



Report to Policy Committee

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Report of: *Ajman Ali – Executive Director of Operational Services*

Report to: *Housing Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *10 November 2022*

Subject: *The creation of a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop the new Housing Strategy*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Not applicable at this stage. An EIA will be developed for the Housing Strategy.</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Not applicable at the stage. A CIA will be undertaken for the Housing Strategy.</i>				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

This report seeks approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop a new Housing Strategy. Membership will be drawn from the Housing Policy Committee.

The Terms of Reference of the Group are appended to this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Housing Policy Committee: -

1. Approve the appointment of a Task and Finish Group on the terms described in this report to oversee work to develop a new Housing Strategy

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 - Terms of reference for Task and Finish Group

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
	Legal: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
	Climate: <i>N/A at this stage</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>Ajman Ali – Executive Director of Operational Services</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted: <i>Cllr Douglas Johnson</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: Georgina Parkin
	Job Title: Service Manager – Strategic Housing and Regeneration
	Date: <i>October 2022</i>

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 The Council's published Housing Strategy 2013 – 2023 is due to run out. We are not required by Government to have a housing strategy, but a strategy document sets out people's housing needs and what the Council intends to do to address them. It helps partners understand the Council's priorities and helps them align their plans and funding. A new Housing Strategy will:

- Provide an overview of housing related issues in the area
- Identify any mismatch between supply and demand
- Identify issues regarding housing conditions
- Set out the key objectives for the Council and its partners
- Establish priorities for action and spending priorities
- Develop an action plan and set out policy direction to deliver the Housing Strategy

The breadth of policy and investment issues which will be set out in the new housing strategy is significant. It is important that appropriate time is set aside for members of the Housing Policy Committee to consider housing context and options, and advise officers of future priorities to develop the new Housing Strategy.

It is proposed that a Task and Finish Group is established to oversee this work. The group will meet regularly for a time limited.

6 meetings of the Group will be held, running on a weekly basis. Meetings will focus on key policy issues which officers require advice on and which Councillors can request. Meeting topics include:

- 1) Equalities
- 2) Supported Housing
- 3) Access to Rented Housing
- 4) Private Rented Sector
- 5) Decarbonisation
- 6) Cllr choice / review and recap

The Group will be accountable to the Housing Policy Committee and will report on progress against the work programme to develop the new Council Housing Strategy. The full Terms of Reference, including membership of the Group, is appended to this report.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 Having a new Housing Strategy will directly contribute creating better communities and neighbourhoods and the Council's commitment to

achieving net zero by 2030. Equalities, decarbonisation and supporting the most vulnerable communities are at the heart of the policy issues the Task and Finish Group will be considering. The Group will enable key policy issues to be debated by members from across the political parties. This will ensure collective agreement on issues which need to be addressed by the Housing Strategy. This will result in a more rounded and effective Strategy, benefitting the Council, its residents and partners. Political endorsement at an early stage will also provide traction for the Strategy development.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 The Council is not required to consult on this proposal.

The Strategic Leadership Board have been briefed on the development of the Housing Strategy and recommended that the Housing Committee consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to oversee this work.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 The Task and Finish Group will have Member representation from the 3 largest political parties, ensuring that advice is reflective of the political makeup of the Council.

The meeting programme will include a session dedicated to equalities. This will help make sure that equalities issues are embedded within the policy advice provided by the Task and Finish Group. An EIA will be completed for the Housing Strategy.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial and commercial implications because of creating a Task and Finish Group. However, the group will consider the financial implications of policy advice provided.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Task and Finish Group will be formed in line with the Council's Constitution.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications as a result of creating a Task and Finish Group. However, climate implications will be a key area of policy the Group will consider. A CIA will be completed for the Housing Strategy

4.4 Other Implications

(Refer to the decision making guidance and provide details of all relevant implications, e.g. human resources, property, public health).

