

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Shadow Executive – 6th December 2018

Somerset Housing Strategy – Adoption and Delivery

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillors Terry Beale and Keith Turner

Report Author: Mark Leeman (Strategy Specialist – Strategy Functional Area)

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Somerset Housing Strategy (SHS) is the local response to the national housing crisis. It highlights key facts and challenges within the local housing market, before proposing a vision for homes and housing across Somerset that embraces strong and effective strategic leadership; a local economy that provides opportunity for all; homes in Somerset are good for your health: and a society that supports the vulnerable.
- 1.2 To help resolve the housing crisis will require integrated systems leadership that embraces communities, housing, health and wellbeing, social care and town and country planning. It will require creativity and innovation (from all partners). It will necessitate solutions that are developed with residents, local businesses and communities.
- 1.3 The preparation of the SHS began in July 2017, with the publication of district housing market profiles (see Appendix A) and a multi-agency workshop. A consultation draft was published in February 2018. TDBC and WS Scrutiny considered the draft SHS during March/April. The consultation closed on 30th April 2018. During the Summer we have been considering the consultation response and have made various amendments to the SHS.
- 1.4 The SHS is developed by the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP). TDBC and WSC are active members of SSHP. SSHP is within the governance structure of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.5 The SHS (appendix B) was approved by SSHP on 22nd November 2018.
- 1.6 The next stage is for SSHP to develop a multi-agency delivery plan (work is underway) and for SSHP partners (if they choose) to develop their own response in the form of strategic housing action plans. Both TD and WS Scrutiny expressed a desire that we (SW&TC) should undertake such work.
- 1.5 The SHS is consistent with our aspirations for People, Place and Prosperity.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Shadow Executive are asked to:
 - A. Provide their approval to the content of the SHS (i.e. it's Vision, Themes, Priorities and Objectives)

B. To support the production of a SW&T action plan, commencing with conversations with Heads of Function and with Shadow Scrutiny

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 The development of the draft SSHF is supported by a comprehensive Risk and Issues register. Some of the key risks are described below:

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The production and delivery of the SHS is coordinated by a small team of officers from across the public sector. Resources are stretched and most organisations are facing disruption through cuts, Transformation and staff turnover. Capacity (and progress) may suffer as a result	5	4	20
Mitigation: We have already seen slippage as a result of such factors. Strong project management, regular performance monitoring and review, and a realist work programme, are essential. This is a key responsibility of SSHP.	3	3	9
Key partners (e.g. some Registered Providers) do not engage with the SHS, therefore jeopardising our ability to coordinate strategic housing activity and deliver improved outcomes for customers	3	5	15
Mitigation: To continue to discuss at the SHS at relevant partnership forums e.g. West Somerset Housing Forum, County Enablers, ENP Rural Housing Network etc. We are planning a launch event in Feb/March 2019, to which all local RPs will be invited. This event will be an opportunity to discuss delivery and partnership working.	2	3	6
The SHS is too aspirational, with too much content that will not be delivered with limited and diminishing resources	4	4	16
Mitigation: SSHP will undertake an initial prioritisation of all content, to inform the draft Delivery Plan. We shall continue this conversation with RPs (and other interested parties) at the launch event (see above). The Delivery Plan will contain a prioritised list of activity, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.	3	3	9
The needs of those with Protected Characteristics (i.e. those who may be vulnerable) are overlooked	3	4	16
Mitigation: A comprehensive EIA has been developed. New projects will also be subject to EIA. SSHP will seek to improve the quality and robustness of housing intelligence, to inform EIA and project development	2	2	4

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

The development of the SHS

- 4.1 The previous SHS was known as the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (SSHF). It was prepared in 2013 and had an end-date of 2016. It contains priorities relating to the availability of affordable housing, making best use of the existing housing stock, and supporting the vulnerable.
- 4.2 The SHS is prepared by the Somerset Strategic Housing Officers Group (SSHG) which reports to the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP). SSHP is within the governance arrangements of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board. Your representatives on SSHP are Cllr Terry Beale and Cllr Keith Turner, and Mark Leeman (Strategy Specialist).
- 4.3 The process of review began in late 2016. TDBC/WSC agreed to provide the Project Management expertise.
- 4.4 The first task was to build the evidence base, and build partnership arrangements around leadership and governance. The following was undertaken during 2017:
 - Data collection resulting in the publication of a 'benchmarking report'
 - Preparation of 5 x district based Housing Market Profiles and 1 x County-wide Housing

