew Palmer

Head of Housing and Built Environment

Purpose of Report

To advise of the results of the 12 week public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy 2016-2019 and recommend that Cabinet adopts the strategy.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the Housing Strategy 2016-2019 is adopted by Cabinet.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Whilst it is no longer a legislative requirement to produce a housing strategy, it is important for the Council to outline plans for addressing local housing needs and to provide a framework for partners and interested parties operating in the local housing market.

The previous strategy covered the period from 2010 and is in need of renewal.

The draft Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy 2016-2019, has been informed by a range of partnership work and has undergone a 12 week public consultation.

The new strategy takes account of new government policy and guidance and reflects a range of changes that have taken place over the life of the previous strategy.

Introduction

1. The Housing Strategy 2016-19 seeks to build on the success achieved through delivery of the previous strategy.
2. The draft strategy 2016-19 has been produced taking account of:
 - Current and future housing needs of the Borough
 - The existing housing stock profile
 - National and local housing policy
 - South East Local Enterprise Plan priorities
 - The Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - How partners will jointly commission new housing services
 - Previous successful housing and regeneration initiatives and strategies
 - Data on the housing market, housing conditions, social and economic data and deprivation statistics
 - Key housing related policy documents that have emerged over the life of the previous strategy
3. Three key strategic housing priorities have been identified for the period 2016-2019. These emerged from facilitated workshops with Council officers, Members and stakeholders during 2015. The three priorities are:
 - Priority 1 - Meet Housing Needs and Aspirations
 - Priority 2 – Improve Access and Opportunities
 - Priority 3 – Support Economic Regeneration:
4. The draft Housing Strategy 2016-19 is attached in Appendix 1. The document provides the context in which the housing plans have been formulated and sets out how the three strategic priorities will be achieved. An action plan is attached to the strategy.

Public Consultation and Final Strategy

5. The draft strategy and review document were made available for public consultation from the 4th November 2015 to the 28th January 2016 on the Council's website. Information on the consultation was also circulated to key partners, stakeholders and Council Officers.
6. Very few comments were received. However, the key issues raised by colleagues, partners and the public as part of the consultation were: the growing cost of private sector accommodation; the impact of future welfare reform changes and the need to provide additional housing solutions for rough sleepers.
7. In general those consulted were positive and supports the direction of the strategy. The strategy has identified a number of initiatives to be delivered in

partnership with key partner agencies which address the concerns which have been raised via the consultation process. These measures include initiatives to increase the provision of social housing, improve the quality and availability of private sector accommodation, raise standards of property management and harness the regeneration of the town to benefit all sections of the community.

8. The draft strategy has been amended slightly since last considered by members to reflect emerging government policy occurring over the consultation period.
9. Of concern to some respondents were the proposed changes in housing and planning legislation outlined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. In particular, the increasing emphasis on home ownership at the expense of other tenures.
10. The reductions in affordable accommodation for rent are of concern to some. Those on the lowest incomes or in receipt of benefits are likely to become increasingly dependent upon the private rented sector; this is happening at a time when access to the private sector is becoming more competitive and rents are rising. Key to the success of the strategy will be how the Council's and other partners respond successfully to the challenges this will pose.

Policy implications

11. Equalities and Community Cohesiveness - An equalities impact assessment has been carried out. The summary of the analysis is that the strategy would not have a negative impact on any group as defined in the Equalities Act.
12. Local People's Views – A public consultation has been undertaken to invite comments from local people on the direction of the attached Housing Strategy, the outcome of which is described in this report.
13. Anti-Poverty - A number of measures outlined in the attached Housing Strategy and action plan seek to address issues of poverty related to improving the quality, provision and access to affordable accommodation for lower income households in particular.
14. Economic/Financial Implications – the attached Housing Strategy is designed to coordinate a multi-agency response to improving the provision of affordable housing to meet the aspirations of all sections of the community. The Housing Strategy action plan outlines a number of measures which are designed to support the economic regeneration of the town.

Wards Affected

All Wards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	No
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	No
Local People's Views	Yes
Anti-Poverty	Yes

Additional Information

Appendix 1 –Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2016/19

Officer to Contact

Joe Powell
jpowell@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451314