



Report – Community and Children’s Services Committee

Housing Strategy 2014-19

To be presented on Thursday, 1st May 2014

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

Summary

1. This report seeks approval of the new City of London Housing Strategy for 2014–2019. All Local Authorities are required to develop such strategies. The Strategy was approved by the Community and Children’s Services Committee on 10 January 2014, the Planning and Transportation Committee on 18 March 2014 and the Policy and Resources Committee on 20th March 2014. It is a high-level statement of the housing offer the City is aiming to deliver for residents and tenants over the next five years through all forms of tenure.
2. The Strategy will entail joint working between Community and Children’s Services, City Surveyor’s Department, the Department of the Built Environment and external partners. It will be resourced and delivered through existing operational plans and targets. It is proposed that these continue to be monitored through the relevant committees and that, when approved, oversight, review and annual reporting of the Strategy be undertaken by the City’s Community and Children’s Services Committee, with reports for information provided at intervals to other Committees as required.
3. The Strategy outlines four main priorities; building more homes to provide enough housing for the future; making better use of our existing stock; improving existing homes to meet the health and other needs of the City’s population; and supporting people within their communities regarding rough sleepers and housing provision for older people and people with disabilities.

Recommendation

4. We **recommend** that the new City of London Housing Strategy for 2014–2019 be approved.

MAIN REPORT

Background

5. It is a legislative requirement for local authorities to have a strategy which sets out the vision for housing in their locality. The Strategy should contain 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; and
 - 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 Transportation and Adult Social Services as well as external partners in the private and voluntary sectors. The Strategy will therefore operate at a corporate and partnership level and shall form part of the City Corporation's wider corporate planning framework.

6. In addition to its housing stock within the Square Mile, the City also owns housing estates in neighbouring areas of London, where statutory responsibilities are limited to those of a landlord. The Strategy will require us to work in partnership with other agencies such as local authorities to deliver our priorities.
7. The Strategy has been developed in consultation with relevant services and departments using evidence from a range of internal and external sources.

Outline of main points of the Housing Strategy

8. 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

- 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 Strategy;
- 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).

The Challenges

9. There are several socio-economic, demographic and related issues which inform the key priorities, including:
 - affordability and supply - the high cost of buying and renting in the city ;

- the impact of the City's economy on population and housing profiles, demographic change, and planning targets;
- housing need, overcrowding and welfare reform;
- the impact of an ageing population, homelessness and health inequalities.

The Priorities

10. There are four high level priorities focused on improving housing supply, existing stock, homes and neighbourhoods and outcomes for vulnerable residents:
 - i. More homes –to help the City provide enough housing for future requirements; our primary focus will be on the delivery of additional affordable housing within the Square Mile and our estates in neighbouring areas: 61 homes in Southwark in 2014 with potential for an additional 299 homes by 2016 and a further 150 beyond that date.
 - ii. Making better use of our existing stock – tackling overcrowding and under-occupation in the city's own housing stock through our allocation policy and incentives for under-occupying households to release larger homes.
 - iii. Better homes, better neighbourhoods - improving the City's housing stock; our focus will be on meeting the health and other needs of the City's ageing population by incorporating lifetime homes features, thermal insulation and energy efficiency measures into the stock refurbishment and modernisation programmes that we will undertake over the next five years.
 - iv. Supporting people within their communities through better prevention and earlier intervention by reducing rough sleeping within the City and reviewing housing provision for older people and people with disabilities.
11. Each priority has a number of strategic aims for the next five years, together with a set of actions for their delivery.

Current position

12. The City Corporation's corporate aims 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 of London 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. The Housing Strategy will also complement other City strategies:

- 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 Strategy, which sets out how we intend to tackle problems such as anti-social behaviour and domestic violence.
14. Delivery will be resourced and implemented through existing operational plans and targets, and the service and departmental business plans supporting these. It is proposed that these continue to be monitored in the normal way through existing reporting arrangements to relevant committees. It is further proposed that, when approved, oversight, review and annual public reporting of progress of the Housing Strategy be carried out through the Community and Children's Services Committee, with update reports provided at regular intervals to this and other Committees as required.

Proposals

15. Having considered the options available it is proposed that approval is given to the new City of London Housing Strategy for 2014–2019. 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.

Financial Implications

16. 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

17. The Strategy meets the City's legal obligations to draw up and publish a housing strategy for the locality. The Strategy supports the City of London's corporate and strategic aims and sets out policies and objectives, based on accurate and up-to-date evidence, which will improve the City Corporation's housing stock and housing-related services for residents and tenants. Your committee recommends that the Housing Strategy 2014-19, which can be found in the Members' Reading Room, be adopted.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 10th day of January, 2014.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

The Reverend Dr Martin Raymond Dudley
Chairman, Community and Children's Services Committee