

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

TITLE: HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2028

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting	24 January 2024
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Regeneration and Culture
Key Decision	Yes
Public or Private	Public

### Purpose of report

A report was submitted to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Cab.4.10.2023/8) seeking approval to undertake a public consultation exercise on the DRAFT Housing Strategy for 2024-28. This report updates members on the outcome of the public consultation exercise held between 16<sup>th</sup> October and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and seeks approval to adopt and publish the final version of the Strategy.

### Council Plan priority

**Healthy** – The Strategy seeks to address health inequalities linked to poor housing and environment.

**Learning** – Investment in housing will deliver social value and learning opportunity outcomes.

**Growing** – The Strategy supports economic and housing growth.

**Sustainable** – The Strategy supports the decarbonisation of existing housing stock via cross tenure investment in housing retrofit- increasing the energy efficiency of homes and reducing fuel poverty.

### Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends that Full Council:-

1. Notes the outcome of the public consultation exercise and approves the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2024-28 which has been updated following public consultation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the updated and final Housing Strategy for 2024-28. The Strategy has been developed following a robust consultation exercise with the public, key stakeholder organisations and colleagues in the Childrens, Adults,

Public Health and Communities directorates; alongside our ALMO, Berneslai Homes. Its purpose is to set out the Council's strategic priorities for housing over the next four years. The Strategy recognises the key issues affecting housing in Barnsley and the impact these have on residents, sets out how the Council will work in partnership to address the issues identified, and demonstrates alignment with other key strategies and plans.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 1.2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 which set out the rationale to develop a new housing strategy for 2024-28. The previous strategy was a high-level document which was adopted in April 2014 and spanned a 20-year period (2014-2033). The report explained the progress made in delivering against the commitments of the current strategy, but also set out the rationale for change.
- 1.3 The draft strategy presented to Cabinet reflected a refocus of the over-arching strategic housing priorities for our borough and a reset of the strategic direction and alignment for several other key housing and health related strategies as referenced in the strategy itself. The new Strategy also changed the hierarchy approach of addressing housing need – ensuring that we place our focus on making the very best use of the stock that we have first and foremost and then looking at how we can address unmet and growing need via the delivery of sustainable housing growth. Alongside this, the draft strategy considered:
  - The Council's aspirations to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 and a net-zero borough by 2045 as part of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and Barnsley 2030; seeking to ensure that we are doing all we can in the residential sector to build low/no carbon energy efficient homes and to reduce emissions in existing residential stock, focussing on making homes more energy efficient and reducing fuel poverty across tenure. Sustainability is a cross cutting theme of the Housing Strategy, with the ambitions of Sustainable Barnsley, in ensuring that people live in sustainable communities with reduced carbon emissions and access to affordable and sustainable energy sources, at the heart of all 4 pillars.
  - Our response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis and Pandemic to ensure that we can make the best use of our stock, promote the continued delivery of additional affordable housing provision, and improve access to housing and housing support and advice outside of crisis support.
  - A commitment to work collaboratively to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of high-quality supported housing provision in line with the Children's Sufficiency Strategy and adult social care plans.
  - Our response to Regulatory Changes in the Social Housing Sector
  - The causal link between health and housing and the promotion of a systemwide approach to targeting and supporting those residents most impacted by unsuitable and unhealthy homes, to address inequalities and improve conditions across tenure.
  - Regional alignment with the key priorities in both the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Housing Strategy and South Yorkshire Housing Partnership Framework and in relation to our priorities and

funding requirements for both place-based investments and Devolution.

- Sustainable Growth and alignment to the spatial framework set by the Local Plan which was adopted in 2019 and refreshed during 2023.

## **CONSULTATION**

1.4 Cabinet gave their approval for wider consultation on the draft strategy on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Cab.4.10.2023/8). Significant internal consultation has already been undertaken with key officers within the Council and via this Governance route. Working with officers in the Council's Communication Team, a 4-week online public consultation was held from Monday 16 October 2023 until Monday 13 November 2023.

- 1.5 The consultation encouraged feedback through multiple avenues, including:
- Filling out the online survey.
  - Emailing with a question or a response.
  - Speaking to the team at the drop-ins.
  - Visiting libraries across the borough to read paper copies of the strategy or fill out a paper survey.
  - Sharing feedback in meetings.

Key activities included three drop-in events that were in partnership with Berneslai Homes:

- Meadow Crescent Community Centre in Royston at 1pm – 2pm.
- Manor Court Community Centre in Royston at 2:30pm – 3:30pm.
- Barnsley Market Stall at 9am – 11am.

These events were run by Berneslai Homes and were a chance to speak to residents and tenants to hear their views and to further promote the consultation.