Market Profile

- Engagement of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board on matters relating to health and housing
- Stakeholder Conference (July 2017) at Taunton Rugby Club, involving 100+ people representing the housing sector and associated services. This conference ran 8 themed workshops on different aspects of housing issues / challenges
- Consultation and engagement on all of the above
- Ongoing development of an Equalities Impact Assessment

4.5 The above, in addition to national housing policy, provided the evidence base to the content of the draft SHS, which was published in February 2018. Since then we have:

- Undertaken further consultation / engagement – for example, the draft SHS was considered by Scrutiny at both TD and WS (March/April 2018). Their responses are included at Appendix C. We have also spoken to (and received support from) a range of partnerships such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safer Somerset Partnership, West Somerset Housing Forum, Exmoor National Park – Rural Housing Network, County Housing Enablers Forum etc
- Considered the consultation feedback and provided a response to each comment – this report can be viewed on request
- Refined the content of the SHS, and obtained ‘sign-off’ at SSHP on 22nd November 2018
- Began the development of a multi-agency delivery plan

SW&T – the Housing Challenge

4.6 It is not an exaggeration to state that we are now in a national housing crisis. This is accepted by all main political parties. Other than Brexit, Housing, along with the NHS, are top national priorities. Indeed, housing and health are inter-related – a key theme of the SHS. We need to rise to this challenge and certainly, we can be rightly proud of some of the exemplar projects that we are currently developing/running:

- Taunton Garden Town
- One Team working in our disadvantaged communities
- Building new council housing
- Worked with providers to develop a ‘prevention’ focussed adaptations service (Somerset Independence Plus)
- 241 affordable homes delivered across WS and Exmoor National Park areas, of which 186 are for rental and 55 for low cost ownership (April ’11 to March ’17)
- Adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032
- Development of One Team working in Minehead

- 4.7 But, there is still much to do. There are challenges around the supply of homes (all tenures), the condition of some of our local housing, and how we support the most vulnerable in our society. These challenges will require SW&T to continue to think creatively and radically.
- 4.8 A key theme of the SHS is leadership – that is, integrated systems leadership that incorporates housing, communities, health, social care and town & country planning. There is much work going on behind the scenes, involving conversations with (e.g.) Health and Wellbeing Board, the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Somerset Strategic Planning Conference and Somerset Academy.
- 4.9 Going forward it is suggested that the Shadow Executive support the following actions:
- SSHP (working with partners) to develop a multi-agency delivery plan that will seek to coordinate countywide housing activity. This is likely to include the following (among others):
 - ✓ The development of policy guidance for Health Impact Assessments
 - ✓ A review of the Youth Housing Strategy
 - ✓ The development of an Elderly Persons Housing Strategy
 - ✓ A county wide review of space standards, delivery of lifetime homes etc
 - ✓ Working to support the delivery of effective and sustainable support services
 - ✓ Working to integrate housing matters within the Health and Care Plan
 - That SW&T produce a district housing action plan that will articulate how we, as a council, will respond to the national housing crisis through creative and innovative housing activity. This will be informed by:
 - ✓ An immediate refresh of the Housing Market Profiles (appendix A), to inform
 - ✓ Initial conversations with Scrutiny and Heads of Function

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The SHS will enable us to address many of the themes and issues within our Corporate Strategies:

Taunton Deane

- 5.2 Key Theme 1: People – the SHS seeks to increase the availability of affordable housing (all tenures); to deliver more housing options for rural communities, single people, young people and the elderly; to support our most vulnerable residents; and to develop employment opportunities
- 5.3 Key Theme 2: Business & Enterprise – The SHS seeks the removal of barriers to housing growth. This includes both the provision of infrastructure and skills development within the construction sector
- 5.4 Key Theme 4: An Efficient and Modern Council: The SHS challenges us to think creatively and radically about how we deliver housing related services, including the

provision of new housing

West Somerset

- 5.5 Key Theme 1: Our Communities – the SHS seeks to increase the availability of affordable housing (all tenures); to deliver more housing options for rural communities, single people, young people and the elderly; to support our most vulnerable residents; and to develop employment opportunities
- 5.6 Key Theme 2: Business & Enterprise – The SHS seeks the removal of barriers to housing growth. This includes both the provision of infrastructure and skills development within the construction sector.
- 5.7 Key Theme 3: Our Place & Infrastructure - The SHS seeks to maximise the legacy of Hinkley Point C
- 5.8 Key Theme 4: An Efficient and Modern Council - The SHS challenges us to think creatively and radically about how we deliver housing related services, including the provision of new housing. It also challenges us to develop ‘asset’ based models of service delivery i.e. problem solving by working with talent and ideas generated within local communities

