

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 17

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Strategy 2008-2013:
healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city

Date of Meeting: 22 July 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report is focussed on the development of the draft Housing Strategy and the draft specialist housing strategies relating to Older People, the city's BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities and the city's LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans) communities.
- 1.2 Development of these strategies began in 2007 to replace the previous Strategy that was developed in 2001 and updated in 2004. This report is to inform Housing Management Consultative Committee (HMCC) of the strategic development process and invite their participation in upcoming consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee note the progress on the development of the city-wide Housing Strategy 2008–2013 and the consultation undertaken to date.
- 2.2 To engage Housing Management Consultative Committee and tenant representatives in detailed consultation / review of the draft Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy, BME Housing Strategy and LGBT Housing Strategy.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Our last housing strategy was developed in 2001 and updated in 2004. The development of our new housing strategy began in 2007.
- 3.2 To ensure our services are working together as effectively as possible, the development of the new housing strategy has been the springboard for a larger strategy development and consultation review. This review is covering 8 key strategy and service areas during 2007 and 2008:

Overarching Housing Strategy

- Housing Strategy 2008-2013: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city
- BME People's Housing Strategy
- Older People's Housing Strategy
- LGBT People's Housing Strategy

Core Strategies

- Supporting People 5-year Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy

Homelessness Sub Strategies

- Single Homeless Strategy
- Temporary Accommodation Strategy

- 3.3 This report is focussed on the overarching Housing Strategy and the specialist strategies relating to Older People, the city's BME communities and the city's LGBT communities that are being developed in recognition of the particular needs faced by these groups. These strategies are currently in development and will be submitted for approval later in the current year.
- 3.4 The strategy development timetable was stretched to take advantage of new government guidance that was expected in June 2008. Unfortunately, as a result of the announcement in May that the housing reform green paper is due to be published towards the end of 2008, it is now unknown if this guidance will be produced. However, our planned timetable will now allow us to reflect in the strategy relevant parts of the green paper and also the Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill expected shortly.
- 3.5 The Homelessness Strategy, Supporting People Strategy Review and Temporary Accommodation Strategy were approved at Housing Committee in March 2008.
- 3.6 We recognise that housing plays an important part of all aspects of people's lives, particularly health and wellbeing. To support the new strategy the Primary Care Trust is carrying out a Health Impact Assessment on the city's housing stock and housing needs. The results of this assessment are helping us to ensure that our strategy and action plans contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of local people.
- 3.7 Day to day management of the strategy development process has been overseen by the Strategic Housing Partnership of the Local Strategic Partnership which has been acting as the Project Board.
- 3.8 The Housing Strategy 2008-2013: healthy homes, healthy lives, healthy city will be submitted for joint approval to both Council and the Local Strategic Partnership and will become a key component of the Community Strategy.

4. CONSULTATION:

- 4.1 Our strategies have been developed in stages to maximise opportunities for local people, advocacy groups, partner organisations, staff and other stakeholders to engage in the process.
- 4.2 The first round of consultation was undertaken over 3 months in summer 2007. The consultation was shaped around a Briefing Pack developed to highlight key areas of housing need to provide stakeholders with relevant information to help facilitate discussion. This pack was available on the council website and throughout the city in libraries and other public places. It was also sent out to many stakeholders, voluntary organisations and residents.
- 4.3 To support this consultation we also organised a 2 day Consultation Fair that included a Saturday, officers went out into the community, attended social functions, service user groups meetings and other events. Where possible we also linked in with other research and consultation being carried out across the city, such as the groundbreaking *Count Me In Too!* research looking at the needs and aspirations of the city's LGBT population.
- 4.4 In winter 2007/08 we published strategy frameworks outlining the proposed key priorities and actions for the Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy, BME Housing Strategy and LGBT Housing Strategy. These priorities and actions were developed from the Consultation Briefing Pack and findings of the first round of consultation. Consultation on the strategy frameworks together is being used to help develop the draft strategies and action plans.
- 4.5 To support the development of the specialist strategies, two Housing & Support Working Groups have been set up:
- Older People's Cross Sector Housing & Support Working Group
 - LGBT Housing & Support Working Group
- These groups are made up of representatives from a wide range of support and advocacy groups, the community and voluntary sector, the Primary Care Trust and the local authority. Whilst these groups have been instigated and facilitated by the local authority, they are led by our stakeholders.
- 4.6 These groups have reviewed each stage of the strategy development process and made many valuable contributions to our strategic priorities, action plan and equality impact assessment. We hope that these groups will have an ongoing monitoring and review remit once the strategies have been published.
- 4.7 We are working with the BME communities to explore the potential for a similar group to be a critical champion of the BME Housing Strategy.