- 1.6 There was an opportunity for Berneslai Homes tenants to have their say on the new Housing Strategy at a Tenant meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Tenants were presented with the strategy and the four key pillars with space to ask questions and feed into discussions. Key themes included:
- Retrofitting existing homes and building sustainable new homes
  - Bringing vacant properties and shops back into use
  - Concerns around affordable housing and privately rented homes
  - Future building plans

1.7 Two online sessions were held with members on 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023. These sessions presented the final draft version of the Strategy and reported on the responses to the public consultation exercise; providing a final opportunity for members to feed into the consultation process.

1.8 In total, there were 107 responses to the online consultation, this includes all the survey responses and email feedback. This does not include the attendance at multiple meetings and boards to discuss the consultation.

Feedback from the consultation was generally positive. Respondents were asked how much they supported each pillar, if they had any further comments on each pillar and then space to share any further comments they had.

For each pillar, the highest percentage of people supported the pillars aims.

<b>Pillar one</b>				
I strongly support these aims	I support these aims	I neither support / oppose these aims	I oppose these aims	I strongly oppose these aims
47%	39%	9%	3%	2%
<b>Pillar two</b>				
I strongly support these aims	I support these aims	I neither support / oppose these aims	I oppose these aims	I strongly oppose these aims
35%	45%	15%	4%	1%
<b>Pillar three</b>				
I strongly support these aims	I support these aims	I neither support / oppose these aims	I oppose these aims	I strongly oppose these aims
36%	47%	15%	4%	1%
<b>Pillar four</b>				
I strongly support these aims	I support these aims	I neither support / oppose these aims	I oppose these aims	I strongly oppose these aims
41%	32%	13%	8%	6%

For a detailed breakdown of the consultation responses, view the consultation outcome report in Appendix 2.

- 1.9 A copy of the final draft of the Housing Strategy is located at Appendix 1. The Strategy has been amended and updated to reflect feedback from the public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement. Amendments include:

- An additional section on successes so far in delivering against our core strategic housing priorities.
- A re-worked Pillars Framework which better sets out the Council's priorities to focus on addressing existing stock.
- Amendments to mirror updates to the Private Rented Sector Plan.
- Amendments to reflect the Council's commitment to increasing temporary accommodation from within Council stock, in line with the new Homelessness Strategy.
- Reference to the Council and our Partners' commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant in relation to housing and accommodation need.
- A commitment to work more closely with the Age Friendly Partnership.

1.10 Following significant consultation with the NHS, Primary Care, and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), key actions within the delivery plan will also include greater emphasis on ensuring that those involved in the provision of local health and support services are better involved in the early planning stages of housing development and delivery.

1.11 As part of the development of the Delivery Plan for the Strategy, officers have also committed to working with our engaged youth representatives to ensure that the voices of our young people are reflected in the strategic delivery priorities for the borough over the next four years.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

2.1 In noting the responses to the public consultation, it is proposed that Cabinet approves the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2024-28.

## **3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **3.1. Financial**

Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Director of Finance (S151 Officer).

There are no direct financial implications linked to the recommendations detailed in the report. The public consultation process will be undertaken online and managed internally.

The key Council housing new build and decarbonisation strategies included in this report from an HRA perspective, the implications are duly considered as part of the HRA budget setting process. These papers are scheduled to be presented to Members in early 2024.

The HRA Business Plan provides a financial assessment over 30 years, considering planned actions as part of the Housing Strategy, and its impact on the management and financing of the Council's housing stock.

### **3.2 Risks**

This is an ambitious housing strategy and there are significant risks and challenges in resourcing and delivering against the strategy both locally and regionally. One of the key risks is ensuring that we can meet both general and specialist housing needs requirements and maintain the supply of affordable/social housing. Our Council housing stock is reducing year on year due to Right to Buy, and we are currently unable to build sufficient replacement homes. This is exacerbated by a slower turnover of tenancies each year and demand for social stock from several services across the council for either temporary or 'move on' general needs accommodation. The Council must make some difficult decisions in prioritising the allocation of general needs accommodation for specific service users, which has a huge impact on council revenue costs (in sourcing private/out of area accommodation) and the quality of life of individuals in ensuring that they can live healthy and independent lives within their home borough.

There are also significant resourcing issues in delivering against all aspects of the housing strategy given increased pressures to directly support the provision of accommodation arising in our adults and children's services teams and in project managing the delivery of new/renovated accommodation to address current and future need.

Finally, there are risks in ensuring that the Council meets all our regulatory requirements as landlord of our 18,000 stock and that sufficient assurances are in place with our ALMO which operationally manages the management and maintenance of council homes.

There are also some opportunities for the Council is ensuring that all opportunities are maximized to lobby for, and access, any devolved housing funding, and flexibilities via SYMCA and in ensuring that the Council is fleet of foot in developing key housing asks of Government.

