

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting21st June 2018

1. Title of Item/Report

Housing Strategy / Homelessness Reduction Strategy

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that sought approval to adopt the Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and the Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023. These documents set out the Councils overarching vision and priorities for housing (across all tenures) and homelessness prevention in the borough over the coming 5-year period.

The Housing Strategy was a framework for how the Council would address the challenges it would face in the coming years, giving direction to partners and stakeholders involved in housing across all tenures (including residents, registered providers, private developers, government agencies, private landlords and voluntary and community groups), so that they could help and support the Council to provide the right homes in the right places.

Both the Council Plan 2018-2023 and the Economic Growth Plan 2017-2020 included a number of housing related priorities. In essence these were collated in the Housing Strategy which detailed how the Council would work in partnership and across tenure to deliver the Councils housing ambitions.

In addition, the Housing Strategy would support the implementation of the emerging Local Plan.

There were 3 high level strategic objectives detailed in the Housing Strategy and under each of these 3 objectives a series of priorities and actions were detailed. The 3 core proposed objectives were detailed within the report.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was enacted on the 3rd April 2018. As detailed in the 'Homelessness Reduction Act' Cabinet Report (January 2018) this Act had significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also

required housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who were vulnerable.

Previously local authorities could decide whether to prepare a separate Homelessness Strategy, in Stockton it was decided against a separate strategy and detailed the homelessness key priorities within the former Housing Strategy. However the 2017 Act required each council to produce a bespoke Homelessness Reduction Strategy, which must detail the key objectives and actions it would undertake to meet the requirements of this legislation.

Detailed within the proposed Homelessness Reduction Strategy were 4 strategic objectives (again each was supported by a number of priorities and actions). In developing these 3 over-arching objectives consideration had been given to key national homelessness priorities, the Councils commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in the communities and the bespoke local circumstances. For example detailed analysis had been to how best to intervene and address the year on year increase in the number of households approaching / seeking assistance from the Council's Homelessness and Housing Solutions Service and the key reasons why households find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The proposed 4 key strategic objectives were detailed within the report..

Each Strategy was proposed to run for a 5-year period (2018 – 2023), to ensure each remained compliant with any changes in national legislation and continued to reflect local issues and circumstances it was proposed that an annual review be undertaken and that the first annual review be considered in the 2019/20 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The emerging Local Plan which would go to public examination in June 2018. The outcome of the enquiry may result in the need to make changes to the Housing Strategy to ensure it continued to support the emerging plans and policies. These changes and further annual reviews would be undertaken by the service directorate and Cabinet were therefore asked to delegate authorisation to the Director of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Communications and Cabinet Member for Regeneration to make any necessary changes to either strategy.

It was noted that should significant or whole scale change be required to either strategy a further report would be presented back to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The draft Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and Homelessness Reduction Strategy 2018-2023 be approved.

2. To ensure both strategies remain compliant with any changes in national legislation, and are fit for purpose it is proposed to undertake an annual review of each document (as detailed in paragraph 13 and as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report), if appropriate to undertake an earlier review in response to recommendations arising from the Local Plan enquiry in June 2018. Following both reviews delegated authorisation be granted to the to the Director of Economic Growth and Development in consultation with the Director of HR, Legal and Communications and Cabinet Member for Regeneration to make any necessary changes.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the Council has an overarching Housing Strategy and Homelessness Reduction Strategy which clearly sets out; its long term priorities, the outcomes we are seeking to achieve and provides a clear direction for housing and the delivery of Homelessness services in the borough over the coming 5-years.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 29 June 2018.

Proper Officer
25 June 2018