

# CABINET



Report subject	<b>BCP Housing Strategy 2021-2026 “Our commitment to our communities”</b>
Meeting date	29 September 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The BCP Housing Strategy has been developed over a number of months following a 10-week public consultation. This along with a number of stakeholder engagement sessions has contributed to the development of final strategy document which includes a vision statement and clear priorities and is to be considered by cabinet for approval.</p> <p>It is a high-level document which sets out a clear vision with strong leadership for BCP to ensure that housing, planning, economic development, and regeneration work together and are integrated to best influence the housing market.</p> <p>This is a key document that frames our partnership work together, drives place shaping and contributes to health and wellbeing of our population. It provides evidence of housing needs and demands and will set out the Council’s strategic approach to inform how it will need forward to achieve its ambitions and attract funding opportunities to support that work.</p> <p>The Council’s housing responsibilities covers a broad range of issues, from identifying land for new homes to improving old ones and meeting the wide variety of housing needs of our communities. More detailed strategies and policies sit beneath this Housing Strategy, setting out our aims and delivery plans in specific areas ensuring they are clearly linked.</p> <p>This document will be complimented by an Action Plan which will set out a summary of actions and more detail as to how those actions will be carried out to deliver the strategy.</p>
Recommendations	<b>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</b> <b>Endorse Council approval of the Strategy, it is a Council level document</b>

Reason for recommendations	To replace the legacy Housing Strategies with a new BCP Housing Strategy setting a new and ambitious vision for BCP to improve housing outcomes for our residents
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Robert Lawton - Portfolio Holder for Homes
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan – Chief Operating Officer
Report Authors	Lorraine Mealings, Director of Housing Kerry Ruff - Housing Enabling Manager Nigel Ingram – Head of Housing Delivery
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

## 1. Background

- 1.1 All Councils are expected to have a Housing Strategy in place and now that we are a single Council across a larger area, we need to implement a fresh updated Housing Strategy that reflects the needs of the Council area and replaces any legacy strategy documents. The new Strategy sets out a vision statement and 5 priorities to focus our actions and efforts in order to achieve the best outcomes for our area.
- 1.2 Housing is a crucial component of wellbeing. Good quality housing, which meets an individual's or family's needs, provides a sound platform to build a good quality of life. Poor quality or inadequate housing tends to be associated with poorer outcomes for people, whether that relates to the health impacts of living in damp or overcrowded conditions or the impact poor housing can have on children's attainment at school.
- 1.3 Housing Strategies help local authorities to provide context, background and evidence to local issues. The BCP Housing Strategy is unique to BCP. Ours has set out a vision statement and accompanying headline priorities to enable the development of supporting delivery and business plans. It provides evidence of housing needs and demands and sets out the Council's strategic approach in order to inform how the council and its many partners need to move forward.
- 1.4 BCP Council, in common with much of the UK, is growing and changing. Meeting the housing needs of our area, now and in the future, is important to residents. Particularly during the covid pandemic, there was a need and still is to provide services which help address health and socio-economic inequalities and support people who are likely to have fewer chances in life and be vulnerable to poverty.
- 1.5 The current economic climate is having, and will continue to have, major effects on the housing market. Coupled with these significant economic changes are

profound demographic changes to the age structure of the population which, in turn, will impact on housing needs.

1.6 The Housing Strategy cuts across a significant part of many of the other services that the Council provides. It provides clear links to other strategies and policies including the Corporate Strategy, Our Big Plan and the developing Local Plan and will be a key document at the heart of many other council strategies that seek to address matters such as social care commissioning services, care services, children services and community needs.

1.7 The Housing Strategy is a key Council document that has a significant impact with regard to place-shaping for our area. The impact of delivering an effective Housing Strategy is ultimately focused on delivering positive housing outcomes for the area and its residents. Its impact is cross cutting - it impacts on multiple issues including community safety, economic growth, vulnerable people and social care provision. It was therefore important that effective consultation took place to inform the development of the Strategy. The ambitions for shaping BCP area coming from the consultation have been reflected in the shaping of the new and ambitious Housing Strategy.

1.8 BCP Homes "Our commitment to our communities" 2021-2026 Issues and Opportunities paper went through a 10-week public consultation from 12<sup>th</sup> March to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021. There were also a number of engagement sessions with stakeholders including an all-member seminar session.

1.9 Despite the restrictions in place due to covid the consultation was very successful. There were over 100 responses to the survey and almost 2,000 people viewed the project online, with several also contributing to the Ideas Board on the Council's Engagement HQ platform. Numerous discussions were also facilitated through various partnership meetings and during the consultation period.

1.10 The issues and opportunities paper was very comprehensive to help provide context and inform the tone of the vision and proposed priorities which sought to address a number of broad ranging aspects from homelessness to new build housing, from carbon reduction and fire safety to the management of Council homes.

1.11 The new strategy is intended to run for a five-year period which is considered to be a suitable medium-term duration to reflect transitions that BCP are still progressing through. There may need to be a formal review of the strategy once the new Local Plan emerges to ensure it is sufficiently aligned.

1.12 The Vision statement for the Housing Strategy is "To provide a safe, secure and sustainable home where it is needed and thereby enabling people to live well" and the priorities are:

1. Meeting future growth needs
2. Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
3. Improving housing options, opportunities and choice for all

4. Empowering and co-creating neighbourhood where resident want to live and be part of the community
5. Improving safety and sustainability across BCP's housing

1.13 The strategy sets out key actions for each of these 5 priorities that will help to deliver the vision and outcomes for residents. A full action plan will be developed once the strategy has been improved to help make sure that the strategy is fully delivered.

1.14 The strategy concludes with a section setting out how it is intended to monitor the priorities and is accompanied by a full equality impact assessment. It sets out the governance arrangements to ensure and effective implementation of the strategy.

1.15 It is clear that many BCP Council services as well as the Council's multiple public, private and voluntary sector partners will play a key part in the implementation with successful partnerships providing a significant contribution to its success.

## **2. Summary of financial implications**

2.1 The Housing Strategy sets out a clear vision and priorities which will now inform how the Council intends to financially commit to achieving housing priorities and will assist with future budget decisions.

## **3. Summary of legal implications**

3.1 There are no specific legal implications emerging from this report.

## **4. Summary of human resources implications**

4.1 The ongoing monitoring of the strategy will require dedicated officer and leadership resources.

## **5. Summary of environmental impact**

5.1 The fifth priority within the Housing Strategy – 'Improving safety and sustainability across BCP's housing' – will help to ensure that current and future housing plays in part to address local, national and international environmental challenges.

## **6. Summary of public health implications**

6.1 There are public health implications when considering the provision of good quality housing. Good housing helps to ensure good health outcomes for residents.

## **7. Summary of equality implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment will accompany the strategy to consider any implication. The results of the screening process and feedback from the EIA panel did not highlight any areas of concern as the strategy document doesn't seek to introduce any policy changes directly and any actions from the strategy that do introduce new policy or approach will be accompanied by their own EIA screening.

## **8. Summary of risk assessment**

8.1 There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 BCP Housing Strategy "Our commitment to our communities"

Appendix 2 BCP Homes Issues and Opportunities consultation paper

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