

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee	30 January 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Housing Strategy 2014–2019	Public
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information

### Summary

This report introduces the new City of London draft Housing Strategy (the Strategy) for 2014–2019 (attached as Appendix 1). It sets out the reason for having a strategy and briefly outlines the key sections and content. The Strategy is a high-level statement of the priority outcomes we want to deliver through our housing offer for City residents and tenants over the next five years, and will form part of the City's wider corporate planning framework. The Strategy will require joint working between service departments and external partners, and will be resourced and delivered through a range of existing operational and other plans and targets. These will continue to be monitored in the normal way through the relevant committees. It is proposed that, when approved, oversight and review of the Strategy be undertaken by reporting to the City's Community and Children's Services Committee, with reports for information provided at intervals to other committees as required. The draft Strategy has been drawn up in consultation with relevant departments and services. The Strategy was approved by the Community and Children's Services Committee on 10 December 2014 for public consultation and circulation for information and comments to other committees, including the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, the Planning and Transportation Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee. Following this, and any requirements for further amendment, the Strategy will be submitted for approval by the Court of Common Council for publication in May 2014.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- note and comment as appropriate on the Strategy;
- note the arrangements for oversight, review and reporting of the Strategy.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Local authorities are required in law to have a strategy which sets out the vision for housing in their locality, and policies and objectives that explain how they will:

- assess and plan for current and future housing need;
- plan and facilitate future supply;
- make best use of existing stock;
- plan and commission housing-related support services;
- secure effective neighbourhood management.

These requirements extend beyond the City's statutory housing responsibilities. The Strategy covers all forms of housing tenure. The outcomes it aims to deliver for City residents and tenants will be reliant on contributions from services such as planning and adult social care as well as external partners in the private, community and voluntary sectors. The Strategy will therefore operate at a corporate and partnership level and will form part of the wider corporate planning framework within the City.

2. In addition to its housing stock within the City boundaries, the City also owns housing estates in neighbouring areas of London, where our powers and statutory responsibilities are limited to those of a landlord; for example, we do not provide social care or housing benefit services to our tenants on these out-of-City estates. This will require us to work in partnership with other agencies such as local authorities to deliver our priorities.

3. This draft Strategy has been developed in consultation with relevant services and departments using evidence from a range of internal and external sources.

### **Outline of the main points of the Housing Strategy**

4. The Strategy sets out the context in which it will operate, the main challenges the City needs to address, and the high-level priority outcomes we are aiming to deliver through our housing offer over the next five years.

### **The context**

5. This outlines the planning and policy issues which inform the Strategy:

- local: the City's vision, corporate and partnership priorities, and other associated strategies such as the Local Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Safer City Partnership;
- regional: the London Mayor's London Plan and Housing Strategy, and our role in neighbouring areas and the wider sub-region;
- national: the Government's agenda for housing, related policy and legislation such as welfare reform, tenancy reform and the significance of the reform of housing finance (self-financing Housing Revenue Account).

This section also sets out key facts about the City's housing and population.

### The challenges

6. This section outlines socio-economic, demographic and related issues which inform the rationale and substance of the key priorities, for example:
  - affordability and supply;
  - demographic change, planning targets, the impact of a growing older population;
  - housing need, overcrowding and welfare reform;
  - homelessness and health inequalities.

### The priorities

7. There are four high-level priorities focused on improving housing supply, existing stock, homes and neighbourhoods, and outcomes for vulnerable residents:

- More homes – increasing the supply of homes

This sets out the role of planning and private sector development, our ambitions as a developer of new affordable housing, and our role as a strategic housing authority promoting, for example, use of the private rented sector to help to increase supply and access to housing.

- Making better use of our existing homes.

This sets out how we will enable people to explore the full range of housing options available, and how we will manage our stock to tackle overcrowding and under-occupation.

- Better homes, better neighbourhoods.

This sets out our ambitions to improve our stock through our asset management strategy to improve quality of life for residents and develop safer, more sustainable neighbourhoods.

- Supporting our communities.

This sets out our aims to plan and commission housing-related services to meet important challenges such as tackling rough sleeping, supporting people with disabilities and older people, and tackling health inequalities.

The Strategy sets out why these aims are important and their relevance to other corporate priorities. Each priority has a number of strategic aims which will guide our direction of travel over the next five years, together with a set of actions, or commitments, which will contribute to the delivery of the aims.

### **Implementation, monitoring and governance of the Strategy**

8. Delivery of the Strategy will be resourced and implemented through a wide range of existing operational plans and targets, and the service and departmental business plans supporting these. These will be monitored in the normal way through existing reporting arrangements to relevant committees. It is proposed that, when approved, oversight and review of progress of the Housing Strategy be carried out through reports to the Community and

Children's Services Committee, with update reports provided at regular intervals to this Committee, and to other committees as required.

### **Next steps**

9. Members are asked to approve the draft Strategy for further circulation to other committees and public consultation, prior to final amendment and approval by this Committee and the Court of Common Council for publication in May 2014.
10. Members are also asked to approve the proposals for oversight, review and reporting of the Strategy.
11. Officers will amend the Strategy as necessary following consultation. Minor changes will be incorporated under delegated authority. Any major changes required to the substance of the Strategy will be brought back to this Committee for further approval and sign-off. The Strategy will then be formatted for publication on the City's website. Subject to the need for any further amendment or approval, it is recommended that the Strategy be published in May 2014.

### **Corporate and strategic implications**

12. The City's ambitions for improving services and quality of life for its residents are:
  - to support and promote the City as the world leader in international finance and business services;
  - to provide modern, efficient and high-quality local services and policing within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors with a view to delivering sustainable outcomes;
  - to provide valued services to London and the nation.
13. The Strategy's priority outcomes support these aims. The City is reliant on housing markets and communities in neighbouring areas to meet the housing requirements of much of the City's workforce. In addition to seeking opportunities to build more affordable housing in the City, we will also work closely with our partners in neighbouring boroughs to provide housing for our tenants and communities on our estates in other boroughs, improving the affordable housing market in our sub-region. The Housing Strategy will also complement other City strategies to help to deliver these corporate aims. These include:
  - the Local Plan, which sets out how we intend to manage growth and development within the Square Mile, including housing development
  - the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which sets out our plans to improve the health of City residents and workers, and reduce health inequalities between local communities
  - the Safer City Partnership, which sets out how we intend to tackle problems such as anti-social behaviour and domestic violence.

## **Implications**

14. There are no legal, financial or human resource implications arising from the Strategy. The Strategy will be delivered from existing budgets using approved operational and delivery plans.

## **Conclusion**

15. The Strategy meets the City's legal obligations to draw up and publish a housing strategy for the locality. The Strategy supports the City's corporate and strategic aims and sets out policies and objectives, based on accurate and up-to-date evidence, which will improve the City's housing stock and housing-related services for residents and tenants.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy 2014–2019**

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