

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Housing Portfolio Holder

19 October 2017

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Housing

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### AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2018/19

#### **Purpose**

1. To provide the Housing Portfolio Holder with an update on the revised Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2018/19
2. This is not a key decision

#### **Recommendations**

3. That the Housing Portfolio Holder endorses the service plan actions identified in this report and suggests additions to or amendments to these service plan actions if required.

#### **Reasons for recommendations**

A list of service projects needs to be agreed in the autumn to enable service and financial planning to be put in place for effective delivery from April 2018. The proposed list represents a continuation of key projects already underway and a series of new projects designed to take forward key developments identified in previous years work and to further enhance the service to customers. The final version of the Service Plan will be presented to the Portfolio Holder in March 2018.

#### **Background**

4. The existing Affordable Homes Service Plan includes a number of service plan projects intended to run over a two or three year timeframe. This is therefore a refresh of the service plan designed mainly to introduce new service plan actions to address external challenges.
5. The Affordable Homes service plan differs to other service plans within the Council as it is closely linked to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The introduction of the self financing regime for council housing from April 2012 means that a separate 30 year HRA Business Plan is in place from 2012/13 onwards.
6. There is also a linked Asset Management Strategy that sets out the Council's approach to managing its homes and other properties, which also covers a 30 year period. Arising from the Asset Management Strategy, the Five Year Housing Maintenance Plan sets out the planned expenditure to maintain the Council's homes and forms part of the HRA Business Plan.
7. The service plan is set in the context of the overarching Housing Strategy 2018 - 2024, which in turn is related to the sub regional housing strategy and the Combined Authority Housing Strategy. None of these related strategies are currently complete but the Housing Portfolio Holder received an Interim Housing Strategy Statement at the Portfolio Holder meeting in March 2017.

### Considerations

8. The service plan addresses the key Councils key aims and actions from the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020, as well as projects contained within the Business Efficiency and Improvement Plan.
9. Government policy changes such as the reduction in rents, changes to welfare benefits and the proposal to sell council houses to pay for the extension of the Right to Buy to housing associations also require specific activity to model the impacts and to identify possible mitigations for both the Council and for the Council's tenants.

### Options

10. The Portfolio Holder is requested to consider these proposed actions and to suggest changes or additions where required.

**Table 1 Proposed Service Plan themes 2017 -18**

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Budget implication</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
1	Housing Strategy 2018 - 2023	No extra budget required	Process of review underway but will be completed in 2018 to allow time for details of new Government policy changes to be firmed up and for work to be completed to align the strategy with Cambridge City.	Julie Fletcher
2	Community impact & community safety	Depends on outcome of communal room review  Establishment of new health & safety compliance officer	Implementation of Communal Room Review  Health & safety internal review (HRA)	Anita Goddard
3	Homelessness mitigation	Extra budget of £200k requested in financial planning process	Implementation project to deliver requirements of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.  A range of activities to be considered to try and offset the worst of the impacts of policy on homelessness as identified by the new homelessness strategy. To include consideration of an extra hostel or similar provision.  Implementation project for new Shire Homes service. To ensure that project is kept under close scrutiny during first full 12 months of operation including ensuring appropriate support is in place to deal with arising issues.	Heather Wood & Sue Carter

4	Housing & planning policy review and updates	No extra budget required	Work closely with Planning to update the Affordable Housing Special Planning Document following expected adoption of new Local Plan.  Consideration to be given to planning arrangements needed to support self build, Community Land Trusts and modern methods of construction.	Julie Fletcher
5	CA housing delivery	Budget to come from CA	Partnership project to deliver new affordable homes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Stephen Hills
6	Options for new housing delivery	No extra budget required at this stage	Project to review and consolidate the Council's arrangements for delivering new build homes including., the HRA programme, innovative GF schemes, self build and work within the HDA	Gill Anderton

### Implications

#### 11. Financial

There are financial dimensions to all of these projects but there is no significant new funding required at this stage other than that indicated in table 1 for homelessness duties. Any formal request for resources will be made through the Council's financial approval route.

#### 12. Legal

A number of these projects will require specialist input from our legal services.

#### 13. Staffing

There are no specific staffing requirements arising from these projects at this stage.

#### 14. Risk Management

Risk logs will be developed for each project.

#### 15. Equality and Diversity

Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on each policy change as it is developed.

### Consultations (including the Youth Council)

16. The final version of the service plan will be produced with the help of the Tenant Participation Group and the Youth Council.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

17. The Affordable Homes service plan is important for all three of the Council's main strategic aims.

## **Conclusions / Summary**

18. Table 1, contains a draft service plan actions list that will be incorporated within the final form of the Affordable Homes service plan to be brought back to the Housing Portfolio Holder in March 2017.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None

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