

CABINET REPORT



Report subject	Mid Point Review of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan
Meeting date	2 April 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The BCP Housing Strategy was produced in 2021 and set priorities to be delivered over the following five years. Given the challenges in the economy and the housing market both locally and nationally, a mid-point review has been completed to consider delivery to date, key challenges, and what has changed since 2021. The review then considers how the Delivery Plan needs to adapt to ensure delivery against the strategy objectives is maximised.</p> <p>The proposed new Delivery Plan for 2025-2027 is appended to this report and Cabinet are asked to approve this.</p> <p>The report also proposes a new governance structure to improve oversight and programme management of the Plan in its final stages.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that [Cabinet]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Approve the Revised Housing Strategy Delivery Plan at appendix B.(b) Approve the extension of the current Housing Strategy Period to 2027.(c) Approve the governance structure as set out in paragraphs 7-11 of the report.
Reason for recommendations	<p>To enable the Council to maximise delivery against the Housing Strategy Vision; to provide a safe, secure and sustainable home where it is needed and thereby enabling people the opportunity to live well.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Kieron Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulatory Services
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Wards	All
Classification	Public

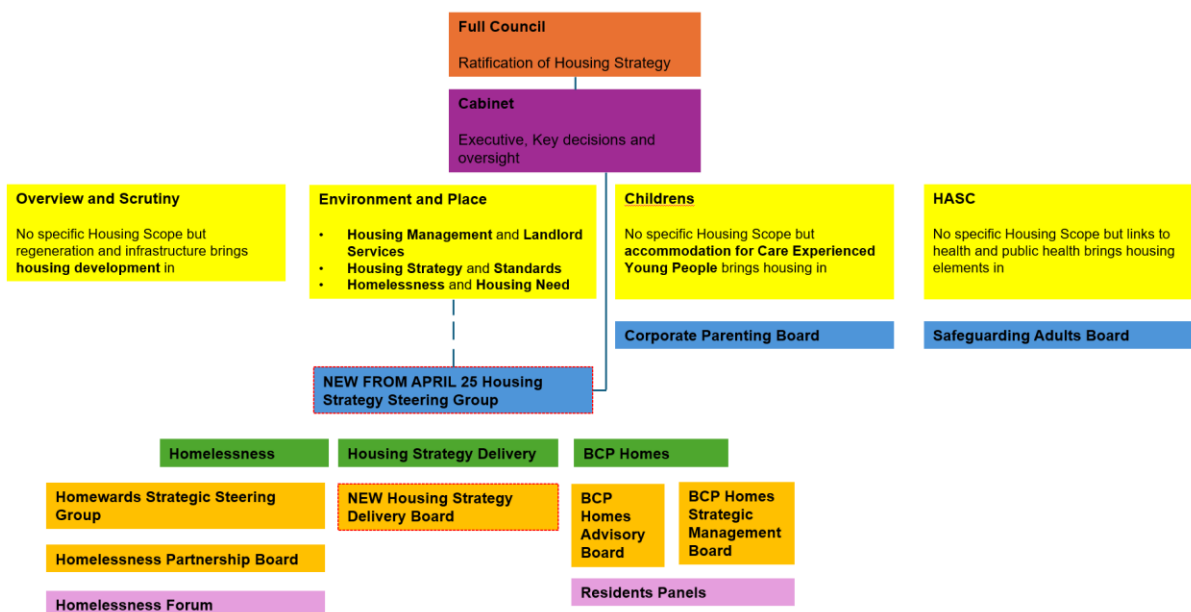
Background

1. The BCP Housing and Homelessness Strategies were produced in 2021 and set priorities to be delivered over the following 5 years. Given the challenges in the economy and the housing market both locally and nationally as well as the change in Government, a review has been completed to consider delivery to date, key challenges and critically, what has changed since 2021. The review then considers how the Delivery Plan for the final stages of the strategy needs to adapt to provide clear focus accounting for current circumstances and challenges.
2. There have been many significant legislative, regulatory and political changes which impacts the work of housing and planning authorities and their relevant partners since the 2021 strategy was adopted and key forthcoming changes to legislation. Appendix a sets out a summary of these and the review has considered the implications as they are understood at the time of writing.
3. The five priorities within the Housing Strategy are;
 - Meeting future growth needs
 - Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
 - Improving housing options, opportunities and choice for all
 - Empowering and co-creating neighbourhoods where residents wish to live and be part of the community
 - Improving safety and sustainability across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole's housing
4. The related Homelessness Strategy was also adopted in 2021 and set out a vision of 'ending homelessness in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole by ensuring everyone has a safe place to live that they can call home.' The delivery plan associated with this strategy is a live document which has extensive partnership input and oversight. It includes significant detail and has been reviewed on an annual basis by the Homelessness Partnership Board. The strategy holds three core aims;

