

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4</b>
<b>6 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

<b>Report of the Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration</b>		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Anne Keogh, Housing and Strategic Planning Manager	Tel. 863815
	Caroline Hannon, Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer	Tel. 863818

## **HOUSING STRATEGY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of the Housing Strategy 2016-20 and to seek comments from committee on the proposed content, particularly regarding rural housing issues. A draft version of the Housing Strategy will be ready for comment at Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> October and presented to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> November for the purposes of approval to commence a 4 week public consultation.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Commission make comments as they see fit on the proposed content and format of the draft Housing Strategy and highlight any specific rural issues that they would like to see covered in the document.

### **3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND RELEVANT CABINET PORTFOLIO**

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy cuts across all the corporate priorities but is particularly linked to
1. Driving growth, regeneration and economic development
  2. Implementing the Environment Capital agenda
  3. Keeping all our communities safe, cohesive and healthy
  4. Achieving the best health and wellbeing for the city
- 3.2 The Housing Strategy falls under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Peterborough Housing Strategy is a major policy item for the council. It sets out the council's priorities and commitments for the period 2016-2020 for a broad range of Housing matters, including rural housing issues. The first draft of the Housing Strategy will be widely consulted on to ensure that all stakeholders and partners have an opportunity to influence the final report.

The Housing Strategy is intended to benefit everyone who lives within Peterborough City Council's area. The strategy will set out the key role that housing plays in improving the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the city as well as identifying and providing solutions to address the housing needs of current and future households.

For context, the Council's current Housing Strategy 2012-15 is available here:  
<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/upload/www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/planning-and-development/HousingStrategy-housingstrategy2011-15.pdf?inline=true>

## 5. KEY ISSUES

### 5.1 Style of the draft strategy

The draft strategy is being prepared as a document that will be:

- Succinct, yet informative;
- Written in an easy reading style that will make it accessible to a range of audiences
- Clear as to what the council wants to achieve and what measures it will take to get there

### Structure of the draft Strategy

The Strategy will consist of four main parts:

- An introduction to the Strategy and an explanation as to how to submit comments on the draft during the consultation period (scheduled to commence towards the end of November, for a four week consultation period):
- A snapshot consisting of key statistics for Peterborough
- An overview of the National and Local legislative and policy context, including the Rural Vision and the Parish Charter for Peterborough and the opportunities and challenges they presents for housing in Peterborough
- A set of four priorities, each with their own set of specific measures that the council will implement to achieve them

### The Housing Strategy Priorities

There are four proposed headline priority areas within the Strategy. First, **supporting substantial and sustainable growth**. A range of key measures are identified to contribute to the delivery of growth in Peterborough. These include preparing a new Local Plan to ensure Peterborough is equipped to meet our growth needs, but also to ensure that growth is sustainable and responds to the demand for all types of housing including rural housing that is affordable to local residents. Supporting other important initiatives such as Peterborough's new housing Joint Venture with Cross Keys Homes which will deliver new housing of all types and tenures including affordable homes, and ring-fencing funding to support affordable housing providers to meet affordable housing needs in Peterborough, are also identified as key areas that can contribute to Peterborough's sustainable growth.

The second priority is **improving housing conditions to support health and wellbeing**. This priority focuses on utilising a range of preventative and proactive measures that will improve living conditions in Peterborough's existing homes. The key measures identified are tackling empty homes, addressing serious disrepair in the private sector through grants and through enforcement and providing aids and adaptations to enable frail elderly people and people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes. Maximising the energy efficiency of existing housing particularly in rural areas where there are a significant number of off-gas heated homes, is also identified as an important area for tackling indoor cold and fuel poverty.

The third priority is **ensuring the provision of a range of supported and specialist accommodation**. The key measure identified to contribute to achieving this priority is ensuring the suitability of accommodation for households with specific housing needs both within the existing stock and within future stock by supporting the provision of a range of property types that will cater for different specialist needs. This involves partnership working with key stakeholders including Adult and Children's services, private sector housing and care providers, affordable housing registered providers and health.

The fourth priority is **meeting housing need and ensuring affordability**. The key measures identified in this section are; ensuring a balanced mix of property types and tenures

particularly recognising the likely reduction in the provision of new rented affordable homes as a result in changes to national policy and funding priorities ; ensuring the sustainability of rural communities through affordable housing provision to address local need; supporting community led housing solutions in rural neighbourhoods such as rural exception sites; and ensuring that allocation policies and tenure policies for social housing promote mixed and sustainable communities in the light of Government's social housing and welfare reforms.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Financial:** Preparation of the Housing Strategy at this stage only involves staffing resource costs that are met within existing budgets. However, the Housing Strategy, once adopted, will commit the council to undertaking various activities in the future, each of which have varying cost implications. These tasks however, will have been agreed with the applicable service areas, and therefore it is anticipated that the budgets will be in place in order to achieve the measures proposed. As such, there will be no new financial implications directly arising from the strategy, other than those already accounted for in existing budgets.

**Legal Implications:** Local authorities in England are no longer required to have a Housing Strategy (Deregulation Act 2015 amendments apply) however, it is an important strategy to deal with the housing needs of the growing population and an important part of the major policy framework and local plan framework. There are no Legal implications involved in the development of the draft strategy The bigger risk in not achieving what we set out in the Strategy is a reputational risk, rather than any legal risk.

**Environmental:** sections of the Strategy relate to environmental issues, such as tackling fuel poverty and bringing empty housing back into use. Overall, the Strategy can be regarded as having a positive impact on tackling environmental issues.

## 7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Housing Strategy and Enabling team (part of Sustainable Growth Strategy within Growth and Regeneration) is coordinating the preparation of the Strategy in association with the service areas within the council, which reflect the wide range of issues which the Strategy covers. Therefore officers across the council are consulted and involved in the development of areas of the strategy that reflect their service areas.

Comments of this Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities will help to inform the draft version of the Strategy currently in development that will be presented to Cabinet in November 2016.

Assuming the draft Housing Strategy is approved by Cabinet on 7th November for public consultation a four week consultation will take place on the attached document during November and December 2016. Issues raised during that consultation period will be fully considered, and changes made to the Strategy where appropriate, before submitting the final version of the Strategy to Cabinet in the new year.

## 8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 To finalise the draft Housing Strategy document and to seek comments from Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016. To present the strategy to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 for the purposes of approval to commence a 4 week public consultation. As this is a Major Policy Item, Council will ultimately be asked to formally adopt the finalised Housing Strategy.

**9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 None

**10. APPENDICES**

10.1 None