### **3.3 Legal**

There is no legal requirement for the council to have a Housing Strategy. However, there is a robust and extensive legislative framework which determines council duties in relation to the prevention and relief of homelessness, in its role as a landlord of 18,000 housing stock, in its role as the Local Planning Authority and in providing housing to meet local need. The strategy ensures that sufficient focus is given to ensuring that the council meets its requirements under the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Care Act 2014, Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, the Building Safety Act 2022, Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

### **3.4 Equality**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed following the consultation process and in advance of the Strategy's resubmission to Cabinet. Having access to good quality and affordable homes is important for all the borough's diverse communities, and the Housing Strategy seeks to remove barriers people can face in accessing a home to meet their needs.

The pillars within the Housing Strategy will support the provision of homes that meet the needs of older people, people with disabilities, larger families, single people, and couples. The Council will continue to engage with communities and make sure the homes provided and enabled, meet their changing needs.

### 3.5 Sustainability



- 3.5.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this, the Council has aimed to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2040, and as a borough by 2045. The Housing Strategy has a positive impact on all elements of the sustainability wheel as creating sustainable communities and reducing fuel poverty and health inequalities exacerbated by housing are embedded throughout each of the four pillars.
- 3.5.2 Pillar One of the Strategy sets out plans to improve the energy efficiency of existing stock, across tenure; reducing emissions in our borough associated with residential properties and decarbonising our homes. The focus is on addressing fuel poverty and reducing health inequalities associated with inadequate, inappropriate, or poor-quality housing. Making the best use of existing homes and buildings is also a more sustainable way to grow the housing offer rather than automatically building new.
- 3.5.3 Pillar Two seeks to promote strong and resilient communities with the right infrastructure and facilities to promote active and sustainable travel, local resilience, safety and pride in our built environment and green spaces.
- 3.5.4 Pillar Three focusses on enabling people to live, healthy independent lives in

accommodation which supports their needs now and in the future.

- 3.5.5 Pillar Four seeks to ensure that all new homes are low/no carbon (in line with emerging planning/building standards), meet the requirements of the Sustainable Construction and Climate Change Adaptation SPD, and are built in sustainable locations. The Council is leading by example in terms of quality of design and sustainability credentials, pledging to build all new Council Homes to the Barnsley Low Carbon Standard.

### 3.6 **Employee**

There are no direct employee implications arising from this report. As part of the Council's Transformation Programme, there will be a requirement to strengthen the Strategic Housing Function in terms of resourcing and how it connects/interacts with other services and organisations to ensure that it is able to deliver/enable all aspects of this ambitious Housing Strategy over the coming four years.

### 3.7 **Communications**

The communications and marketing team will collaborate closely with the Strategic Housing team to develop effective communication channels for partners and the public, ensuring clear understanding of the consultation process and how it has supported the new strategy. Progress against the delivery of the Strategy will be monitored by the Housing Board via the development of 2-year delivery plans.

The aims set out in this Strategy will only be achieved by working in partnership with a range of local and regional stakeholders. The Council works strategically with partners through the Housing Board and with Housing Association and Developer Partners to help meet the wide range of housing need across the borough. Working with Homes England and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to access funding opportunities is vital to make housing delivery schemes viable.

This Housing Strategy has been developed in collaboration with the Housing Board, which includes representation at a senior level from Adult Care, Children and Young Peoples Services, Planning, and Public Health. Further updates were made following a public consultation.

## 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 **Do Nothing & Retain the Existing Strategy** – The current strategy is a high-level document which spans 2014-33 in line with the Local Plan period. Members could agree to retain the existing high-level strategy and key ambitions. This option is not recommended. The 2014-33 Strategy was developed as part of a suite of Strategies including the Jobs and Business, Transport and Employment and Skills strategies; all of which have updated to align with Barnsley 2030, regional priorities and updated Government Policy and directions. Officers have also undertaken a robust public consultation exercise the results of which show strong support towards the priorities of the



new strategy.

#### 4.2 **Option Two: Support the adoption of the revised Housing Strategy.**

Preferred Option. The new Strategy presents a refocus of the over-arching strategic housing priorities for our borough and a reset of the strategic direction and alignment for several other key housing and health related strategies as referenced in the strategy itself. The new Strategy also changes the hierarchy approach of addressing housing need – ensuring that we place our focus on making the very best use of the stock that we have first and foremost and then looking at how we can address unmet and growing need via the delivery of sustainable housing growth.

### 5. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Section 1.3 identifies the several key challenges/opportunities which have arisen since the 2014-33 Strategy was published. These changes need to be reflected in this key document which shapes the over-arching Strategic Housing priorities for our borough and provide the Strategic Direction and Alignment for other key housing and health related strategies as referenced in the Strategy itself.

### 6. **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Housing Strategy 2024-28

Appendix 2: Draft Housing Strategy Consultation Outcome Report

### 7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Housing Strategy 2014-33 & Cabinet Decision 9/4/2014/6.3

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### 8. **REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Financial consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date:  Ashley Gray – Strategic Finance Business Partner - 20/11/2023
<b>Legal consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Legal Services officer consulted and date.  Ian Goldsmith 21.11.23

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**Date:27/11/2023**