

SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2012

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2012

Report of the: Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For Decision

Also Considered by: Cabinet - 9 February 2012

Full Council - 21 February 2012

Key Decision: Yes

This report supports the Key Aim of:

- i) Community Plan; and
- ii) Vision for Balanced Communities.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Mrs Carol Clark

Head of Service Head of Housing and Communications - Mrs. Pat Smith

Recommendation to Services Select Committee: It be RESOLVED that Members recommend the Housing Strategy Action Plan (HSAP) to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendation to Cabinet: It be RESOLVED that Members recommend the HSAP to Full Council for approval.

Recommendation to Full Council: It be RESOLVED that Members adopt the HSAP as District Council policy.

Reason for recommendation: to agree strategic direction and related housing activity up to 2013.

Introduction

- 1 Local authorities are no longer required to produce housing strategies, though it is still considered good practice to do so. These documents provide strategic direction and include a range of tactics to achieve strategic goals.
- 2 The Draft HSAP (Appendix A) has been produced to reflect findings from consultation and latest intelligence, both of which provide an indication of future housing need and demand. Consideration is also given to financial and non-financial capacity going forward, which is a key factor in the current and near-term economic environment.

- 3 If approved, delivery of the HSAP will be overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership's (LSP) Strategic Housing Sub-group on which sit District Council officers and a number of other partner organisations. Progress reports will be taken to the main LSP and Services Select Committee to update on strategic objectives.
- 4 Minor adjustments are likely to take place during the course of the action plan to reflect developing policy and the changing housing market. This will ensure that local housing strategy is routinely adapted to best effect. A full review and update of the HSAP will then take place in 2014.

Key Implications

Financial

- 5 The HSAP will be delivered from existing resources. Bids will be made for external funding to deliver some objectives, as set out in the HSAP.

Community Impact and Outcomes

- 6 The HSAP aims to meet housing need and demand across sectors and client groups, with a particular focus on the vulnerable. It also supports wider Community Plan outcomes, such as health, welfare, employment and training.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

- 7 This is compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) and is not likely to result in any HRA implications.

Resource (non-financial)

- 8 The HSAP will be delivered using existing resources and there will be no additional non-financial implications.

Value For Money and Asset Management

- 9 The HSAP provides opportunities to reduce the impact on District Council assets and will help to create savings.
- 10 Working across local authority boundaries and with cross-sector partners, there is less consequent requirement for office space.
- 11 The HSAP will not have a negative environmental impact - impact would be positive, though negligible.

Equality Impacts

Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?

- 12 There is some positive discrimination to assist certain client groups and to equalise opportunities.

Does the activity make a positive contribution to promoting equality?

13 Yes - it aims to assist those who have fewer opportunities than the norm.

Summary of Impacts

14 Impacts are positive.

Sustainability Checklist

15 Completed and available by request.

Conclusions

16 The HSAP aims to make best use of limited financial and non-financial resources to deliver housing strategy to best effect - and without placing further strain on constrained local budgets by making best use of external funding and/or shared services, where possible.

Risk Assessment Statement

- 17 There are a number of risks associated with **not** adopting the SDHAP, including:
- 18 Not having a strategic document setting the way forward to meet housing requirements in the District and across West Kent; and
- 19 A failure to demonstrate to the community that the District Council is actively working towards related Community Plan objectives.

Background Papers: Sustainable Community Action Plan 2012-13
Vision for Balanced Communities
See: Supporting Evidence/Intelligence (Appendix A: SDHAP, p12)

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