People, Place and Prosperity

- 5.9 The SHS is consistent with our aims for Transformation. It seeks to support vulnerable people and families, to adopt a creative place-based approach to service delivery, and to aspire to an economy that works for the benefit of all. The SHS will help us deliver integrated systems leadership that will enable the Transformation of service delivery for the benefit of our communities and local business.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 None directly, but the development of the SHS is of direct interest to SW&T, and its content will go on to help shape / inform the Place Plan, HRA service, Local Plan, Private Sector Housing Partnership etc. The SHS envisages strong leadership that will be used to address the housing crisis, which could result in new and innovative areas of work consistent with our aspirations for people, place and posterity.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None. There is no statutory duty to prepare a Housing Strategy

8 Environmental Impact Implications

- 8.1 None directly, although the SHS does seek to improve (through influencing other areas of work) the environmental setting of new developments to encourage cycling, walking and play, and also to address cold/damp homes which should have a beneficial effect on carbon emissions

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 The SHS supports the development of a revised Homelessness Strategy. It also seeks a refresh of the Youth Housing Strategy. Both of these pieces of work will seek to improve safeguarding arrangements / improve community safety

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 There are significant equality and diversity implications. Understanding housing issues and the effect on those with protected characteristics, helps us to respond with interventions. The SHS is supported by a comprehensive EIA (see Appendix D) which has been used to help shape the priorities and objectives. The EIA is not a static document. Its content will continue to inform the development of projects / activity within the Delivery Plan, and any supporting partner action plans.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 The SHS envisages significant positive implications for Social Value, by seeking the commissioning of housing and related support services to deliver social value and a social return on investment (see Priority 3, ambition 5)

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 Major implications. The SHS proposes a vision that seeks to integrate complex systems – communities, housing, social care, health services and town and country planning. Work has begun as the SHS seeks to align its work with that of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the LEP. Significantly, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Improving Lives) and the Health and Care Plan (Fit for my Future) have been / are also subject to review during 2018/19. This has provided a significant opportunity to align strategic priorities for housing, health and social care. Improving Lives has the SHS as a ‘cross cutter’ among all its priorities. Fit for my Future is seeking to drive prevention / health and wellbeing among its workstreams. Housing is integral to this.
- 12.2 The SHS has been prepared by a partnership comprising all 5 Somerset district councils, Exmoor National Park, Public Health, the HCA, County Council (social care and strategic planning) and registered providers

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications)

- 13.1 See 12 above.
- 13.2 In addition, it is worth noting that there is a significant correlation between housing conditions and health inequalities. Cold and damp housing, over-crowding, and insecurity of tenure all have a major impact on a person’s health and wellbeing, and even more so for the young and the elderly.
- 13.3 The SHS contains Health and Housing as one of its four ‘themes’ – it is a key element of the vision for homes and housing and is supported by a range of priorities and ambitions.
- 13.4 The SSHP is within the governance arrangements of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

14 Asset Management Implications

- 14.1 No direct implications, but the delivery of the SHS should challenge our thinking on how we may best utilise our assets for the benefit of our communities. This includes One Public Estate. Please refer to Housing and the Economy – Priority 3/objective 3: ‘Work with One Public Estate and identify opportunities to reuse released land and buildings to meet housing needs’

15 Consultation Implications

- 15.1 Consultation and engagement has been critical to the development of the SHS. We needed to create a product that has support and buy-in from a range of key partners and the local community. We had a successful conference (July 2017) which was attended by 100+ representatives from the housing sector and associated services. The output from that conference has directly influenced the content of the SHS. We also prepared Housing Market Profiles that were subject to consultation during Summer 2017. We undertook comprehensive engagement activity following the publication of the draft SHS during the Spring of 2018.
- 15.2 The development of the SHS was supported by a comprehensive consultation plan that coordinated and guided our approach to engagement. This included engagement with Scrutiny at both Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Now that SSHP has adopted the SHS, we plan further consultation activity around the Delivery Plan. We are currently planning a 'launch event' for Feb/early March 2019. This will be a half-day workshop, to which we shall invite the local housing sector, to discuss action and activity going forward.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – Yes**
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- **Cabinet/Executive – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – Yes / No** (delete as appropriate)

Reporting Frequency : Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly
 Twice-yearly Annually

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	Housing Market Profiles for TD and WS
Appendix B	Somerset Housing Strategy
Appendix C	Feedback from TD and WS Scrutiny
Appendix D	Equalities Impact Assessment

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