



# Delegated decision report

## **DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

### **DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 31 DECEMBER 2019**

Title **APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-25**

Report of **CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND HOUSING**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report introduces the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-25 and sets out the Isle of Wight's strategic approach for housing services. It details how the council will enable the delivery of these services, and the background to the strategy's production.
2. This includes the consultation process and the subsequent refinement of the strategy based on the feedback received to date. Following feedback from CMT and previous stakeholder consultations the report recommends that the next step is a full public consultation before formal adoption of the strategy. The outcome required is to demonstrate transparency of the Council's intent to engage in the housing market generating more "affordable housing" positively impacting vulnerable households and economic stability on the Isle of Wight.

## BACKGROUND

3. The proposed Housing Strategy 2020-25 is effectively a new document as previous housing strategies have been superseded by the need for a new Island Plan for future planning policy, which in turn requires a new housing strategy relevant to the Island's current housing situation.
4. The strategy aligns with the government's White Paper 2017 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market' which concludes the housing market in England is broken, and the simple cause is that for far too long enough new homes have not been built since the 1970s. It also promotes balancing housing supply across the full economic range of current and future residents. This is especially relevant to the Island given the need to attract, keep, and sustain a skilled and sustainable work force, accommodate younger people in the housing market, and address the urgent need for 'affordable' homes of all types.

5. The resultant 'ask' is a range of homes that will include more expensive homes as well as standard and affordable housing of all types including keyworker housing and to tackle homelessness. This broad market approach is difficult for many residents to understand, albeit the vast majority of homes will be provided from the private sector reacting to market demand. However, the delivery of affordable homes is a key driver for the housing strategy as we have an increasing number of local households experiencing housing challenges, and increased vulnerability to homelessness with its wider negative social impacts.
6. We understand that many Island residents are against or resistant to new developments of all types and there is much misinformation being promoted across the Island to reinforce these sentiments. This strategy also promotes the critical messages that social housing is only allocated to Island residents and the council will be using its own resources to deliver affordable homes for Island people. This is to effectively intervene in the housing market to stimulate better delivery in the private and social housing sectors, which are increasingly failing to deliver enough new affordable homes, while accepting that there is also a need for wider range of homes as provided by the private sector to promote economic growth.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

7. The strategy has been developed based upon:
  - a comprehensive review and consideration of the national and local context;
  - achievements and progress of the regeneration policy, 'Inspiration Island';
  - wide consultation with stakeholders;
  - needs analysis including the strategic housing economic needs assessment.
8. This approach absolutely fits with the council's latest [Corporate Plan 2019-22](#) which cuts across the 12 corporate priorities to one degree or another, but specifically to develop a unique case for funding housing development and delivering affordable housing across the Island. The premise is the underlying impact that housing has on a wide range of corporate and service priorities, both positive and negative, which are critical to the council and its wider partnerships including social care, crime, health and education; accepting that access to a safe and secure home underpins everything for our residents.
9. It is recognised throughout the housing strategy that it will only be delivered in partnership. This includes with a range of internal Isle of Wight Council partners and external stakeholders including housing associations, Homes England, private developers, landlords and local organisations whose work focusses on housing issues.
10. The other strategic plans that relate specifically to the recommendations within the report. include, but not limited to:
  - a regeneration strategy 'Inspiration Island' 2019–30;
  - the Homeless and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-24 to be finalised;
  - the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Isle of Wight 2018-21;

- the Extra Care housing strategy 'Independent Island' 2017-32;
- the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-20;
- Community Safety Partnership Strategic Plan 2018-20.

## REGENERATION/HOUSING DELIVERY

11. The delivery of new homes on the Island has been placed in broader context of regeneration, both strategically and operationally, as it relates specifically to new housing units added to the Island's housing stock or bringing old and run-down housing stock back into use.
12. The main objectives of joining up housing in this way is:
  - re-balancing our population to ensure we can sustain our public services;
  - caring for our most vulnerable people and helping everyone to "age well";
  - reducing deprivation levels in affected areas of the Island;
  - changing perceptions of the Island and its future among those who live here and those who might want to relocate, invest and visit.
13. Overall, the service is working to gain the economic benefits that new development brings in both the private and social markets generating new jobs, growth and income to sustain council services including building enough homes to ensure for example that the numbers of local families in temporary accommodation is reduced.

## CONSULTATION

14. The draft strategy has been widely consulted upon internally and drafts were circulated to all internal and external stakeholders in June and again in August through the second housing conversation event.
15. The Strategy was originally designed around four overarching themes:
  - People.
  - Properties.
  - Place.
  - Partnerships.
16. Following feedback from a wide range of housing partners at three housing conversation events held this year, the last one being on 9 October, it was decided to further break down the overarching themes into six cross-cutting strategic priorities. This was for clarity given the breath and length of the themes and the challenging expectations of so many stakeholders.
17. This has enabled more focused outcomes in the action plan to prioritise key actions and interventions:
  - **Strategic priority 1: New housing supply** – Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing delivery through the efficient use of land and capital resources including those the council owns or has control of.

