

People and Health Overview Committee

30 November 2023

Home In On Housing – Dorset Council's Housing Strategy

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Somper, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: V Broadhurst, Executive Director of People - Adults

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

The Dorset Council Housing Strategy is a high-level document setting out our vision, aims and objectives for housing in Dorset.

The strategy brings together extensive research and analysis of housing issues from a local and national context. Internal and external stakeholder engagement and responses to a 10-week public consultation have also helped to shape the strategy.

The consultation asked participants what was most important, in terms of housing, and to comment on our proposed vision, aims and objectives. We received 2137 responses. A full report is at Appendix B.

The strategy outlines the housing pressures facing Dorset residents. It sets out our strategic approach to meeting these challenges and is supported by a high-

level themed action plan. A detailed delivery plan plus supporting strategies, policies and procedures will be developed over the lifetime of the strategy and set out how these objectives will be delivered.

Recommendation:

That Members recommend the housing strategy and its objectives to Cabinet.

Reason for Recommendation:

1. Background

- 1.1 All Councils are required to have a Housing Strategy under the Local Government Act 2003. The Act requires Dorset Council to have a clear vision for housing, together with targets and objectives and policies on how it intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role. It should provide an overarching framework against which the Council considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues.
- 1.2 Housing Strategies must address all relevant issues and be consistent with any community strategies. It should consider local housing related issues, needs and challenges, and reflect national policies.
- 1.3 This is not a stand-alone document, and it reflects and links to the Council Plan, aims of the Transformation Programme, the draft Local Plan and key Council strategies and workstreams. The strategy is also part of our Policy Framework and sits above existing housing policies and strategies such as the Housing Allocations Policy and the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.4 It replaces the existing legacy housing strategies and creates a single document which represents the needs of Dorset Council as one authority.
- 1.5 The strategy is not a Planning document.
- 1.6 The strategy is due to be considered by Cabinet on 5 December 2023 and Full Council for approval on 14 December 2023.

2. The Housing Strategy

- 2.1 Our vision is *'to ensure our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities'*.
- 2.2 Access to good housing is essential for a good life, enables people, families, and communities to thrive. Inadequate housing can contribute to health inequalities for anyone.
- 2.3 As a non-stock holding council, our role is to support, enable and commission the delivery of housing, and related services, which meet our resident's needs, as well as shaping the future of housing developments in our area.
- 2.4 To support this work, we need to have a clear understanding of the needs of our residents both now, and in the future. We can bring together a range of data which support us to develop housing needs maps to influence the delivery of the right types of homes, in the right places.
- 2.5 Dorset's residents should have the most secure form of housing possible. They should live in well-designed and well-built homes which meet their needs, are accessible and maintained to a decent standard.
- 2.6 Housing that people can afford to buy, or rent is difficult for some of our residents across the sector. A range of factors affect the housing market and how people meet these costs.
- 2.7 Growth in housing supply is a priority, but it is essential that delivery is not just about numbers. Providing homes which are the right type, the right tenure and in the right place are also key.
- 2.8 Sustainable development and improving existing homes that are well connected to places of employment, education, care, and other community facilities supports economic growth.
- 2.9 The Housing Strategy sets out our aims and 4 key objectives:
 - (i) Housing Need: Enabling residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs.
 - (ii) Housing Supply: Driving the delivery of homes people need and can afford to live in.

- (iii) Housing Standards: Improving the quality, standard, and safety of homes.
- (iv) Prevention of Homelessness: Support, at the right time, to people in crisis to prevent homelessness.

2.10 The high-level themes for delivery plan outlines the scope of how we aim to deliver the objectives and meet the aims and outcomes for Dorset residents. It will be supported by a detailed delivery plan which will set out the projects, policies and strategies needed to achieve the vision.

2.11 Delivering the strategy will require the Council to continue and build on our partnership approach.

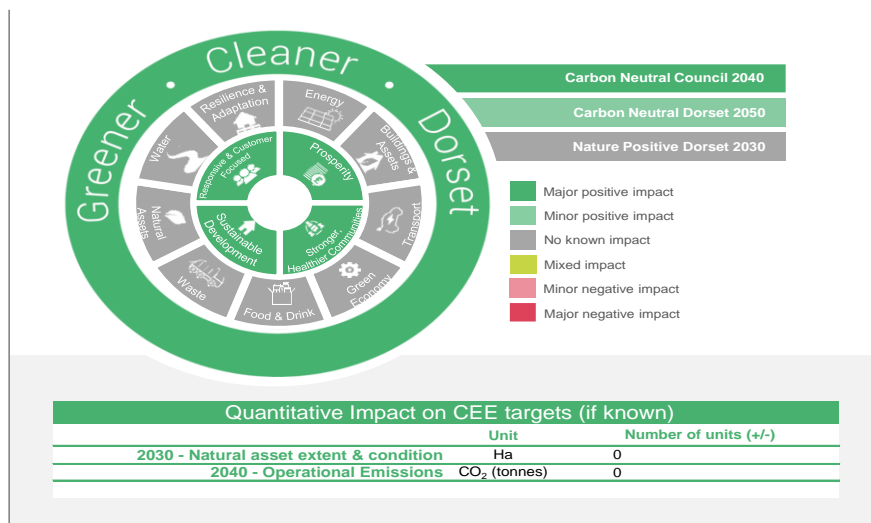
3. Financial Implications

A future detailed delivery plan will inform how the Council intends to financially commit to achieving housing priorities and will assist with future budget decisions.

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

Overall, the strategy seeks to have a positive impact by supporting improving standards of existing homes and the delivery of houses which are energy efficient, meet accessible housing standards, and the actions set out in the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological Strategy.

The current assessment illustrated in the table below is high level only. Assessments will be completed for the detailed delivery plan actions as they are developed.



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	strongly supports it
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	strongly supports it
Responsive & Customer Focused	strongly supports it

5. Well-being and Health Implications

- 5.1 Housing quality has a significant impact on both physical and mental health with people who live in poor quality homes experiencing more ill health than those who live in good quality housing. Inadequate housing contributes to the inequalities in health that we see in Dorset between different groups of people, with people on lower incomes, and those who are most vulnerable, more likely to be affected by the problems caused by substandard housing, as well as other factors which drive health inequalities.

- 5.2 As well as the condition of housing, the health impact of housing includes whether homes are overcrowded and whether they meet the physical needs of the occupants. Concerns about security of tenure, not being able to pay bills, and the threat of homelessness have all been shown to have a negative impact on health, especially on children.

- 5.3 By improving the condition and standards of existing homes, meeting the specific property needs of some of our residents, and ensuring

that future developments support and promote health, we can we create healthy and thriving communities.

6 Other Implications

Policies developed or amended during the delivery of the strategy will be assessed against Planning policies and the Local Plan, as it is developed, the Rural Proofing Assessment and Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Decision Wheel.

7 Risk Assessment

7.2 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

8 Equalities Impact Assessment

See the EqIA at Appendix C

9 Appendices

1. Dorset Council Housing Strategy
2. Appendix A – Supplementary Data
3. Appendix B – Consultation Report
4. Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

10 Background Papers

None