- 4.4.1 The Housing Committee can establish 2 Task and Finish Groups each year. Setting up a Task and Finish Group for the Housing Strategy will leave one opportunity for the Committee's remaining annual work plan.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 An alternative would be to deliver a series of Knowledge Briefings for the Housing Policy Committee. This was rejected as it would not enable constructive debate and advice to be provided to officers.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Group will bring together a small, focused group of members to examine key housing policy issues and provide clear advice to officers developing the strategy. Cross party representation will mean that political agreement is reached at an early stage of the process allowing the strategy to progress. This has been a significant barrier to the Strategy's development in the past.

The group will feedback advice given, and progress on the work programme to the Housing Policy Committee, so the Committee can make informed decisions on the Housing Strategy.

Policy Committee Task and Finish Groups

Terms of Reference

Housing Strategy Development

Housing Policy Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.2 The Council's Constitution outlines that Task and Finish Groups may be appointed by Policy Committees as appropriate to assist in the completion of their duties, save that each Policy Committee may have no more than one appointed Task and Finish Group at any time.

The purpose of such Task and Finish Groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service, according to their remit. These groups do not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of the Policy Committee. They should provide regular progress updates to meetings of the Policy Committee

Details of the scope of this Task and Finish Group are set out in Section 4.

2. Membership and attendance

- 2.1 Membership is drawn from the Housing Policy committee. This may be the whole Committee or some of the Committee. When not the whole committee, membership of the Group will be proportionate to the political representation on the committee.

The Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group will consist of:

- 5 Elected Members and include 2 from the Labour Party, 2 from the Liberal Democrats Party and 1 from the Green Party.
- The Group will include at least one of the following members of the Housing Policy Committee
 - Chair
 - Deputy Chair
 - Group Spokesperson
- Councillors from each party will be appointed based on the topic for review. Members of the group may have a special knowledge or interest in the subject being considered.
- The Group may co-opt non-voting members who are not elected Members of the Council to assist in its consideration of an issue. This could include other council officers and representatives of other agencies for specific items.

- 2.3 Chair:

Task and Finish Groups will require a Chair to lead the review, chair meetings and report on progress. The Chair should be appointed based on the topic for review and can either be appointed by the parent committee or at the first meeting of the Task and Finish group.

2.4 The Task and Finish Group will be supported by officers from the relevant directorate. Officers will provide relevant material and take action notes for the Group

2.5 Task and Finish groups do not meet in public session and are not subject to the Access to Information Requirements.

2.6 The Group will be accountable to the Housing Policy Committee and report on progress against the work programme to develop the new Council Housing Strategy

2.6 Behaviours:

- Members of the Group will be polite and respectful and encourage constructive debate across the range of issue.
- Prepare for each meeting by reading briefings and fact sheets relevant to the task and finish group purpose.
- Request further information to help shape thinking where it is practicable to provide this within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Members of the Group will request that certain issues are considered by the Group where this is practicable within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Members will liaise with their relevant political parties in advance of the meetings and be empowered to provide advice within the remit of the task and finish group

3. Meeting Frequency and Format

3.1 6 meetings will be held. Meetings will take place weekly and last for 2 hours. Meetings will be in person where practicably possible or online. Additional meetings can be requested by Group Members by exception and will be facilitated where practicable with the time constraints of the Group

3.2 The Task and Finish Group will seek to bring its work to a conclusion and submit a report to the Policy Committee by December 2022

4. Scope of the Task and Finish Group

4.1 The Group has been established to oversee work to develop the new Housing Strategy. The group will meet regularly for a time limited period to provide advice on housing policy and investment priorities, to help shape the new housing strategy.

4.2 Specific Functions

- The Group will have oversight of key housing issues and give advice to officers who are developing the Housing Strategy
- Raise awareness and share information about policies, strategies and plans related to housing
- Feedback to the Housing Policy Committee about policy advice given to officers to shape the development of the housing strategy

4.3 Meeting work programme:

1. Equalities
2. Supported Housing
3. Access to rented housing
4. Private Sector Housing
5. Decarbonisation
6. Councillor choice or phase 2 of previous topics

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