- Early and effective upstream prevention: reducing homelessness by intervening and educating prior to occurrence
 - Reducing and stopping the cycle of homelessness: where this does occur, work at making it a one-off event
 - Ongoing improvement, development and sustainability
5. This review has focused on the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan and adopting an approach of improved oversight/active programme delivery. To support this, it is proposed that a new governance structure is implemented alongside the new delivery plan. This is outlined from paragraph 7 below.
 6. The proposed delivery plan at appendix b sets out an extensive programme of work over the next two years. It is therefore recommended that the Housing Strategy period is extended by 12 months to 2027, to allow the pursuit of these priorities whilst allowing sufficient time and capacity to develop a new Housing Strategy throughout 2026, reporting to Cabinet in December 2026. The Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement and a new 5 year new Strategy will be completed by March 2026.

New Housing Strategy Governance Structure

7. In order to improve oversight of delivery against the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan it is proposed that a Cross Party Housing Strategy Steering Group is implemented. This Group will be Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulation and report to Cabinet. It will sit within the scrutiny remit of the Environment and Place (E&P) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Draft Terms of Reference for the group can be found at appendix c.
8. It is proposed that an annual delivery update is provided to Cabinet and made available for scrutiny by the E&P O&S Committee. Composition of the Working Group will be one Member per Group plus one unaligned Member. Expressions of interest for inclusion in this group will be requested by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regulation in April 2025.
9. A dashboard of measures and key performance indicators will be developed prior to the commencement of the Board and will link in with Corporate Strategy monitoring.
10. In addition to the oversight of the delivery of the Plan, the Board will also support the development of the delivery of the new Housing Strategy for 2027 - 2032 which will commence in 26/27.
11. The chart below illustrates the full proposed governance structure relating to housing and includes reference to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees as housing touches on their scope in most cases. The new Steering Group is shown as well as a Delivery Board to complement it. Chaired by the Director of Housing and Public Protection, this Board will bring officers together to ensure this varied and complex programme remains on track and that issues are actively tackled.



BCP Member Engagement

12. In July 2024 a Motion was passed at Council which proposed that a number of aspects relating to housing in BCP were considered within this review. The table below summarises the Motion and how each matter has/is being considered;

This Council acknowledges that there is a housing crisis across the country, including within BCP. There are a variety of factors that have led to this, however, as a Local Authority, we could begin to tackle this by agreeing to use the forthcoming review of the Housing Strategy to explore:

HOUSING MOTION JULY 2024	ACTION	DELIVERY PLAN REFERENCE
Enhancing the 'Housing First' approach to tackling homelessness at BCP Council so that no-one has to sleep rough and that the standard of available accommodation is assessed and maintained.	Housing First is a key part of our homelessness response and is an essential part of the council's response to rough sleeping. The continued and extended use of the model will be considered within the review of the Eradicating Rough Sleeping Plan.	2.1

The existing arrangements in order to make empty properties become available more quickly.	Included in revised delivery plan.	1.10
Lobby central government for a new definition of affordable housing that accurately reflects people's ability to pay, with some discretion to allow for local pay and housing costs.	Continue to lobby and engage with the Government as they consult on their Rent Policy for Social Housing to ensure that long term investment requirements within Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) are addressed whilst protecting affordable rent levels.	5.5
Reviewing, in consultation other appropriate bodies, the viability assessment methodology used for housing developers and ways in which existing rules can be applied or amended to increase the number of affordable homes.	<p>New affordable housing policy had been proposed as part of the new Local Plan. It reduced the Poole and Bournemouth town centre locations and wider locations on Brownfield sites to a 10% requirement and 40% on Greenfield sites.</p> <p>Following the rejection of the draft Local Plan by the examiners in March 2025; the delivery of the prescribed number of affordable homes will now require further review.</p>	1.6
the possibility of supporting Local Authority built homes in the BCP area by developing an inward investment strategy to seek investment from external investors such as Dorset Pension Fund.	The Council is developing a "Place" bid for securing private and public investment which will help to focus on the growth opportunities of circa 3000 homes over the next ten years, a strong demand for all tenures, a well established build to rent market and continued supply of affordable housing which could offer opportunities for investor-led contractors. Consideration of an inward investment strategy including institutional investment opportunities and alternative funding vehicles, mechanisms etc	1.5