- **Strategic priority 2: Housing affordability** – To introduce and define “affordability” on the Island through detailed research of both incomes and housing costs to inform both planning and housing policy going forward.
  - **Strategic priority 3: Private sector housing** – Ensuring that the private housing sector provides enough good quality market housing through support for developers and landlords and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.
  - **Strategic priority 4: Homelessness and housing need** – Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping through effective prevention work and building a new homeless pathway through property solutions and wrap-around services.
  - **Strategic priority 5: Special housing needs and vulnerable people** – Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people including extra-care housing for older people and people with disabilities.
  - **Strategic priority 6: Partnerships** – Enabling housing associations and our other partners to build more new affordable homes for Island residents while maintaining their current homes to a high standard.
18. This strategy should be placed in the context of a range of the council’s key strategic documents as outlined previously. It covers a broad range of housing issues and services, though of particular relevance in terms of timing and topics is the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-24 which has recently been adopted.
19. This strategy highlights the challenges in delivering a sufficient supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of residents of the Isle of Wight. It proposes that council should take a more active role in the direct delivery of affordable housing, initially across its own selected sites, through the use of special purpose vehicles (SPVs) where appropriate and ultimately through its own wholly owned local housing company, as agreed by Cabinet in November 2018.

## FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

20. In itself, the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-2025 does not include any budgetary commitments over and above those already planned for. It does however aim to attract major investment in house building from private and registered sectors to complement and deliver the step-change required in house building to meet the council’s strategic objectives as outlined.

## CARBON EMISSIONS

21. The production of the proposed Housing Strategy 2020-25 has considered the council’s Carbon Management Plan which aims to reduce council carbon emissions by six per cent per year through making best use of home insulation schemes in both private and social homes. More broadly, with the aim of this strategy being to build more new homes it is accepted that their construction does ultimately put more carbon into the atmosphere. However, the strategy also promotes the use of new construction technologies to create high quality, low-carbon and environmentally resilient homes for the future to offset carbon

emissions in the longer term. These include carbon emissions resulting from energy use in buildings, street lighting, fleet vehicles, business travel, water use, waste disposal, air conditioning and contractors' services. It should be noted that the council is unlikely to be building at any scale itself and will participate in the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme as required.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

22. There is no legal requirement to have a housing strategy (although there is to have an allocations strategy and homelessness strategy). There is also a legal obligation to have a tenancy strategy for stock holding councils, though this does not apply to the Isle of Wight Council as it does not hold a housing revenue account.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

23. While not a legal requirement, it is still considered best practice to undertake an equality impact assessment which has been carried out. The initial findings indicate that a full impact assessment may not be required and that the strategy as proposed should be positive in terms of delivering better homes and services for protected groups.

### PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

24. The strategic asset management implications of this strategy will be mainly around the use and sale of the council's own land and property to deliver or facilitate the delivery of new homes as part of the regeneration programme. This is currently under a governance system which includes the prioritisation of wider regeneration loan funding, with a full business case being required by the council on each individual project basis before commencement. Each one will be progressed with full input from Legal, Finance, and sign-off by the section 151 officer and Cabinet at the relevant stages.

### SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

25. The Local Development Framework provides the local policy context within which decisions on planning applications are made and their crime and disorder implications considered by our Planning Department. More broadly, outside of designing out crime in new developments and initiatives such as 'secure by Design' there is a whole range of partnerships and client groups represented in the Community Safety Strategy. This strategy promotes the reduction of crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse across all our stock holding landlords.

### OPTIONS

26. The following options are available to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing with delegated authority:
  - A. to agree the Draft Housing Strategy for Public Consultation
  - B. to recommend adoption of the Draft Housing Strategy to Cabinet for adoption without further public consultation
  - C. to not progress the Draft Housing Strategy through the adoption process.
  - D. to propose amendments to the housing strategy;

Option A is the preferred option because this will allow us to proceed with publishing and implementing an up to date strategy and action plan for wider public consultation in a reasonable time scale.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

27. The following table considers the significant risks arising from this report:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>	<b>Risk level</b>
That the actions required by the strategy are not carried out.	There are detailed action plans covering outputs which will need to be achieved to meet the outcomes required by the strategy.	Monitoring of progress against the action plan will be carried out regularly through the Housing Partnership Board and annually by a report to Cabinet.	High
That agencies do not work in a coordinated fashion to achieve the aims of the strategy.	Actions detailed to fulfil the aims of the strategy will need the input of statutory and voluntary partners.	Officers will ensure that governance meetings are timetabled to progress strategic objectives	Medium
That the decision is made not to adopt the draft 2020-25 Housing Strategy, leaving the council open to challenge as not having a current strategy at a time of having to undertake the housing delivery test due to low numbers of new homes being built.	The strategy has been written to consider recent legislative changes (e.g. the Homelessness Reduction Act and the 2016 benefit cap) and the evolving needs of Island residents including the challenges of affordability” and housing stress. The underlying focus remains on developing more homes.	The direction outlined in the strategy is a shared vision across strategic housing and partner agencies. Should the strategy not be agreed, the work areas would continue under the various teams of stakeholders, but possibly remain ineffective.	Low
That the document does not remain current and up to date.	That changes occur within the life of the document which significantly impact the accuracy of the strategy.	As part of the continual monitoring process, the strategy will be reviewed in light of additional information e.g. changes in the demographics of Island residents and emergent housing needs.	Medium

## EVALUATION

28. The Isle of Wight needs a housing strategy to bring together the full range of strategic thinking and possible housing interventions to give confidence to both local residents, and the wider economy including investors and the government to deliver more and better housing on the Island.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Housing is recommended to agree the Draft Housing Strategy 2020-2025 for full public consultation to commence early in 2020 for a period of 6-8 weeks, before the Final Strategy is presented to Cabinet for adoption in March 2020 with relevant amendments made.

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Cllr BARRY ABRAHAM  
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Decision

Signed

Date

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