



Cabinet report

Date **12 OCTOBER 2023**

Title **HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025
ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2023**

Report of **CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING,
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of progress the council and its partners have made to develop and implement the Housing Strategy through an action plan since adoption of the strategy in October 2020.
2. The Cabinet is responsible for monitoring delivery of the action plan annually; this is the third annual review, but progress reports have been provided during this period.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That Cabinet notes the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023 contained at Appendix 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND

4. The council adopted its current Housing Strategy 2020-2025 in October 2020 and this was supported by a detailed action plan which covered the five-year period.
5. The Covid-19 pandemic significantly increased housing pressures and service disruption throughout the sector, which serves to emphasise the urgency of delivery of the housing objectives outlined in the Housing Strategy 2020-2025

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Provision of affordable housing for Island Residents

6. The Housing Strategy 'vision' is "To enable everyone living on the Island to have a place they call home". Six strategic priorities underpin this vision which in turn shape the desired outcomes in the action plan to prioritise key actions and expected outcomes.

- **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** – Defining “affordability” on the Island through detailed and on-going 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: 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.
- **Strategic priority 5: 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 6: Special housing needs and vulnerable people** – Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people including primarily extra-care housing for older people and people with disabilities.

7. The housing strategy action plan commits the council and its partners to delivering the outcomes of the Housing Strategy together via agreed high-level strategic actions and contributions.

8. Details of progress made in delivering the Housing Strategy action plan is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. This also includes details of future milestones for delivery of those tasks not completed.

9. Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

The council has set a target to achieve net zero emissions:

- in its business and delivery of services by 2030;
- across the school estate by 2035; and
- as an island by 2040.

10. The housing strategy promotes the use of new construction technologies to create high quality, net-zero carbon and environmentally resilient homes to offset carbon emissions in the longer term to meet the council’s 2030 zero carbon target and the government’s 2050 legal requirement.

11. Following a successful bid to the LGA a report was produced in partnership with a Registered Provider setting out how Net Zero Carbon Homes could be delivered on the Isle of Wight.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

12. The economic landscape has changed significantly due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and it has never been more important for housing provision to meet local need and the council support its delivery.

13. The provision of housing is a key contributor to regeneration and economic recovery, supporting a large range of contractors on the Island, many of whom support skills development and apprenticeships for younger people.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

14. The decisions the Council makes now not only affect current residents, but may have long term impacts, both positive and negative, on young people and future generations. These impacts may not immediately be apparent or may not emerge for a number of years or decades. Impacts will be interrelated across the various domains of young people's lives from housing, employment or training, health and the environment.
15. By providing adequate, affordable and good quality housing the strategy supports young people and future generations as housing has a significant impact on the life chances of individuals.

Corporate Aims

16. The Council set out their aspirations in the Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025 and this is based around a need to ensure that housing created is fit for purpose. They have prioritised truly affordable housing for Island residents, meaning housing that is not just affordable to rent or buy but affordable to live in and maintain.
17. The Corporate Plan includes the following key housing related activities, which are also included the Housing Strategy:
 - Work with partners, including town, parish and community councils to deliver innovative solutions to secure the provision of affordable housing for Island residents
 - Where necessary make use of the council's housing company to address market failure in meeting needs
 - Where possible use available powers including compulsory purchase
 - Introduce temporary housing schemes to meet local needs by September 2023
 - Increase the number of affordable housing units available by December 2023

PROGRESS & OUTCOMES

18. The Council has a Housing Strategy and associated action plan 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 UK government to deliver more and better housing on the Island.
19. There has been good progress across the majority of deliverables as set out in Appendix 1 including a step-change in delivering some long-standing housing objectives for the Island.
20. New Housing Supply:
 - The target for 300 homes has been met. The following table provides details of the delivery of affordable homes over the last 4 years. *2022/23 figures are provisional

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23*	Total
Homes granted planning permission	320	493	1005	487	2,305
Total homes built	253	445	490	357	1,545
Of which affordable homes	6	123	114	65	308
% of completed homes being affordable	2%	28%	23%	18%	20%

Breakdown of affordable tenure:	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Total affordable homes	6	123	114	243
Of which affordable/social rent	0	103	69	172
Of which intermediate tenure (e.g. shared ownership)	6	20	45	71

- Two extra-care schemes providing 150 homes have been built on the Island and these offer high quality affordable housing for older people.
- The Council has a range of projects underway to support the delivery of affordable housing.
- A bid to the Brownfield Land Release Fund was successful and this has provided £950k to enable 3 council owned sites to be disposed of for affordable housing. We have recently been advised that a further £427k has been awarded for delivery on a further 3 sites. The aim is for Registered Providers to develop these sites so that the maximum number of affordable rented units are delivered.
- An Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document was progressed in 2023 to better clarify our approach and facilitate delivery of a new type of affordable housing. RentPlus is a new model of housing and will offer a rent to buy product.