- 4.8 Sub groups of the Strategic Housing Partnership have been looking at the role of housing co-ops and the issues around student housing. The findings of these groups are helping to inform the draft strategies.
- 4.9 In tandem with the strategy development process, a number of Chairman's Focus Groups have been set up to consider key issues affecting the council's social housing stock and impacting on the lives of tenants. These groups are looking at a number of issues such as sheltered housing, adaptations and allocations which are also helping to inform the draft housing strategies.
- 4.10 The draft Housing Strategy, Older People's Housing Strategy, BME Housing Strategy and LGBT Housing Strategy are expected to be published in the autumn for a final round of stakeholder consultation before being submitted for approval early in the new year.
- 4.11 We do not want consultation to end with the publication of our strategies, but would like it to be a part of an ongoing process, involving local people and other stakeholders throughout the life of the strategies helping us to monitor its implementation and review our services.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications: [Mike Bentley, Accountant, 16 June 2008]

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations made in this report. However the final published strategies will need to have close links with the various financial recovery plans in place/being developed across Adult Social Care & Housing.

5.2 Legal Implications: [Celine Hayden, Lawyer, 16 June 2008]

Under the Local Government Act 2003 the Council is required to produce a Housing Strategy (section 87–88) setting out the objectives, targets and policies on how the Council intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role. The Housing Strategy document should also provide an overarching framework against which the Council considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues. The Council's Housing Strategies are made available and appraised by Government Officers for the region (section 65 Local Government and Housing Act 1989) to ensure they are fit for the purpose i.e. that they are capable of delivering the housing function to a standard demanded by Government. The Housing Strategy should also address energy efficiency issues in the housing stock (Home Energy Conservation Act 1995). Policies must be consistent with any national housing strategies at present.

5.3 Equalities Implications:

An equality impact assessment is being carried out on each strategy as it is being developed, with the strategy containing a summary of the assessment. Assessments will be completed during the last stage of consultation to inform the final drafts of the strategies. Additional Equality Impact Assessments will be

required as the strategy action plans are implemented over the next few years. Below is a summary of our approach to each of the 6 equality strands:

- **Race:** BME Housing Strategy in development.
- **Disability:** Strategy Statement on Physical Disabilities incorporated in Housing Strategy and Older People's Housing Strategy. Disability of all kinds, including physical disability, learning disability and mental health issues, are also a key feature of the Supporting People and Learning Disability Housing Strategies.
- **Gender and gender identity:** Actions from the Gender Equality Scheme have been fed into the strategic development process. Gender Identity is also a key feature of the LGBT Housing Strategy.
- **Age:** Older People's Housing Strategy in development. Youth Homelessness Strategy developed in 2007. Supporting People Strategy links to older people's services, youth homelessness services, and action to fund LGBT support worker for young people at risk.
- **Religion / Belief:** The BME Housing Strategy includes community safety objectives which also cover religion and belief.
- **Sexual Orientation:** LGBT Housing Strategy in development.

5.4 **Sustainability Implications:**

Housing is one of the 12 key objectives of the council's Sustainability Strategy which aims ***to ensure that everyone has access to decent, affordable housing that meets their needs***. The Housing Strategy 2008-2013 and related specialist strategies support this aim.

5.5 **Crime & Disorder Implications:**

Ensuring appropriate housing and support is essential in helping to reduce antisocial behaviour and other crime and also to support the victims of crime. Specific actions within the LGBT and BME housing strategies recognise hate crime and aim to support victims and help develop safer communities.

5.6 **Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:**

The current economic climate brings with it the risks of increased levels of home repossessions, increased numbers of empty homes, increased overcrowding, reduced access to equity funding for maintenance and improvements and reduced levels of house building. This could increase pressures relating to homelessness, housing support and community cohesion. A robust housing strategy is essential to help mitigate these risks and resultant budgetary pressures.

5.7 **Corporate / Citywide Implications:**

Housing is a fundamental aspect of people's wellbeing affecting the daily lives of 250,000 residents in Brighton & Hove. Poor or inappropriate housing has a direct impact on the ability of residents to maintain their independence – this has implications for social care, education and the health. 22,000 households in the city have someone with a support need and vulnerability affects 1 in 5 households. Housing also has a significant impact on the economy, with the housing stock currently valued at approximately £26bn. Homes worth more than £1bn are sold every year with around a further £1bn being spent on maintenance, rents, mortgages and other associated housing costs. Our housing aims support the priorities and aims of the 2020 Community Strategy.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. None

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents:

All available at: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1188834>

1. Draft Housing Strategy Framework, December 2007
2. Draft Older People's Housing Strategy Framework, December 2007
3. Draft BME People's Housing Strategy Framework, December 2007
4. Draft LGBT People's Housing Strategy Framework, December 2007
5. Housing Strategy 2008: Consultation Briefing Pack, May 2007