

Report – Community and Children’s Services Committee

Housing Strategy

To be presented on Thursday, 7th March 2019

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

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval of a new City of London Corporation housing strategy – ‘Healthy homes; vibrant communities – Our housing strategy for 2019-23’. The strategy sets out the City Corporation’s vision for housing, and provides Members, residents, partners and officers with a high-level summary of outcomes and activities as a focus for prioritisation, oversight and accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to approve the adoption of ‘Healthy homes; vibrant communities – Our housing strategy for 2019-23’.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. The City Corporation is the landlord and freeholder to 2,859 homes in the City and six London Boroughs, as well as the strategic housing authority for the Square Mile.
2. The draft strategy – ‘Healthy homes; vibrant communities – Our housing strategy for 2019-23’ (Appendix 1) - identifies the priority outcomes sought by the City Corporation in this role and supports the allocation of resources to deliver them.
3. The strategy’s outcomes also deliver to those of the *Corporate Plan 2018-23*, and its duration is aligned to that overarching document.

Development

4. The strategy has been developed through wide stakeholder engagement, a needs analysis and an equalities impact assessment.
5. A consultation draft was approved by your Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee and your Health and Wellbeing Board. This document was then shared with the Community and Children’s Services department’s “Housing User Board” – a 162 member consultative group of tenants and leaseholders. The comments of this group, and the findings of the Annual Survey of Tenants and Residents, have informed the final draft presented for approval. Members of your Housing Delivery Working Group also reviewed and commented on the draft.

6. At the conclusion of this process, your Community and Children's Services Committee was pleased to approve the final draft of the strategy, now presented to the Court for adoption. Your Policy and Resources Committee has also reviewed the strategy and supports its recommendation to the Court.

Strategy

7. The strategy provides Members, residents, partners and officers with a high-level summary of outcomes and activities as a focus for prioritisation, oversight and accountability. The detailed delivery of those outcomes will be driven by, and detailed in, related plans and policies such as the Major Works programme and the housing development programme.
8. The strategy sets out a vision for 'healthy homes, space to thrive and vibrant communities for Londoners' and an overarching aim:

'to use our expertise and resources to develop, maintain and manage quality homes on estates people are proud to live on, where our residents will flourish, and through which we support our communities and economy to thrive'.
9. Four priority outcomes are identified:
 - quality homes that meet the changing needs of our residents and communities
 - well-managed estates that people are happy and proud to live in
 - thriving and connected communities where people feel at home and flourish
 - new homes to meet the needs of Londoners, our communities and economy.
10. Each outcome is supported by identified activities to achieve their delivery, and the measures that will indicate success. Their contribution to the *Corporate Plan 2018-23* is also set out. Quotes from our engagement with residents are given alongside the outcomes to reflect the range of views expressed.
11. Key commitments in the strategy include:
 - investment in a £55 million major works programme over five years
 - a programme of fire safety and maintenance work
 - community development activity to involve residents in service design on estates
 - using design to enable residents to lead more active lifestyles
 - developing the Community Builders programme and other initiatives to tackle social isolation
 - increasing housing supply, with a long-term ambition to deliver 700 new social homes and a further 3,000 mixed tenure homes.
12. Significant funding has been budgeted against many of these commitments – most notably the Major Works Programme and current housing development projects. The strategy acts to focus future activity and to provide a framework

through which the allocation of budgets can be made and prioritised. Budgetary control will sit within individual workstreams and their governance structures.

13. Your Community and Children's Services Committee, in approving this strategy, was particularly keen to gain clarity in relation to the commitment to deliver affordable homes on our existing social estates. The term "affordable homes" describes a range of possible housing products and, therefore, the strategy has been amended to clarify that "our programme will maximise the number of new homes available at genuinely affordable social rents"
14. This commitment is consistent with the *Rents and Tenancy Policy* – agreed by members – which commits to offering tenancies at social rents as standard practice. However, this policy also acknowledges that the City may deliver new homes at rents above a target social rent "where homes are being developed to meet the needs of groups on low to middle incomes, or where in future the conditions of any grant received requires a mix of rent levels".
15. The diversification of tenure is also essential to the financing of new build - as is set out in the Corporation's 2015 housing policy (*Increasing the supply of homes – the role of the City of London Corporation*) which describes development on the City's housing estates being:

...supported by funding drawn from Section 106 receipts, grant funding from the Mayor of London's housing investment programme, borrowing within the Housing Revenue Account and cross subsidy from shared ownership and market sales. This approach will deliver a range of tenures to meet a variety of needs and incomes.

Governance and oversight

16. The implementation of the strategy will be by overseen the Community and Children's Services Committee, with the support of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee and the Housing Delivery Working Group.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The new housing strategy supports the *Corporate Plan* aims of a flourishing society, thriving economy and outstanding environments. It delivers specifically to the outcomes:
 - People are safe and feel safe.
 - People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
 - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
 - Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
 - We have access to the skills and talent we need.
 - Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.
18. The housing strategy also delivers to the outcomes of the City Corporation's *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Local Plan, Social Mobility Strategy* and the

Homelessness Strategy and contributes to the *Mayor of London's Housing Strategy*.

Conclusion

19. The new housing strategy – 'Healthy homes; vibrant communities – Our housing strategy for 2019-23' – reinforces the City Corporation's commitment to its existing homes, its residents, and the vital contribution of new homes to London's communities and economy.

Appendix

- *Appendix 1 - Healthy homes; vibrant communities – Our housing strategy for 2019-23*

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

DATED this 11th day of January 2019.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Randall Keith Anderson
Chairman, Community and Children's Services Committee