

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Housing Plan 2012 - 17
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 27 March 2012
Cabinet Member: Councillor Fry
CMT Member: Director for Place and Director for People
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Ref:

Key Decision: No
Part: I

Executive Summary:

Cabinet agreed a draft Housing Plan for consultation on 13 December 2011. This report sets out a summary of the consultation feedback, together with suggested responses, and a final updated Housing Plan for approval and adoption by Cabinet and the Council. The plan is complete but needs typesetting and delegation is sought to the portfolio holder to agree the final layout.

Overall we received 40 responses from individuals and organisations with a majority of positive comments endorsing the main approach and priorities of the plan, but seeking more detail. We are heartened and grateful to partners for their engagement and commitment.

Our plan is deliberately strategic, with detail to be developed within the themed delivery plans, and this feedback will be invaluable in developing the four plans with partners. Individual responses to those agencies that provided detailed comments are being prepared

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 of our partner agencies in the delivery of the priority objectives. This should meet our statutory requirements for specific strategies e.g. Homelessness Strategy. Cabinet is asked to approve and adopt the plan so that final work can be undertaken on these detailed Delivery Plans for each theme.

The Housing Plan has been updated to reflect outturn statistics on this final year's delivery of the Housing Strategy, which preceded our new Housing Plan 2012-17.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015:

The plan directly supports the vision and wider priorities for the city around growth including new homes and jobs, tackling health and wider inequalities especially in areas of deprivation, supporting resident's aspirations, and developing successful and cohesive 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 external public and private investment, deliver new homes, and maximise New Homes Bonus to fund growth and regeneration.

Some resource streams and funding are not yet clear as government have not yet announced all the detail of new initiatives within the new Housing Strategy, 'Laying the Foundations', and the delivery 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:

The Housing Plan has included a risk evaluation and Equality Impact Assessments of all delivery plans will be complete prior to their adoption.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Housing Plan 2012 – 17 and recommends it to Council for adoption, with delegation to the Assistant Director for Homes and Communities to agree a final layout with the portfolio holder prior to publication.

Reason – to provide a clear priority framework for action across the city in housing and related improvements with our partner agencies.

2. Instruct officers to develop Delivery Plans for each theme working with partner agencies to realise the objectives in the housing plan, and reporting annually to cabinet and relevant boards on their outcomes.

Reason - to ensure that detailed and resourced action plans focus on our agreed priorities, with flexibility to ensure we capitalise on future opportunities for the city, and are accountable for delivery.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Not applicable.

Background papers: Housing Plan 2012-17

Sign off:

Fin	MC 1112 .09	Leg	LT3 736	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This final 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.

1.2 Our 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 priority actions were developed with partners. Clearly we will need to evaluate all realistic options to meet our objectives but they must be deliverable.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 The priorities we need to address 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.

2.2 We asked people whether they:

- Recognised the description of the issues, problems and challenges, and if not what was missing
- Agreed with the key priority objectives, and if not what was missing
- Would commit their agency to work with us to tackle them, and if so specifically if there were issues they could help with.

A wide range of partners and residents of the City, including Plymouth 2020 Executive, have had the opportunity to comment, and many have made positive suggestions on Plan. There is also much which will feature in the development of the detailed Delivery Plans which are now in development. Around 40 comments and suggestions were received.

2.3 There is broad overall agreement with the key priorities and objectives, with suggestions on specific nuances and detail to ensure the plan is located with a wider context, geographically, and thematically. Some examples by theme are set out below with specific changes or inclusions to the plan noted. However no changes were required to be made to the objectives or priorities proposed.

2.4 Where the responses define a specific and accepted gap, an amendment to the plan has been made. However, the majority of responses were focused on the detail of how the objectives and priorities should be developed and delivered in the eyes of the respondent. These comments will be considered in the development of the action focused delivery plans which set out how we will achieve our ambitions. Furthermore as we specifically asked respondents to define how they could help, where they have offered support, we will engage them in this process.

A summary of responses by the Housing Plan themes are set out below.

2.4 .1 General / challenges

Generally, the majority of responses agreed that the plan was well set out with clarity on the issues, challenges and options, and it articulated the problems clearly. The majority of respondents were broadly in agreement with the description of the challenges, with some commentators emphasising the underpinning causal factors inherent within the economy, and that to address the issues, the economy needs to improve. This is accepted, and the Council sees this as a priority.

2.4.2 Growing the City

There was a general agreement on the need for a mix of homes including affordable housing, and tackling regeneration. Quality is as important as quantity, with a focus on design requested. A challenge for more aspiration was made and greater mention of the private sector in meeting demand. There is a need to locate this within a sub-regional housing market context and a clear role for the Growth Board and Heart of the South West Local Economic Partnership in connecting housing to the economy.

The majority of these comments have been reflected in the revised text, but there was no need to change the objectives or priorities. The detail in the delivery plan will accommodate some of the aspiration and housing sector emphasis, and also quality and design issues. Governance through engaging the Growth Board is also critical in defining the role of housing and regeneration within the underlying economic factors we need to tackle.

2.4.3. Better Homes – Healthy Lives

There were no areas of disagreement, and much agreement with the priorities from the respondents to consultation, but some comments were made on points of emphasis, and a need to mention the link between housing quality and educational attainment, and also policies and measures to address the negative impact imbalance in tenure mix, especially in deprived neighbourhoods. Closer links were suggested with public health priorities, together with proactive policies or measures to improve the management and quality of the private sector. All of these factors can be included within the Delivery Plans, but there is no need to materially change the priorities.

2.4.4. Housing Choices - Smarter Solutions

There was general approval of the priority objectives identified. In addition to general comments about homelessness, some respondents particularly requested further emphasis on tackling rough sleeping, and supporting vulnerable people to access decent private rented sector accommodation. We agree that these issues are a high priority and they will be given further consideration during development of the delivery plan. There was only one area of dispute – in relation to the inclusion of gypsies and travellers in the plan and in particular their need for appropriate site provision. The comments demonstrated some misunderstanding of the issues, and the plan will not be changed as a result.

2.4.5 Successful Communities

There were many areas of agreement with the objectives in this theme, together with a clear cross reference to the tenure re-balancing mentioned in the Better Homes feedback above. There was a suggestion that we should recognise the dynamics of change within communities in respect of cohesion; a zero tolerance of sustained harassment and prejudice to send a stronger message to all; a strong dialogue with communities and a focus on smoking cessation, particularly in the home. All of the above can be accommodated within delivery plans, but the main priorities received a clear endorsement.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Overall, the priorities and objectives within the plan received an endorsement by the majority of respondents. This reflects the fact that the plan was developed with a wide range of partner agencies across the public, private and voluntary sectors who are engaged in addressing the housing and regeneration needs of the city. This should give the Council confidence, that it has accurately identified the key priorities and objectives, which must now form the core of action focused delivery plans to address these issues over the next five years.

3.2 Minor amendments to the text have been made to address some of the contextual responses, and final outturn figures on delivery of priorities within the Housing Strategy 2008-11 have been included. The plan will be formatted prior to final publication. Cabinet is therefore requested to approve the plan and recommend it to the Council for adoption.