

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Housing Plan 2012-17
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2011
Cabinet Member: Councillor Fry
CMT Member: Director for Development and Regeneration
Author: Stuart Palmer, Asst. Director Strategic Housing
Contact: Tel: 01752 306716
e-mail: stuart.palmer@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:
Key Decision: Yes
Part: I

Executive Summary:

Our current Housing Strategy 2008-11 has driven real improvements across the city, delivering £250M investment to improve the homes of 15,500 former council tenants, and over £100m to deliver record numbers of new affordable homes.

Our plan is now out of date and now needs replacing with refreshed and renewed priorities and objectives to meet the changes in policy, funding and the current economic climate. The Government have recently published a new national housing strategy, 'Laying the Foundations', and this is an ideal time to evaluate which initiatives within this plan will be beneficial for the city to respond to.

During the year we have worked with our partner agencies across all sectors to ensure that we capture ideas on how we can tackle the challenges of the next five years in delivering growth, tackling inequalities, lifting aspirations and developing successful communities.

Rather than replicate the existing format of a suite of five separate strategies and plans, we are proposing one Housing Plan with four themes, each with four priority objectives to align with the city priorities.

For each theme we aim to develop action focused delivery plans, which are measurable, flexible and responsive to changes over the five years of the plan, to hold to account all agencies in the delivery of priority objectives. This should meet our statutory requirements for specific strategies e.g. Homelessness Strategy.

The attached proposed consultative draft plan has been formed through multi-agency, cross sector task and finish groups, to ensure that they link with other plans and priorities in the city.

The government has published a national housing strategy, and the timing is ideal to enable consideration of any proposals relevant to Plymouth, together with a review of available resources before any revisions are made following consultation.

The aim is to bring the final plan before the council in the new year, following consultation, for adoption.

The challenges for the council and its partners are significant in the current economic climate, and we cannot do everything. The plan focuses on key areas where collectively we can make significant progress towards our city vision.

Corporate Plan 2011-2014:

The plan directly supports the vision for the city and our agreed priorities around growth including new homes and jobs, tackling health inequalities especially in areas of deprivation, supporting aspirations, and developing successful communities.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

The plan will be a key focus for supporting investment bids, and guiding spending plans when substantial reductions in public sector funding for housing are now challenging our services.

Homeless Prevention Grant needs a focus for spend to reduce the incidence of people losing their homes, and our capital investment equally needs to target those projects which make a transformational change to the city.

The Plan proposes the strategic use of assets and land, to lever in additional extended and private investment, deliver new homes, and maximise New Homes Bonus to fund growth and regeneration.

Some resources and funding are not yet clear, and the action plans need to be flexible and responsive to opportunities as they arise.

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

Delivery Plans will go through a risk evaluation and Equality Impact Assessment prior to their adoption.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that cabinet

1. Approve the draft Housing Plan for consultation until 13th February 2012.

Reason – to ensure that we capture a wide range of views and consensus on our strategic housing policy direction, and consider proposals in the National Housing Strategy.

2. Instruct officers together with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Strategic Housing and Economic Development to make appropriate amendments and responses to consultation findings, prior to bringing the revised Plan to the Cabinet and Council for adoption in March 2012.

Reason – to ensure that we take account of the wide range of views and responses to our draft plan

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

We have a statutory requirement to develop a number of separate housing related strategies and plans and could still do so. It is proposed that we develop one master plan and delivery plans action specific as an alternative, streamlined and more focused approach.

Background papers:

Sign off:

Fin	DevF11 120037	Leg	13363/ NJ	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Good quality housing in thriving communities is essential to achieving Plymouth's Vision, 'To be one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.'
- 1.2 This consultation draft Housing Plan sets out how partners across the city can work towards this city vision for its homes and communities over the next five years. It replaces five current separate strategies which are now out of date or at the end of their intended scope. Together with clear action focused delivery plans, this approach will also meet the City Council's statutory strategy requirements.
- 1.3 Plymouth offers a good quality of life for the majority that live and work here. But it is also a place where some residents are disadvantaged and don't have equal access to a home that they can afford in an attractive environment. It experiences symptoms of higher than average UK rates of homelessness, and vulnerable people with wide health inequalities and worklessness. The city includes a number of areas within the nation's highest locations of deprivation, often combined with poor housing conditions.
- 1.4 In comparison with the UK and much of the South West Plymouth has relatively:
- Lower levels of owner occupation and higher levels of private rented and social rented homes
 - Marked differences in house prices to buy or rent from one part of Plymouth to another
 - Less affordable homes than much of the UK because of the low wage base
 - More older privately owned or rented properties in poor standard or failings basic tests
 - Higher concentrations of poorly maintained and fuel inefficient private housing occupied by older and vulnerable, low income people
 - More poor standard social rented homes needing renewal and regeneration in mono tenure estates
 - Higher numbers of larger families with complex needs, impacting negatively on their communities
 - High social and financial exclusion in a low waged economy, with significant worklessness and child poverty.
 - Significant demand for privately rented homes, and those in multiple occupation from both students and local people
- 1.5 Plymouth is feeling the effects of the economic downturn, with public resources reduced and with constrained development and limited access to mortgage finance. Household budgets are being squeezed with fuel, food and housing costs are rising. Our challenges ahead are significant. Our responses need to be equally innovative, robust and focused.
- 1.6 This Plan has four key housing themes each containing four priority objectives with suggested actions through which we aim to address the wider housing needs of the City. Each theme reflects on the evidence base on the issues we need to tackle and the actions were developed with partners. Clearly we will need to evaluate all realistic options to meet our objectives but they must be deliverable.

- 1.7 The council has delivered significant achievements and investment in both new and existing homes for local people. The Plan briefly itemises some of the outcomes driven by the current Housing Strategy 2008 – 11. It also shows the pressing housing challenges which now face the city and its residents. The final document will include a glossary of special and technical phrases to aid a wider understanding

2.0 Our Key Housing Themes – and priority objectives

- 2.1 The Housing Plan has four key themes which set out the strategic housing objectives that work towards the shared City and Council vision and priorities:
- **Growing the City** - Contributing to the economic prosperity, physical regeneration and growth of the city our objectives will be to -
 - Ensure new homes support Plymouth's growth, economic competitiveness and future prosperity
 - Increase the supply, mix and quality of new and affordable homes
 - Deliver the physical regeneration of priority neighbourhoods
 - Bring empty homes back into use
 - **Better Homes, Healthy Lives** - Making homes safer, healthier and accessible our objectives will be to -
 - Target interventions to improve the standard of private sector housing
 - Improve the management of private sector housing
 - Adapt housing, so that older and disabled people can live independently in their own homes
 - Improve the energy efficiency of homes
 - **Housing Choice, Smarter Solutions** - Increasing choice, tackling inequalities and preventing homelessness our objectives will be to -
 - Prevent homelessness.
 - End rough sleeping.
 - Promote access to a range of accommodation options.
 - Address the wider causes and impacts of homelessness.
 - **Successful Communities** - Making neighbourhoods safer, healthier, cleaner, cohesive and more prosperous our objectives will be to -
 - Effectively engage residents in priority neighbourhoods
 - Tackle inequality in priority neighbourhoods
 - Support our local communities through major regeneration
 - Tackle anti-social behaviour, targeted harassment, and reduce significant harm from ASB.
- 2.2 Progress against our objectives will be measured through detailed Delivery Plans, one for each theme, to cover specific, measured and agreed actions to realise the delivery of our priority objectives. They will include an analysis of risk and investment required, and equality impact assessments for each theme.
- 2.3 All agencies need to work together on these cross cutting actions to make a material difference to people's lives in the city. To ensure accountability we will agree a series of regular reports on progress through the Council and Plymouth 2020, including the

Plymouth Growth Board, Health and Well Being Board, Children's Trust, Safer and Stronger etc.

- 2.4 We will need to be even more innovative and committed to our housing objectives if we are to realise the transformation we seek in the current challenging economic environment. The governments housing strategy 'Laying the Foundations' sets out new initiatives which we will need to consider as part of the delivery elements of our plan.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 The changes we need are significantly delivered through partnerships, so we have taken time to develop this plan through multi agency and cross sector task and finish groups. Therefore the key priority objectives and aims should be familiar to a significant number of agencies who will be responsible for their success.
- 3.2 However, before the work on the detailed Delivery Plans is completed we will consult more widely on this consultation draft document. We will be seeking feedback from residents and partners on a number of key questions before it is finalised.
- Do you recognise the description of the issues, problems and challenges that we face, and if not what is missing or what do we need to clarify?
 - Do you agree with the key priority objectives set out in the four themes - if not, what is missing to tackle the problems identified?
 - What you, or your agency, commit to working with us to tackle these – if so are there any particular themes or objectives that you can help with?
- 3.3 The consultation will run until 13 February 2012 and we bring the final plan before the council in March, following consultation, for adoption.