21. Housing Affordability:

- A housing affordability tool has been created that provides evidence to support the need and incomes levels for affordable homes on the Island.
- The Island now re-qualifies for Social Housing Grant which enables housing associations to claim grant to provide affordable homes for rent and purchase. This was reimplemented following a campaign with partners in 2022.
- Conversations are taking place with Homes England around the Council accessing grant to support delivery of schemes on the Island.

22. Private Sector Housing:

- Disabled Facilities Grants delivered to improve accessibility for homeowners.

	£'000	No Grants completed in year
2021/22	1,162	157
2022/23	1,085	143

- A review of the position on empty properties has been carried out and an updated Empty Property Strategy has been approved which sets out the

proactive approach that will be taken going forwards to manage empty properties and support communities with the issues these can create.

- Approval of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Policy (2022) which applies to private rented properties and allows for a financial penalty to be imposed where standards are not maintained. Whilst this has been promoted no penalties have been issued to date.
- Adoption of a Civil Penalties Policy (2021) to support housing act enforcement to provide a simplified process for taking action. This has been used in 5 cases and resulted in fines of £1,875.

23. Homelessness and Housing Need:

- The Homeless Strategy was reviewed, and an action plan is in place to ensure outcomes are delivered, minimising the number of families who need to go into B&B. The strategy ends in 2024 and so this will be refreshed and co-produced over the next year.
- Grant funding to purchase five flats for homeless people was secured in 2020 and by April 2023 all had been purchased and were occupied.
- Grant funding to purchase 9 houses for refugees was secured in 2023 and the purchase of these properties are in progress. Occupation is planned for November /December 2023.
- Capital funding has been secured for 2023/24 to purchase a property for use as temporary accommodation.

24. Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable People

- The Allocation Policy has been reviewed and HomeFinder updated to include extra care properties.
- A new Pathways contract was tendered and awarded to alleviate the pressure on temporary accommodation and B&B provision. The Homeless support services are commissioned through the Single Homeless Pathway, which provides accommodation and support for 181 single individuals. This is provided by 4 different service providers. There is also a Families pathway providing accommodation and support for 35 families, these are provided by 2 service providers.

25. Organisational changes have been made to pull together the councils housing functions and a full-time Strategic Manager for Housing Enabling & Delivery has been appointed.

CONSULTATION

26. The Housing Strategy and agreed action plan were produced following a detailed consultation exercise with key partners and the public.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27. A report detailing the actions that have been taken with regards to the delivery of affordable homes on the Island, actions proposed, and a clear outline of the problems being encountered in the delivery of the Housing Strategy will be provided to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration in October 2023 and any key points will be verbally updated at the meeting.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

28. The Housing Strategy and action plan refers to matters which are already reflected in approved budgets, and where additional resources are required to deliver the housing priorities set out in the strategy, the financial implications of these will be evaluated and reported once plans have been developed. Any further action requiring additional council funding will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

29. There are no direct implications arising from the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

30. The council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
31. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023. The equality impact assessment for the Housing Strategy stated that it had either a neutral or positive impact in respect of all the equality strands and is unaffected by this update report.
32. There are no direct implications arising from the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023. The strategic asset management and property implications of the Housing Strategy are linked to 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. Proper process will be followed for all acquisitions and disposals.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

33. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by Police and Justice Act 2006) provides that: '...it shall be the duty of each authority ... to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour adversely affecting the environment, and substance misuse in its area'.
34. 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.

OPTIONS

35. Option 1: That Cabinet notes the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023 contained at Appendix 1 of this report.

36. Option 2: Not to note the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report 2023 contained at Appendix 1 and carry out a further update of the action plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

37. Without the production of the annual update on progress there would be no overall view available on delivery against the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
38. A risk assessment is carried out for all relevant projects within the Housing Strategy and delivery is monitored through the housing governance framework.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

39. Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy Action Plan Progress Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Isle of Wight Housing Strategy 2020-2025.

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