	to maximise delivery options.	
Co-produce a Tenants' Charter with local residents to influence housing and tenancy standards across BCP.	This will be considered as part of the options appraisal for use of further regulatory powers.	5.3
The licensing of all private sector rented housing and adding its voice to local and national calls for a ban on 'no fault' (Section 21) evictions.	Evidence base and options appraisal considering further regulatory powers subject to resources.	5.3
The existing mandatory licensing of HMOs and if additional measures are required to ensure consistent standards are applied and whether existing enforcement measures are adequate.	Evidence base and options appraisal considering further regulatory powers subject to resources.	5.3
What measures are required to regulate Airbnbs and holiday lets in BCP.	<p>Further exploration of the issues is required to define the potential response. There are legislative powers already available to the council to respond to issues of nuisance if there is a negative impact on the local community.</p> <p>In terms of regulating the number of Air B&B's and holiday lets there are no powers currently available to the council.</p>	-
Whether, given the announcements by the new Government, the house building targets in the Local Plan need reviewing.	New Government housing announcements have increased local housing targets which will be reviewed in the Local Plan urgently	1.6

13. In September 2024 an all Member workshop was facilitated to provide an update on the delivery of the strategy, discuss the key challenges and to offer the opportunity for comment and input into the review and further actions. This was attended by over 40 Members. A further session on 23 January 2025 was undertaken to provide further feedback, share the headline proposed delivery plan and to discuss the proposed new Governance Structure.

Overall Summary

14. The revised plan sets an ambitious programme across the next two years which includes delivery of new homes, the pursuit of improved housing standards and several housing initiatives which will improve outcomes for our residents. It also prioritises important foundational work which will support assessment of need and allow longer term plans and strategies to be developed and delivered.
15. The Housing Strategy is a key area of work for the Council in a geographical area which is experiencing significant and complex housing challenges. The new approach to delivery and oversight will ensure dynamic consideration of issues and development of responses - and will facilitate greater input and collaborative working into this most critical of areas.

Consultation

16. As this is a mid-point review of the strategy delivery plan, no public consultation is required. Consultation has taken place with registered providers and other stakeholders such as health partners as part of the review.
17. There has been extensive input from several council services including Housing & Communities, Investment and Development, Planning, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Customer Arts and Property and Finance.
18. A workshop session was held at Directors Strategy Group in February 2025.

Summary of financial implications

19. Programmes within the Delivery Plan will require exploration and confirmation of potentially complex financial arrangements on a case by case basis.
20. Facilitating suitable, affordable accommodation for BCP residents has a wide reaching impact on the cost to the council, other public sector and health services.

Summary of legal implications

21. There are no specific legal implications. Any implications relating to specific programmes or actions will be considered on a case by case basis in consultation with legal services.

Summary of human resources implications

22. None.

Summary of sustainability impact

23. The delivery plan contributes positively to sustainability by pursuing improved quality of housing and supporting the development of energy efficient housing standards and solutions.

Summary of public health implications

24. There are wide ranging positive contributions across the delivery plan including specific programmes which will improve health outcomes through better housing. In addition, the plan seeks to work with a range of partners to pursue an improved understanding of housing as a wider determinant of health to inform future strategic plans.

Summary of equality implications

25. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening of the Strategy Review has taken place and was assessed by the EIA panel on 18 September 2024, feedback provided by the panel included that the EIA needed to show more clearly what the equality impacts were and what the mitigations would be. It was noted that while the EIA contained a lot of information that was drawn upon, it was deemed a general synopsis and lacking in detail specific to individual protected characteristics.
26. The EIA screening that took place in 2021 when the Housing Strategy was launched was rated adequate. It was considered appropriate that protected characteristic and negative impacts would be drawn out at a project level.
27. It has been agreed the EIA for the Review does not need to return to panel, and an action plan within the EIA is will be monitored alongside the Delivery Plan.

Summary of Risk Assessment

28. Risks associated with delivery of the Housing Strategy will be managed through the Council's usual risk management framework.

Background papers

Published works relating to Housing Strategy:

- Housing Strategy 2021 [housing-strategy](#)
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 [Homelessness-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy](#)
- CNHAS Strategy 2021 updated 2024 [Council Newbuild Housing & Acquisition Strategy \(CNHAS\) 2023-2028 \(Cabinet 13 December 2023\)](#)

Appendices

- Appendix A – Legislative and Political changes since 2021
- Appendix B - Revised Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2027
- Appendix C – Housing Strategy Steering Group Draft Terms of Reference
- Appendix D - EIA Housing Strategy 21-26 EIA Report and Action Plan
- Appendix E – Glossary of terms and reference document