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**To:** Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

**Date:** 13 February 2019

**Subject:** Housing Action Plan

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To review the Draft Housing and Homelessness Action Plan following consultation in December 2018.
- 1.2 Provide a summary of the current financial position, governance arrangements and key activities planned for the next few months.
- 1.3 Provide a progress update on specific areas, including:
  - Operational team performance,
  - Progress against local plan targets for affordable house building,
  - Supply of social housing in the city,
  - Refurbishment and expansion of existing homes,
  - Modular housing options.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) are recommended to identify comments for Cabinet when they consider the item.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Council is required to develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness every five years, under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002. The Strategy brought together the Council's Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy into the same document. This approach means that the Homelessness Strategy can be read as 'part of the bigger picture' within Coventry's wider Housing Strategy. An Action Plan accompanies the Strategy outlining its priorities and the activities to achieve them.
- 3.2 The Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 focusses on four main themes: Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households; New housing development; Improving the use of existing homes; and Support for people and communities.
- 3.3 Consultation on the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024) ran from Tuesday 6 November to Tuesday 18 December 2018. Comments have been submitted by individuals and organisations in the city and are being considered at time of writing. A summary of consultation feedback will be presented.

### **4 Governance**

- 4.1 Housing and Homelessness is now considered monthly by Strategic Housing Board and One Coventry Change Board. Membership is of directors across the Council. The current RAG rating for the programme is RED, taking into account financial risk, timeliness and any other issues.

- 4.2 Strategic Housing Board is supported by the Housing and Homelessness Operational Group with meets fortnightly, with attendance from service heads operational managers.

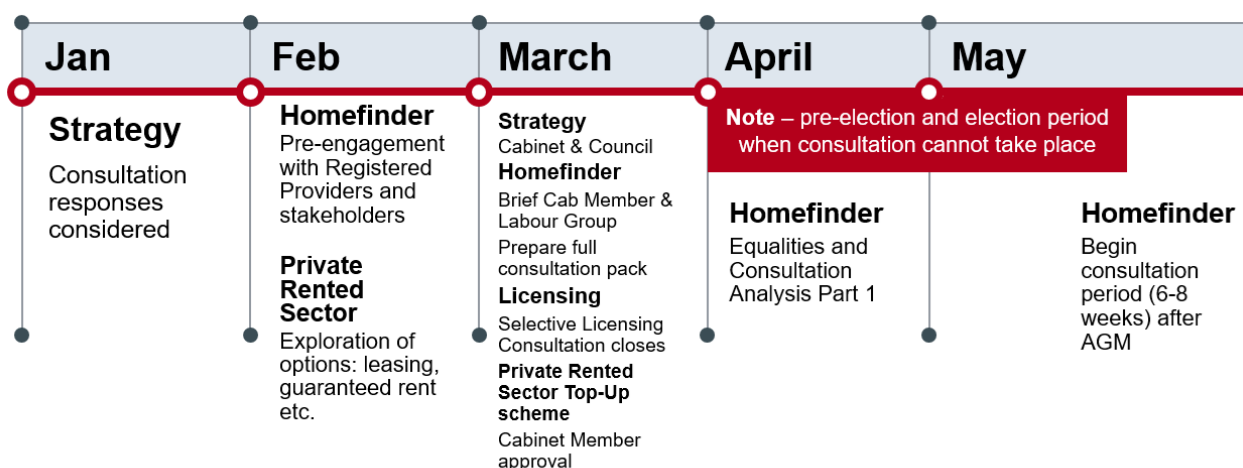
## 5 Timeline

- 5.1 A key objective of the Action Plan is to bring together multiple pieces of work to be considered concurrently. Some of these work streams have been in progress for several months whilst others have not begun.
- 5.2 The timeline below details some key events between now and May 2019.



# Housing and Homelessness

## Strategy approval and Timeline



## 6 Finance

- 6.1 At quarter 3 we are reporting total expenditure across Housing and Homelessness of £9.4M, which equates to an overspend of £3.5M. The forecast overspend largely shows in the gap between what we pay out for temporary accommodation compared with what we can recover through the Housing benefit subsidy grant.
- 6.2 The pre-budget report allocates additional resource equating to an annual budget of £8.4M over the next 3 years. In addition, there is grant funding of £2.1M (17/18 to 19/20) being used in relation to the prevention duty. Government are currently unclear on the level of this resource after 19/20.

## 7 Action plan

There follows an update on the Action Plan with emphasis on specific areas mentioned above. The full Draft Action Plan is attached for reference

### Theme 1: Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless household

Priority	Action	Update
The Council will meet the duties placed upon it by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)	Monitor the impacts of the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act on the demand for homelessness services	Significant increase in clients accessing Housing service* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2,745 households have approached the Homelessness Prevention Service to date this financial year</li> <li>- Approx. 30 cases prevented from homelessness each month</li> <li>- Approx. 50 cases relieved from homelessness within new legislative 56-day window each month</li> <li>- Average caseload of Prevention Officer is 43 cases</li> </ul>
	Review the resources and structure available to deliver the plan and make changes when necessary	Increase in resource necessary to effectively meet demand. New posts actively recruited to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 new frontline prevention officers</li> <li>- 6 accommodation and placement officers</li> <li>- Head of Housing and Homelessness joins April 2019</li> <li>- Operational, contract and commissioning management</li> </ul>
	Work with the West Midlands Combined Authority to deliver the Housing First pilot scheme	Specification tailored to Coventry context and requirements. Market workshop completed with intention to complete tendering exercise and begin scheme in Summer 2019.

\*Data correct as of January 7, 2019

### Theme 2: Housing Development

Priority	Action	Update
Ensure that affordable housing is developed of the right type and tenure to meet the needs of the city	Increase delivery to an additional 348 affordable homes per year (level of need identified in the Local Plan), achieving at least 25% affordable homes on sites that meet the criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivering approx. 1,300 new homes each year, 25% of which are affordable homes and approximately half of those socially rented properties</li> <li>- In 2018/19 1,242 new homes were built in the City, of which 223 were affordable</li> <li>- Total Housing Stock in the city as of March 2018 is 140,610</li> <li>- Registered providers completed 410 new homes in 2016/17 (160 of which were right to buy in the same period).</li> <li>- Pilot progressing to build Modular Homes in Coventry as permanent housing at social rent. Partnership development with WM Housing.</li> </ul>

**Theme 3: Improving existing housing**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Update</b>
Make the best use of existing housing stock in the city, including bringing empty homes back into use	Review the Homefinder Policy ensure it provides applicants with an informed choice about their housing options & encourages sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pre-engagement questionnaire and conversations have taken place with Registered Providers. Intention to consult in Spring 2019 followed by proposals to Cabinet.</li></ul>
	Develop a proactive plan to identify and bring empty homes back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Intention to use Whitefriars properties to bring approx. 26 homes back into use as Temporary Accommodation and reduce use of B&amp;B. Discussions continue to increase the numbers of properties available</li><li>- Intention to use 102 units at Caradoc Hall for small families</li></ul>

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