



# **BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 DECEMBER 2015**

## **HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW**

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration Community and Culture

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### **Summary**

The Housing Strategy 2015 was approved by Cabinet in February 2015. The strategy contains a commitment to annually review and assess progress against the targets, which this report seeks to do.

### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy was developed in partnership with the Strategic Housing Partnership Board and a diverse range of partners and stakeholders. The strategy sits alongside a number of other council policies.
- 1.2 The Housing Strategy is consistent with the Policy Framework and a review of progress is a matter for Cabinet.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy was approved in February 2015. It contains a commitment to annually review and assess progress against the targets, which this report seeks to do.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy aims to reflect policies and priorities at national, regional and local level. It will help to deliver the strategic housing priorities for Medway and sets the direction for housing in Medway until 2018. It is designed around four strategic priorities.
  - Increase the supply of suitable and affordable homes
  - Improve the quality of homes, environment and people's lives
  - Promote sustainability by supporting people within their community

- Improve the flexibility of accommodation.
- 2.3 The Strategic Housing Partnership Board is responsible for monitoring the performance against the Housing Strategy and the progress of the action plan on a half-yearly basis.
- 2.4 The Board includes representation from Housing Associations, the Homes and Communities Agency, private landlords and local organisations whose work focuses on housing issues. This representation helps to ensure that local knowledge and expertise informs the ongoing review and development of the strategy and also acts to provide challenge to the Council.
- 2.5 An updated copy of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015-18 is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

### 3. Achievements

- 3.1 Across all strategic priorities there has been significant progress against the 51 actions. A total of six actions have been completed and a further 41 are on target to be delivered. Four actions are currently off target but it is hoped that these will progress further in the next quarter. A detailed report of the progress against each of the priorities is given below.

<b>Strategic Priority One - Increase the supply of suitable and affordable homes</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
7	n/a	7	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 115 new affordable homes were delivered in the first 2 quarters of 2015-16 through an investment of more than value of £13 million.</li> <li>• A range of homes were delivered including larger family homes and wheelchair units</li> <li>• 0.84% of the private sector stock in Medway is currently long-term empty and work continues to bring empty properties back into use</li> </ul>			
<b>Strategic Priority Two – Improve the quality of homes, environment and people’s lives</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
17	2	15	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collaborative working agreement is now in place with Public Health to deliver improvements which tackle and prevent health inequalities</li> <li>• 426 vulnerable clients supported via the floating support service</li> <li>• Work continues with private sector landlords via the Landlords Forum. Membership of the Landlord’s Accreditation Scheme and Tenants Accreditation scheme have increased</li> <li>• The Council continues to work to improve the standards of management and housing conditions in private accommodation with formal enforcement. This is seeing poor landlords change their practices.</li> </ul>			

<b>Strategic Priority Three – Promote sustainability by supporting people within their community</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
24	4	16	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Institute of Public Care have completed a needs assessment of older people in Medway (jointly commissioned with Social Care)</li> <li>• 55 households have received major adaptations to their homes via the Home Adaptation Service to ensure that their homes are suitable to their needs (first two quarters of 2015-16)</li> <li>• A new outcome based support service for clients affected by Domestic Abuse has been implemented. The service provides advice, floating support and refuges</li> <li>• 32 ex-offenders were helped to secure and maintain accommodation via our supported accommodation providers in the first two quarters of 2015-16</li> <li>• Progress has been made with Children’s Services to replicate the mental health link worker role with 16-17 year olds and is due for implementation in the next quarter.</li> <li>• Housing service is working with Childrens Services and other partners to review and develop focused interventions for children and families identified through the Early Help Panel meetings</li> <li>• The number of homeless applications is down from 720 to 636 against the same period last year</li> <li>• The number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced</li> </ul>			
<b>Strategic Priority Four – Improve the flexibility of accommodation</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
4	n/a	4	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is underway to review the council’s Tenancy Strategy</li> <li>• Homes advertised via Kent Homechoice detail any adaptations at the property. The Housing Occupational Therapist assists in assessing the suitability of properties to ensure that they meet the needs of the client</li> <li>• Applicants are able to access an online mutual exchange system</li> </ul>			

#### **4. Advice and analysis**

4.1 The Housing Strategy has proved a useful and effective framework in delivering real improvement to lives of people within Medway by:-

- Helping people benefit from regeneration
- Assisting older and vulnerable people to maintain their independence and live healthy lives
- Creating a safe, clean and green Medway
- Helping to ensure that children and young people have the best start in life

4.2 The Housing Strategy provides the basis on which to continue to improve services, attract resources and invest in Medway.

## 5. Risk management

5.1 The primary risk and influencing factors are set out within the strategy, which will be subject to half yearly review and monitoring. Key risks include:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>
Changes to the environment in which the strategy operates	Possible impact on service demand, funding and opportunities for intervention	Action plan reviewed half yearly through the Medway Strategic Housing Partnership Board, with action taken to mitigate risk

## 6. Financial implications

6.1 The Housing Strategy is used to target and direct resources internally and to direct and provide evidence to attract external funding, including from the Homes and Community Agency and other partners.

## 7. Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the review.

## 8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee notes the progress against the aims of the Housing Strategy.

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### Appendices

Appendix 1 Updated Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015-18

### Background papers

Housing Strategy 2015-18  
<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Housing%20Strategy%202015-18-.pdf>