

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2022

Report Title	HRA Delivery Plan update			
Purpose of Report	To present the updated position of the HRA Delivery Plan to Committee			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to: a) Note the updates b) Agree to review and submit a revised plan in light of the new Council Plan, the 30-year financial plan, the Government White Paper on Social Housing and CN2030 including retrofit			
Consultation and Feedback	Head of Property Services, Head of Contract Services, New Homes and Regeneration Manager, Strategic Head of Housing, Accountancy Manager.			
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Options	N/A			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	Yes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stroud District Council's (the Council) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Delivery Plan sets out the Council's direction and priority for its housing service, enabling it to focus on the delivery of stated priorities, manage and respond to business risks and opportunities, and have appropriate contingencies in place.
- 1.2 The HRA Delivery Plan includes an action plan which is revised annually to ensure that it remains relevant and supports the Council's ability to meet local needs, statutory and regulatory responsibility, borrowing and debt repayment commitments, stock investment and management objectives (decent homes), service delivery, (tenancy management, resident involvement, satisfaction levels) objectives, as well as ensuring that it remains sustainable.
- 1.3 Following a period of consultation during summer 2019 with tenants and leaseholders and the application of the tenant survey reports (STAR Survey), members of Housing Committee and the Housing Review panel reviewed and updated the HRA Delivery Plan 2020-2025 with additional strategic priorities; this was approved by the Housing Committee on 10th December 2019.
- 1.4 The HRA Delivery Plan was updated with the following key strategic objectives for the medium term:

- Improve tenant satisfaction and culture exploring different avenues and opportunities to build, enhance and grow communities;
- Delivery of the Older Person's Strategy and action plan over the next 5 years including the current programme to modernise the Council's sheltered housing stock and the quality of the 'housing offer';
- New development;
- Investment in sustainable and attractive estates and stock; and
- Implementation of the updated energy strategy.

1.5 A 12-point action plan was put in place and activity can be seen against each element and is supported by work streams involving the Head of Housing Contracts, New Homes and Regeneration Manager and the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

<p>Objective one: Develop forward-looking development and Asset Management Strategies that sets out the Council's long-term strategic approach to ensuring sustainable council housing.</p>	<p>The New Homes Strategy was approved in September 2020. The programme is aiming to deliver schemes to a minimum SAP rating of 86 and EPC A rating with a fabric first approach. (Ringfield, Broadfield and Summerfield). The specification is being reviewed for future schemes, by liaising with colleagues in Contract Services to align with their approach, assess new technology coming to the market e.g. battery storage and learn from others to achieve the best value approach to delivering greater energy efficiency and reduced running costs for the Council's residents.</p> <p>The Corporate Asset Management Plan will be reviewed in 2022.</p>
<p>Objective two: Work with residents to define our local 'offer' to them, i.e. what will we do and to what standard, balancing: the 'people' issues, i.e. the needs and aspirations of residents with the 'property' issues, i.e. the investment need for homes and neighbourhoods and getting best use of resources by focussing on priorities and diverting resources from non-priority areas if appropriate.</p>	<p>The consultation was halted due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions during 2020 with staff re-purposed on service priorities of increased ASB and lettings, including homeless provision for all rough sleepers in line with Government direction. Additional actions in line with this activity include acknowledging the Government's White Paper and the seven strands of the Charter for Social Housing Residents and SDC's response (paper to HC in Sept 2021). Also the formation of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Strategy Task & Finish Group in August 2021 is specifically looking at these issues including (after consultation in January 2022) drafting a Tenants Charter specific to Stroud. The review of tenant led service standards and Cleaner Estates Strategy, which are additionally supported by the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS). A 20-point consultation is currently out for comment</p>

	<p>based on tenant satisfaction measures from the Regulator of Social Housing and work is underway to gauge views from our tenants prior to Stroud responding by the end of February 2022 (deadline is the first week of March 2022).</p>
<p>Objective three: Produce regular review and impact assessments of the future sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account Delivery Plan and 30-year financial model, to support all decision-making.</p>	<p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and 30-year financial position of the HRA is reported annually to Housing Committee, Strategy and Resources and Council as part of the budget setting process.</p> <p>The long term impact on the financial position is also reported as part of major decisions, such as the consideration of a retrofit programme, in order to support the decision making.</p>
<p>Objective four: Begin development of closer management arrangements of the new Communities directorate including regular senior manager meetings to shape the directorate and ensure a clear vision and direction.</p>	<p>The Directorate management team meet every Month and there are regular fortnightly/monthly catch ups scheduled with the Director of Communities. The Head of Housing Services and Head of Community Services engage directly on a number of key cross cutting issues.</p>
<p>Objective five: Deliver agreed priorities from the updated energy strategy.</p>	<p>The Tenant Services Energy Strategy has a five year rolling programme, which enables delivery of objectives to be strategically aligned to the MTFP.</p> <p>Over the past 12 months we have spent over £3m on energy related improvement works, and improving 270 homes.</p> <p>In line with the Council's 2030 Strategy, Housing Committee on 7th December 2021 agreed a retrofit programme which will see improvements being made to over 3500 dwellings over the next 8 years, ensuring the retained stock achieves an average SAP rating Band C by 2030. This will involve committing over £18m in additional financial resources to achieve the target.</p> <p>In addition to this commitment we will continue to investigate and pursue opportunities where grants or support may be available to support our work.</p>
<p>Objective six: Assess and explore options which may help the Council to maximise the number of new homes delivered, both by itself, and in partnership with other social landlords, with a preference for rented housing.</p>	<p>The Strategy for New Council Homes was approved by Housing Committee on 21 September 2020, setting a framework for the purchase of land and the type, tenure, and standards for new homes. Approved programme with budget in the MTFP to deliver</p>

