

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 05TH SEPTEMBER 2017
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

OLDER PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY 2017 – 2022

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The draft Older Persons Housing Strategy has been developed in response to recognition at a national level that we need to plan for an increasingly ageing population who are living longer; the predicted rise in the number of people in the country who will be over 60 in the next 20 years is considerable (19.4m 2016 -31.1m 2037).
- 1.2 The draft Older Persons Housing Strategy (attached at Appendix A) sets out the Council's plans, working jointly with its partners, to meet the housing needs and aspirations of older people in the borough over the next 5 years.
- 1.3 The report provides information on:
- a) Why an Older Persons Housing Strategy is needed
 - b) The key issues and challenges in meeting the housing needs of older people in the borough
 - c) The Council's priorities for addressing the housing needs of older people and how it intends to achieve them
 - d) The report also outlines the consultation activity with people over 50 in the borough, consultation on stakeholder response to the strategy and the outcomes of those consultations.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves, the Older Persons Housing Strategy incorporating revisions from the consultation with key stakeholders and recommends its adoption to Council

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The Older Persons Housing Strategy sets out proposed priorities and associated actions over the next five years, for meeting the future housing needs and aspirations of older people for the Borough
- 3.2 The draft Strategy is linked to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2013 to 2018 and in particular the key priority – Meeting older people and other vulnerable group's housing needs. This is important because:

- a) We have an increasing generation of older people, who are living longer, healthier, and more active lives who have higher and evolving aspirations for their housing in later life
- b) Research suggests that good quality housing, secured at the right time, that meets the changing needs of people as they age, significantly preserves their health and wellbeing. This in turn leads to significant savings in expenditure on long term health, care & support.
- c) Providing housing that older people want to move to, could have a significant impact on the general housing market, alleviating some of the housing shortage, freeing up equity and much needed family size homes across all sectors.
- d) It will assist the council in its asset management of its older persons housing stock in relation to possible, refurbishment, redevelopment, re-modelling and new build opportunities as part of its Affordable Housing Programme.

3.3 The draft Older Persons Housing Strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders (internal and external) and via a public consultation. The public consultation invited residents over 50 in the borough and partners to complete a survey. Two focus groups were also held with members of the public from this demographic.

3.4 The key outcomes of the consultation have informed the development of the strategy. An additional detailed report has been drafted on the outcome of the consultation, to support the strategy. The report is contained in the background document.

3.5 The key challenges to meeting the needs and aspiration of older people in Welwyn Hatfield, identified in the development of the strategy were:

- a) Providing a more varied and improved housing offer to older people, with cuts to public sector spending and housing revenue.
- b) Developing the relevant partnerships to increase the supply of affordable homes that meet the needs of older people
- c) Addressing the demand for older persons housing to reduce social isolation and increase health and well being
- d) Encouraging older people to plan ahead for accommodation that better meets their need in the future.

3.6 Three priority areas have been identified which are important to focus on in addressing the housing needs of older people. They are:

- a) Have a range of good quality, appropriate and affordable housing available across all tenures that meet changing needs.

- b) Enable older people to live independently for as long as possible
 - c) Encourage partnership working between all stakeholders to improve the overall quality of life experienced by older people
- 3.7 The objectives for achieving the priorities are set out in the Older Persons Housing Strategy Action Plan also part of (Appendix A)
- 3.8 On the 16/11/16 the Older Persons Housing Strategy was presented to the Social Overview and Scrutiny Panel, they were asked to consider, revise if required and then to give permission to initiate consultation with key stakeholders. Members did not request any amendments to the strategy and agreed that officers should initiate consultation on the Older Persons Housing Strategy with key stakeholders.
- 3.9 In January 2017 consultation was carried out with key stakeholders on the draft strategy (e.g. neighbouring boroughs, partner providers and the voluntary sector etc.)
- 3.10 As a result of the consultation with stakeholders, two amendments were made to the strategy, the amendments were to:
- a) add an additional action to the action plan to work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council on the “Community Conversation” initiative
 - b) add an additional action in the action plan to work in partnership with Herts County Council on the “specialist care at home” initiative to explore how to expand this resource with the voluntary and community sector.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 There is no statutory obligation, for a strategic housing authority to provide an older persons housing strategy

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 This strategy sets medium and long term objectives that are likely to require planned and coordinated investment from existing Council budgets and other external investment. The investment requirements have not yet been identified at this stage but are likely to include

- a) Grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency
- b) Usable capital receipts

- c) Affordable Housing Programme capital budget
- d) Major Repairs Reserve
- e) Private Investment

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:

6.1.1 Reputational: Failure to deliver on the actions set out within the Action Plan. Controls: A project group would be formed to oversee delivery of the Action Plan; progress on the delivery of the Action Plan to be reported to members via this committee. Impact medium Likelihood Low.

6.1.2 Resources: Insufficient funding or staffing resource to undertake the Actions set out in the Action Plan. Controls: Action Plan has been developed with the information available about resources currently; all actions are SMART; Project team will oversee delivery. Impact high; Likelihood Low.

6.2 Financial: Funding cuts that may impact the ability to remodel, refurbish or provide new homes. Controls: Scheme progression will be monitored by the project group overseeing delivery of the action plan, any issues with funding will be reported to members at this meeting via the Action plan progress updates. Impact High - Likelihood medium

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

7.1 There are no specific security and terrorism implications arising from this report

8 Procurement Implication(s)

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

9.1 Key strategic priority 1 will make a significant impact on climate change it incorporates :

- a) Increasing supply of affordable housing for older people, which will include the potential to build new homes which are more sustainable and energy efficient
- b) Improving and redeveloping the councils existing sheltered stock, making it more sustainable and energy efficient

- c) Improving standards for older people in the private rented sector, includes improving property condition and energy efficiency.

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities 1 and 3

Priority 1 - Maintain a safe and healthy community, and specifically to the achievement of "work with partners to keep people safe"

Priority 3 - "Meet the borough's housing needs, and specifically to the achievement of "Plan for the housing needs of our communities"

11 Equality and Diversity

11.1 An Equality impact screening has been carried out as part of the survey and consultation. Equality Impact Assessments would be carried out in relation to actions set out in the associated Action Plan.

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Background papers to be listed N/A

Appendices to be listed

Appendix A: Draft Older Person's Housing Strategy and Action Plan