

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Housing and Wellbeing Committee – 10 September 2024
SUBJECT:	Housing Strategy 2024-2029
LEAD OFFICER:	Richard Tomkinson – Group Head of Housing, Wellbeing and Communities
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Carol Birch, Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee
WARDS:	All
<p>This report supports the following areas of the corporate vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering the right homes in the right places• Supporting our environment to support us• Improving the wellbeing of Arun	
<p>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</p> <p>Arun District Councils Housing and Homelessness strategy was approved in 2019 to cover the period 2019 to 2021. The strategy was subsequently extended at Committee to October 2024 to allow the service time to develop two new strategies.</p> <p>Whilst there is no longer a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have a Housing Strategy it is considered best practice, and the strategy sets out a key vision for Housing in Arun focusing on five strategic priorities.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy will also underpin development of service policies and procedures ensuring alignment to the overall priorities in the strategy.</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</p> <p>Costs relating to the consultation process are contained within overall project budget. The financial implications arising from this strategy will need to form part of the budgeting setting processes and managed within budget constraints. In addition, this strategy may have budgetary impact on other service areas across the council which will need to be quantified as the strategy is implemented.</p>	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To ask Members to adopt the Council's Housing Strategy for the period 2024-2029.
- 1.2 To provide Members with details of the public consultation carried out during the period 8 July 2024 to 4 August 2024.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Housing and Wellbeing Committee
- 2.2 Adopt the final version of the Council's Housing Strategy for the period 2024-2029

- 2.3 Give delegated authority to the Group Head of Housing, Wellbeing and Communities to make minor changes to the strategy and any amendments necessary to reflect legislative and regulatory changes.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Council has opted to produce a Housing Strategy which sets out our vision and priorities for housing over the next five years. It provides an analysis of the current situation in Arun and then outlines the strategic housing priorities and the actions that will be taken to improve the provision of housing across the district. The strategy will run for the period 2024-2029.
- 3.2 The final version of the Housing Strategy 2024-2029 sets out the Council's vision for housing which is **'For Arun's residents to have access to the right homes in the right places which enable them to live a fulfilling life and contribute to the future growth and sustainability of the district'**.
- 3.3 To achieve the vision the strategy recommends that we focus our efforts on activities across five strategic priorities
- a) Delivering the right homes in the right places
 - b) Improving the quality of homes
 - c) Promoting environmental resilience
 - d) Providing housing options
 - e) Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping

4 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy 2024-2029 sets out the Council's vision for housing. The strategy was developed by Campbell Tickell on behalf of the Council.
- 4.2 To achieve the vision the strategy recommends that Arun District Council focus our efforts on activities across five strategic priorities which are summarised below.
- 4.3 Each of the priority themes feature a suggested set of KPIs through which progress will be measured. Delivering the strategy will be done in partnership with key stakeholders and the community, using council resources and assets where these can be used to leverage additional external funding.
- 4.4 **Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places**
- 4.4.1 Evidence shows that Arun's household population is growing and that there are rising challenges of affordability across both home ownership and private rented housing, with high levels of demand for affordable housing.
- 4.4.2 The Council is committed to providing a mixed economy of housing which meets a range of needs across the district. Arun will seek to influence the local housing market to provide the homes and infrastructure it requires to accommodate housing needs and future growth. This will include a specific focus on:

- a) **Delivering affordable homes** by working with a range of stakeholders, seeking additional investment, providing support to Community Land Trusts, and exploring the potential role of the Council in delivering new homes.
- b) **Ensuring a mix of homes** including a focus on one and four-bed affordable homes, low-cost homeownership for younger households, accessible and adaptable homes, student and visitor accommodation, and housing options for keyworkers.
- c) **Providing certainty through planning** through updated evidence, a robust viability process, use of planning policy and guidance to influence placemaking, and providing a consistent and high performing service.

4.5 Improving the quality of homes

4.5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring homes of all tenures are maintained to a high standard. This will involve working with partners to improve the quality of homes, secure funding for improvements, and sharing best practice. Where necessary the Council will use new and existing legal powers to ensure compliance.

4.5.2 Evidence shows that the private rented sector continues to grow and that rents have risen significantly, in the majority of cases beyond the Local Housing Allowance rates.

4.5.3 Arun remains the single largest provider of social housing in the district, but there are more affordable homes owned and managed by housing associations. All social landlords will need to ensure compliance with new social housing regulations, whilst investing in the improvement of their homes.

4.5.4 This strategic priority will include a specific focus on:

- a) Enhancing the landlord service including by continued improvement, a review of policies, insourcing of the repairs function, up-to-date stock condition surveys, and compliance with regulations.
- b) Working with housing associations through more regular liaison.
- c) Improving conditions in private housing through HMO licensing, working with landlords to share best practice, and preparing for forthcoming regulatory changes under the Renters Reform Bill.
- d) Bringing empty homes back into use via engagement, encouragement, and enforcement.

