

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 27 June 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Communities
PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport
SUBJECT: Halton Housing Strategy 2013/18
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a finalised version of Halton's Housing Strategy 2013/18 for adoption.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the Board approves the revised Housing Strategy (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B); and**
- 2) the Council be recommended to approve the revised Housing Strategy.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At its meeting on the 24th January 2013 the Board received a report setting out the principal elements of the draft Housing Strategy 2013/18 and its supporting evidence paper. The Board approved the documents for consultation purposes.

3.2 A formal consultation exercise was undertaken between the 4th February and 22nd March to seek the views of partners, stakeholders and residents. This included the following awareness raising measures –

- Presentation to the Environment and Urban Renewal, Health and Safer PPBs
- A questionnaire on the Council's website
- Copies placed in Halton Direct Links and Council libraries
- Articles in the Civic magazine and local press
- Copies sent to Housing Associations, and raised at the Halton Housing Partnership and Housing Visioning Group

3.3 In addition to comments received from internal Directorate Management Teams and the PPBs, the consultation received comments from Riverside, Halton Housing Trust and Liverpool Housing Trust, and 39 responses to the on-line survey (4 of which were from Members and 1 from a Council employee).

3.4 In the main the comments received did not raise new issues, but sought to expand and add emphasis to existing information already in the evidence paper, particularly around the Welfare Reforms. Where possible the text has been amended to accommodate these comments, but the Strategy itself is largely unchanged.

3.5 It must be said that the Strategy is being introduced at a time of rapidly declining resources for public services generally, and for housing in particular, and consequently the Strategy seeks to portray a realistic assessment of what can be achieved within existing and likely future resources. However the information gathered in developing the Strategy means we can provide an evidence base to support funding bids should additional resources become available in the future.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Housing Strategy will set the context for future policy development relating to housing and will have a significant influence on related policies and strategies such as the Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, linking also to the Core Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial implications of delivering the Strategy are outlined in the Action Plan contained in the draft Strategy. In particular the delivery of affordable housing is dependent on future levels of resources from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Further clarity about this is expected to emerge through the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on the 26th June.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The Housing Strategy aims to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing conditions which will have a beneficial impact on families with children and other household groups.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None directly, although programmes to increase the supply and energy efficiency of housing could result in additional jobs and skills for the Borough. Construction and other investment offers the opportunities for increased jobs and apprenticeships locally.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

A number of priorities contained within the Strategy e.g. around fuel poverty, provision of supported housing and improving conditions in the private sector will have positive health benefits for some of Halton's most

vulnerable residents.

6.4 A Safer Halton

A number of priorities contained in the Strategy e.g. prevention of homelessness and regeneration of Castlefields will contribute to the creation of safer and stronger communities.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The draft Strategy aims to promote housing growth and support economic growth in the Borough which will have a positive impact on the built environment.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Delivery of some elements of the Strategy is dependent on the continued availability of resources from external funding streams e.g. from the HCA. Future reductions in funding levels could impact upon the ability to deliver some of the targets contained in the Action Plan.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Strategy specifically aims to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people due to age or disability and will therefore have positive impacts for these groups.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 Under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are expected to produce a Housing Strategy which gives an overview of housing in their district and sets out priorities for action.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 Not applicable.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 2013/14 to 2017/18.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Housing Strategy	Runcorn Town Hall (second floor)	Joanne Sutton
Housing Strategy evidence paper	Runcorn Town Hall (second floor)	Joanne Sutton