	<p>the next 101 new homes across the district together with a land acquisition pot. Update to the programme was issued in an Information Sheet in September 2021.</p> <p>SDC are part of the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership (GRHP) which focusses on delivery of rural exception sites. This will assist in the delivery of further opportunities to add affordable homes to the new homes programme.</p> <p>The disposal programme for the sale of garage and small sites in the HRA is continuing and uses a process of review to identify development opportunities on each site and consider the best means of achieving this.</p> <p>The brownfield sites register is being reviewed for opportunities to deliver more affordable homes.</p> <p>In 2019/20 we completed 198 new affordable homes with CLT and RP partners, against an average of 120 per annum. The increase can largely be attributed to the delivery of new homes at Great Oldbury. For viability reasons, homes delivered under planning policy are generally 50% rented, 50% shared ownership. However, sales of shared ownership are strong and help relieve pressures on the rented stock.</p> <p>In 2020/21 we completed 219 new affordable homes with CLT and RP partners, against an average of 120 per annum. The increase can largely be attributed to the delivery of new homes at the Great Oldbury strategic site. For viability reasons, homes delivered under planning policy are generally 50% rented 50% shared ownership. However, sales of shared ownership are strong and help relieve pressures on the rented stock.</p>
<p>Objective seven: Deliver the Independent Living (formerly sheltered modernisation) programme as defined in the older peoples Housing strategy.</p>	<p>Ringfield, Broadfield Road, Cambridge House, and Glebelands, are all being progressed with a view to redeveloping assets which are no longer fit for purpose.</p> <p>The overall Modernisation Programme is progressing well and all on programme and on cost. Works being carried out in 21/22 are also</p>

	<p>due to be completed on schedule and within budget.</p> <p>We now have a total of 4 Hubs operating in the district and are currently carrying out works on our 3rd Independent + scheme to be modernised.</p> <p>(see Information Sheet Sept 2021)</p>
<p>Objective eight: Begin a consultation on green space areas linked to alternative use such as community allotments and community based assets, enhancing communities and reducing costs to the HRA for e.g. grounds maintenance.</p>	<p>Paused due to lockdown restrictions and current resourcing issues; however, this will now link to the Cleaner Estates Strategy action plan as they overlap and will be added to the 2022 programme and tie in to the depooling project ahead of its implementation in 2023.</p>
<p>Objective nine: Review the provision of all support services provided to the Housing Service and explore ways to deliver efficiencies and improvements.</p>	<p>This is an overarching piece being led by the Director of Communities in how he wishes to shape services</p>
<p>Objective ten: Explore the options for greater integration across council services to deliver efficiencies and a more holistic approach to meeting the needs of residents and neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>See Objective nine.</p>
<p>Objective eleven: Develop a new 'suite' of performance indicators focusing on our key priorities (covering resident satisfaction, value for money and programme delivery). The suite will support informed decision-making and the delivery of key strategies including this and linked plans.</p>	<p>New KPI's are being developed through the Council Plan and are being shared and agreed by committees as part of the cycle.</p>
<p>Objective twelve: Exploring the appetite for enhanced (paid) services as part of asset management activities, for example, wider choice, higher quality fittings or services to leaseholders, provision of a 'handyperson'/care & repair, service, etc.</p>	<p>This remains part of future opportunities that we have not been able to progress as quickly as we would like. Conversations between the Head of Housing Services and the Director of Communities have begun regarding opportunities, but these are very much part of the return to "normal" following lockdown and the development of the Communities directorate in line with the Council Plan and service plans.</p>

2. Summary

- 2.1 Clearly Covid has had a significant impact on delivery and as such a number of work streams that should have commenced or been completed have been delayed. Additionally the formation of the Communities Directorate during this time has been slower than expected as a result. That said there are some great examples around new build and development, resident involvement, and independent living.

A new delivery plan is required to reflect the changing nature of the work the Council and its stakeholders are involved with, including the new Council plan, the Government's White Paper on Social Housing and CN2030 (including retrofit), as well as the impact of Covid, both financially and socially, with our residents and stakeholders.

3. Implications

3.1 Financial Implications

The ongoing work on the updated delivery plan is funded within existing budget. Any future charges would need to be considered against existing budget pressures.

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3.2 Legal Implications

None arising from this report.

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3.3 Equality Implications

None arising from this report – see Appendix 2

3.4 Environmental Implications

To achieve the targets set out in the Council's 2030 Strategy, changes have been made to the specification for all new homes being delivered through SDC's New Homes & Regeneration Programme. The specification is based on a fabric first approach with the use of additional renewable technology as required on a site by site basis. The aspiration is to achieve a minimum SAP rating of 86 (EPC A rating) for all new homes developed through the programme. The specification now also includes the infrastructure on each site to facilitate future EV charging when required.

The specification will be reviewed again before the next projects start on site to see if there are any technological advances within the sector which may be beneficial to explore and include for all new homes (i.e. battery storage). Contract Services are consulted in relation to any changes to the specification to ensure there is a consistent approach across the Council. All costs associated with specification changes will be modelled and appraised and incorporated in any future budget setting.