

**BUSINESS SUPPORT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
1 DECEMBER 2016
HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW**

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture,
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Summary

The current Housing Strategy 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 Council works with a range of partners on both the delivery and monitoring of the work, and whilst monitoring is undertaken in various formats throughout the year this report seeks to bring the overall information together for consideration.

2.4 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 actions. A total of 16 actions have been completed and a further 28 are on target to be delivered. Four actions are currently off target but it is hoped that these will progress further in the second half of the year. One action is on hold. A detailed report of the progress against each of the priorities is given below.

Strategic Priority One - Increase the supply of suitable and affordable homes			
Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
7	0	6	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 new affordable homes were delivered in the first 2 quarters of 2016-17 and a further 251 are currently on site. Due to slippage in some schemes the annual target will not be met as the units will be delivered in the following financial year • Over the life of the strategy to date, more than £31.5m has been invested into affordable housing in Medway • A range of homes have been delivered including larger family homes and wheelchair units • 0.88% of the private sector stock in Medway is currently long-term empty and work continues to bring empty properties back into use 			
Strategic Priority Two – Improve the quality of homes, environment and people’s lives			
Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
14	3	10	1 (on hold)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative working agreement is in place with Public Health to deliver improvements which tackle and prevent health inequalities • The floating support service (commissioned in 2014) has supported just under 300 vulnerable clients year to date with their housing issues. • Work continues with private sector landlords via the Landlords Forum. Membership of the Landlord’s Accreditation Scheme and Tenants Accreditation scheme have increased • Four Tenant Accreditation training sessions have taken place in 2016-17 • 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 			

Strategic Priority Three – Promote sustainability by supporting people within their community			
Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
24	11	10	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Institute of Public Care have completed a needs assessment of older people in Medway (jointly commissioned with Social Care) • In the first two quarters of 2016-17, 49 Disabled Facilities Grants were completed to help people live independently in their own homes • Ex-offenders are being helped to secure and maintain accommodation via our supported accommodation providers • Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) now take place on a weekly basis • A specialist worker has been recruited within Children’s Services to jointly assess 16/17 year olds who approach Medway Council as homeless • We were involved in developing the Early Help panel with Social Care and attend on a regular basis to help identify cases for early intervention • Homeless Prevention work has increased and in the first two quarters of 2016-17 homelessness was prevented in 234 cases • At the end of September 2016 there were 306 households in temporary accommodation 			
Strategic Priority Four – Improve the flexibility of accommodation			
Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
4	2	2	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review the council’s Tenancy Strategy has been undertaken • 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 • Applicants are able to access an online mutual exchange system • A review of the accommodation available for Young People has been undertaken in partnership with Children’s Services 			

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:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Changes to the environment in which the strategy operates	Possible impact on service demand, funding and opportunities for intervention	Action plan reviewed half yearly, 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](#)