



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2013

Report of: Derek Martin

Subject: Housing Strategy 2013-23

Author of Report: Georgina Parkin, Manager Housing Strategy and Policy

Summary:

The new ten year housing strategy will set out Sheffield City Council's (SCC) approach to housing in all tenures and in all areas of the city. Its action plan will be refreshed every three years to make it responsive to the local and national housing landscape but will be guided by the overarching themes and priorities of the strategy. This report is being presented at the request of the Scrutiny Committee to help scrutinise SCC's future strategic approach to housing in Sheffield.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Consider the 10 year Housing Strategy and its first three year action plan and provide comment on their content prior to cabinet approval.

Background Papers:

Housing Strategy 2013-23
 Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013-16
 Housing Strategy Performance Indicators
 Housing Strategy 2013-23 EIA
 Strategic Housing Review Report
 Housing Strategy Consultation Findings

**Report of the Director of Derek Martin –
Housing Strategy 2013-23**

1. Introduction/Context

- 1.1 It is widely recognised that Sheffield faces a number of significant challenges where housing plays a pivotal role. Some of these challenges are already being addressed by the Council and its partners, whilst others challenges are expected to develop as national policy is implemented.

The strategy sets out Sheffield City Council's (SCC) approach to housing in all tenures and in all areas of the city, and will be supported by a series of action plans. These will be guided by the overarching themes and priorities of the strategy but refreshed every three years to make the plans responsive to the local and national housing landscape.

There is no statutory duty to produce a housing strategy but the new housing strategy will help our partners, funders and residents understand our housing ambitions for new and existing homes in the city and for the housing services provided for Sheffield's residents. In addition, it will enable them to consider and develop their own opportunities to deliver this shared vision. The report is being presented at the request of the Committee for their comment.

2. Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc

2.1 Consultation

Extensive consultation has been carried out on the priority issues for the new Housing Strategy. The consultation highlighted a wide range of issues and concerns; some of these were strategic and policy focussed, some were about how the Council delivers its services, and some were about access to housing and how the city's residents are affected by the area and house in which they live.

The consultation ran between March 2010 and May 2012. Equality and accessibility considerations were taken into account throughout the consultation and some groups that were under represented in the consultation feedback were given additional opportunity to get involved.

2.2 Housing Priorities

The feedback from this consultation has fed directly into the identified priorities in the draft Housing Strategy, as set out in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 below. The 10 most important issues highlighted from the consultation are shown below:

- a. Provide more affordable homes to rent and buy
- b. Improve the quality of Sheffield's neighbourhoods.
- c. Increase support to help people remain independent in their own home, including provision for older people.
- d. Give people a greater say in decisions on housing and provide opportunities to empower our communities to help them thrive.
- e. Help young people to obtain and run a home
- f. Promote cohesive communities, including reducing anti-social behaviour and improving our response to it.
- g. Improve the condition of the private rented sector and the standard of service provided to tenants living in the sector.
- h. Reduce the carbon footprint of the city's housing stock.
- i. Make best use of our existing stock, including reducing the number of empty homes in the city and the impact that these have on our communities.
- j. Improve the quality and range of homes in the city.

The 10 housing priorities above span a range of housing issues and particularly mention helping the younger and the older members of our communities. The priorities also include wider neighbourhood concerns such as anti-social behaviour and the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods.

2.3 Strategic Housing Review

- 2.3.1 The feedback gathered from Sheffield's communities and key stakeholders has allowed the Council to gain a better understanding of the housing issues that residents view as being most important to them. In order to establish how the Council and its partners could work towards progressing these priorities and take account of national and local changes, a Strategic Review of housing in Sheffield was undertaken.

The review highlighted that the current housing landscape will be significantly impacted by:

- Changes to the age and mix of Sheffield's population
- The government's financial and (relatively untested) policy changes, which will need to be fully implemented before their impact is known and properly understood
- The overall economic climate and its effect on slowing housing growth and access to finance
- The impact of government policies, such as the Localism Act, changes to the Planning Act
- Welfare benefit reform, which is going to have a significant impact on housing choices, creating some complex problems for predicting population growth and migration, household formation, and true demand for housing and housing services
- Councils working with reducing finances, making it increasingly important for resources to be effectively targeted and intelligence led.