4.6 Promoting environmental resilience

- 4.6.1 The Council is committed to tackling climate change and achieving its net zero ambitions. This entails a significant role for the housing sector, with the council working to retrofit its own homes, whilst working in partnership with others to support retrofit activities across other tenures and using planning to ensure higher standards of sustainability of new housing.
- 4.6.2 Evidence shows Arun's homes have an average EPC rating of D, but that this varies significantly by the tenure and type of homes. There are also pockets of high fuel poverty across the district.
- 4.6.3 The Housing Strategy seeks to promote environmental resilience through a specific focus on:
- 4.6.4 **Working with partners to retrofit homes** by securing external funding, determining the council's offer to households, retrofitting council homes, and supporting wider benefits across local communities.
- 4.6.5 **Promoting climate resilient behaviours and measures** such as property adaptations to mitigate the impact on homes and working with partners to promote sustainable behaviour change.
- 4.6.6 **Encouraging more sustainable development** through the construction process and planning system, adoption of the Future Homes Standard, and working with the supply chain

4.7 Providing housing options

- 4.7.1 The Council is committed to improving the wellness of its citizens, including supporting those whose needs are not effectively served by the housing market. This will be done in partnership with West Sussex County Council.
- 4.7.2 Evidence shows that Arun has a relatively high number of older people living in the district, as well as many other residents with complex needs. Where possible, the Council will seek to support residents to live independently in the community wherever possible, with a range of quality housing options for those where required.
- 4.7.3 This strategic priority will include a specific focus on:
- 4.7.4 **Housing for older people**, working with the County Council and other partners to develop more Extra Care housing, assessing the potential to remodel sheltered housing to meet a wider range of needs, diversifying the housing options available to older people, and promoting new homes suitable for ageing through planning.
- 4.7.5 **Housing for people with support needs** by working with the County Council to support the recommissioning of supported housing, provision of aids and adaptations, producing a supported housing strategy, and exploring the case for provision of housing for keyworkers.

4.8 Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

- 4.8.1 Arun faces challenges in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, in line with the national picture. A separate but related Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been produced, according to statutory requirements. This outlines Arun's vision for homelessness to be rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- 4.8.2 Activities under the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy fall within three key themes:
- a) Prevention of homelessness
 - b) Develop more permanent solutions to homelessness
 - c) Build on partnerships

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 A public consultation ran for the period 8 July 2024 to 4 August 2024.
- 5.2 During the consultation period a Members event was held on 16 August 2024, in which District, Parish and Town Councillors were invited to attend an event to discuss the aims of the strategy, 16 Members attended.
- 5.3 We held two drop-in events for the public on 23 and 24 July 2024, unfortunately we only had one member of the public attend.
- 5.4 A survey was conducted throughout this period and publicised on our website, social media, posters at our officers and with key partners across the district. We received 47 responses to the survey; a summary of these responses is set out as Appendix 2.
- 5.5 As an outcome of the consultation the following changes have been made to the draft strategy
- a) Introduction – reference added to consultation and the General Election (1.4 and 1.5)
 - b) Vision and priorities – clarification provided on the vision statement in response to consultation (3.3)
 - c) Strategic Context – updated to reflect the General Election and new legislation announced in the Kings Speech (5.2 to 5.8)
 - d) Delivering the right homes – references made to needs of specific groups (6.4 to 6.5), provision of infrastructure updated (6.10), addition of wording on delivery of affordable homes (6.15), addition of wording on CLT's and empty homes (6.16 and 6.18)
 - e) Improving the quality of homes – reference to developing an acquisitions and disposal strategy added (7.13)

- f) Promoting environmental resilience – reference added to water management and drainage
- g) Providing housing options – reference added to delivering access housing via planning (9.11)
- h) Arun's Housing – figures updated on the housing market to reflect tenure dated included in the baseline report (page 37)

6 OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERS

- 6.1 Not to approve the Housing Strategy
- 6.2 This is not considered a feasible option as it is best practice for local authorities to have a Housing Strategy.

7 COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 Costs relating to the consultation process are contained within overall project budget.
- 7.2 The financial implications arising from this strategy will need to form part of the budget setting processes and managed within budget constraints. In addition, this strategy may have budgetary impact on other service areas across the council which will need to be quantified as the strategy is implemented.
- 7.3 The Q1 Budget monitoring report provides further information on current year budgets and forecast.

8 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Any actions taken forward as part of this strategy will be risk assessed before proceeding and where appropriate added to operational risk registers for the relevant department. An action plan that sits behind this strategy will be created with an annual update on progress being brought to this committee.

9 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 The Housing Act 1985 Section 1(1) confirms that the District Council is the Local Housing Authority (LHA)
- 9.2 The Housing Act 1985 Section 8(1) specifies that LHAs shall consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.
- 9.3 The Housing Act 2004 Section 3(1) specifies that a LHA must keep the housing conditions in their area under review.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 No impact identified

11 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 No impact identified

12 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 No impact identified

13 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 Attached at Appendix 3

14 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 Council housing produces a significant amount of carbon emissions each year. Though not reported this is included within the annual carbon audit, for the most recent period (22-23 financial year) housing produced an estimate of 5,593 tco2e. This would be the second largest emitter for the council, behind purchased goods and services at 16,463 tco2e. Significant work will be required to upgrade council housing to meet the government 2050 net zero target, and the closer 2030 target of all rented properties to EPC C.

14.2 One of the 5 priorities within the Housing Strategy 2024-2029 is 'Promoting environmental resilience', this showcases that there is a real commitment to ensuring that housing across the district is supported to become more sustainable. This includes work to improve the energy efficiency of homes, the promotion of climate resilience, working with partners to help retrofit homes, supporting behaviour change and encouraging more sustainable development

15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 No impact identified.

16 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 There are no implications identified.

17 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 Taking part in the consultation survey was not mandatory and those who took part were provided with links to our privacy policy and were advised how we would use their feedback to shape the strategy

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Q1 Budget Monitoring Report.