

Cabinet
Council

5th March 2013
19th March 2013

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure & Culture) – Councillor Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Community Services

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18

Is this a key decision?

Yes

The proposals within the report are likely to impact on residents across the whole of the City.

Executive Summary:

Coventry City Council no longer owns any council housing after the stock was transferred to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. However, the Council still has strategic housing responsibilities and a duty to carry out a periodic review of homelessness in the area and to publish a Homelessness Strategy.

The Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 sets out how these responsibilities will be delivered. Consultation has been carried out and a Final Draft Strategy has been produced and is presented at Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

1. Cabinet are requested to support the Coventry Housing & Homeless Strategy 2013-18 and recommend that Council approve it at their meeting on 19th March 2013.
2. Council are requested to approve the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18
Appendix 2 – Equality and Consultation Analysis

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Supporting Document for the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18: The Coventry Context & The Coventry Homelessness Review.

Supporting Document for the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18: The Results of Consultation.

Copies of these supporting documents are available from the Report Author (contact details at the end of the report)

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

The Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6) considered the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy consultation document at their meeting on 28th November 2012.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 19th March 2013

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Coventry City Council no longer owns any council housing after the stock was transferred to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. However, the Council still has strategic housing responsibilities which include:
 - Assess and plan for the current and future housing needs of the local population across all tenures.
 - Make the best use of the existing housing stock.
 - Plan and facilitate new supply.
 - Plan and commission housing support services which link homes and housing support services.
 - Work in partnership to secure effective housing and neighbourhood management on an on-going basis.
- 1.2 The Council also has a duty to carry out a periodic review of homelessness in the area and publish a Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.3 The way these responsibilities will be met is set out in the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18.
- 1.4 Consultation has been carried out and a Final Draft Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy has been produced. This is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 A Housing Strategy is required to ensure the future provision of housing to meet the needs of the residents of Coventry. The production of a Homelessness Strategy is a legal duty required in the Homelessness Act 2002. Therefore, the Council must consider the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18.
- 2.2 The Cabinet are requested to support the Coventry Housing & Homeless Strategy 2013-18 and recommend that Council approve it at their meeting on 19th March 2013.
- 2.3 Council are requested to approve the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 attached at Appendix 1 of this report

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The themes and priorities for the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy were developed following a period of ongoing consultation and evidence gathering. This included three public Housing Fairs in the City Centre, a stakeholder conference, focus groups and consultation with services users.
- 3.2 The results of this first stage of consultation led to the development of the themes and priorities for the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy, also taking into account the national, regional and local housing contexts.
- 3.3 A Draft Strategy document was produced for consultation, with the identified Themes and Priorities, along with plans for 'what we will do' to address the priorities.

- 3.4 This Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy document was subject to public consultation for twelve weeks from 26th October 2012 to 15th January 2013. The Draft Strategy was published for comment and an online survey was provided for people to give their views.
- 3.5 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy had identified the main issues and challenges for Coventry. 70% agreed or strongly agreed that the 'what we will do' sections identified appropriate ways to tackle these issues.
- 3.6 The Draft Strategy document was also considered by the Transport and Infrastructure Development Scrutiny Board (6) at their meeting on 28th November 2012. As a result of discussion at this meeting, an additional priority was included under 'Theme 1: Increase the supply, choice and quality of new housing', to: *support economic growth by developing high value, high quality housing to retain higher earners and attract new residents*.
- 3.7 Following the consultation on the Draft Strategy document, a final draft Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 was produced. It is this document that we are requesting Council to approve, and is attached as appendix 1.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If the Final Draft Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 is approved, it will be implemented from April 2013.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications that would result from the approval of the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18. It is a high level document which provides the strategic direction for future housing investment decisions. As this direction is followed and any subsequent changes proposed, the specific financial implications will be reported as part of the Council's approval processes.

5.2 Legal implications

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council has a duty to periodically review homelessness in the city and publish a Homelessness Strategy. This has been incorporated into the overall Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 as Theme 2: *Prevent and Tackle Homelessness (Our Homelessness Strategy)*. A review of homelessness in the city has been carried out and will be published as a supporting document to the Strategy. The Local Authority also has a duty under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 to periodically review housing needs within its area.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

This will support the delivery of the Council Plan 2011-14, in particular the priority outcomes; 'Coventry, proud to be a city that works... for jobs and growth', through the objective of the provision of housing to meet the needs of residents; and 'Coventry, proud to be a city that works... to protect our most vulnerable residents', through the objective of preventing homelessness and supporting people who do become homeless.

It also contributes to the housing priority of "a good choice of housing to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Coventry" in the Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-14. The Action Plan shows how the actions for each theme will contribute to meeting the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy. If the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 is not approved, there is a risk that the Council could be challenged on this.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 sets out the strategic themes and priorities for housing and homelessness services, as well as housing related services such as housing enforcement that are carried out by the Council.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

An Equalities and Consultation Analysis (ECA) has been carried out and is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

The ECA identified that some groups with protected characteristics are more likely to be in housing need or to become homeless. The measures contained within the Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy to improve housing provision, increase affordable housing, support independent living, support balanced and sustainable communities, and prevent and tackle homelessness should therefore have a positive impact on protected groups.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

The Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy contains priorities to improve the energy efficiency of domestic dwellings in Coventry across all tenures (in Theme 3: Strive for a healthier and more sustainable City by improving the quality and use of existing housing) as well as recognising the need for energy efficient design in new dwellings (in Theme 1: Increase the supply, choice and quality of new housing). This will have a positive impact on the environment.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 provides a high level strategic direction for housing and housing-related services in Coventry for the next

five years. Partnership working with other organisations is essential to the success of the Strategy and key partners have been consulted at each stage of the development of the Strategy.

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Members: Councillor Ed Ruane	Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action, Housing, Leisure & Culture)	Coventry City Council	04/02/2013	05/02/2013

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