- 2.3.2 The Strategic Housing Review considered the changes to funding for housing activity. Since the last strategy was developed many sources of funding which were used to support housing activity across the city and across tenures are no longer available.

The Council still has the challenge of finding solutions for legacy schemes where funding has been withdrawn early, and in funding activities to improve the quality of homes within the private sector. However, there is now government commitment to address the need for greater housing supply, and Government has created financial incentives to encourage local authorities to facilitate housing growth. It is therefore currently in the Council's interest to prioritise projects that have a significant impact on increasing housing delivery and on our ability to bring empty homes back into use.

2.3.3 Having looked at the current housing policy and investment landscape and housing market changes in Sheffield, and having considered the priorities raised by our residents, the Strategic Housing Review established 3 key objectives for housing in the city over the next 10 years. These are:

- Help younger, older and vulnerable people to live independently
- Increase the supply of new homes in the city
- Make best use of the city's existing housing stock

These objectives will be delivered by the Council and our partners through investment in physical interventions in the places that people live and work in, and by our approach to supporting our residents. Therefore in the new housing strategy the issues have been grouped under the themes of '**Great Places**' and '**Sustainable Communities**'. These chapters of the Housing Strategy have been summarised in the sections below.

2.4 Content of the Strategy

2.4.1 Great Places

In Sheffield we are working towards creating a city that is a 'Great Place to Live'. By this we mean a city with desirable neighbourhoods that offer a range of affordable and quality homes that meet people's needs, along with a strong sense of local identity and attractive well-used and popular public spaces and facilities. The physical intervention priorities to help us achieve this are described in the strategy, and set out under the following headings:

- Enabling housing development and increasing housing supply
- Improving the mix and range of homes
- Making best use of existing stock

2.4.2 Sustainable Communities

We believe everybody in Sheffield should live in welcoming, inclusive and safe communities and have a good standard of housing that enables them to stay safe and warm. We know however, that some communities within Sheffield's diverse population will need extra support to achieve this and to actively participate in the life of the city. Our approach to supporting independent living is set out in the housing strategy and describes how we will ensure that our resources help deliver the following outcomes:

- Improving health and wellbeing

- Helping young people to live independently
- Helping vulnerable and older people to live independently

2.4.3 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report or the Housing Strategy. Any legal implications arising from individual projects or activities set out in the Action Plan will be considered when they are reported for approval in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of delegation.

2.4.4 Financial Implications

There are a number of changes in the sources of funding which underpin the targets set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan. However, this report does not commit the Council to any spending plans. Instead it will be used to inform the allocation of resources in the forthcoming Business Planning process for 2013-14 and beyond.

2.4.5 Equality Implications

The Housing Strategy outlines our belief that everybody in Sheffield should live in welcoming, inclusive and safe communities and have a good standard of housing that enables them to stay safe and warm. It also acknowledges that some communities within Sheffield's diverse population will need extra support to achieve this and to actively participate in the life of the city. The Housing Strategy therefore sets out our broad approach to meet this ambition whilst reflecting the current policy and investment landscape in which we are operating, and the levels of investment and resources available.

2.4.6 Environmental Implications

Our intention to make the best use of existing stock in the city is described in section 2.9 of the Housing Strategy and includes our priorities for reducing the city's carbon footprint and for reducing the risk of cold related illnesses as a result of fuel poverty. Individual projects arising from this housing strategy will assess their individual environmental implications as part of future approval processes.

3. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

- 3.1 Work to develop the new Housing Strategy has established clear priorities for the Council and for Sheffield residents. Based on these priorities the Housing Strategy sets out how the Council and our partners can best use investment and resources over the long term to bring maximum benefit to Sheffield's residents.

The new Housing Strategy will ensure that housing investment will support the Council's strategic outcomes, in particular the Great Place to Live and Safe and Secure Communities outcomes.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Committee provide views and comment on the housing priorities identified in the Housing Strategy.

4.2 That the Committee provide views and comment on the actions identified in the Housing Strategy Action Plan