

North Somerset Council

Report to the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 2 Nov 2023

Subject of Report: Housing Strategy 1 Year Review

Town or Parish:

Officer/Member Presenting: Sarah Stillwell, Head of Housing Solutions

Key Decision: No

Reason:

Non key decision - note to scrutiny only for minimal changes to Housing Strategy

Annual Review of Housing Strategy to amend any actions in line with the current situation to ensure a timely action plan taking into consideration any recent changes or developments which impact Housing.

Recommendations

Endorse proposed changes to North Somerset Council Housing strategy as part of the annual review.

1. Summary of Report

Review North Somerset Council's Housing strategy and Action plan to ensure all actions are relevant and achievable.

2. Policy

North Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027

3. Details

North Somerset Council Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027 is reviewed annually to review actions to ensure they are still relevant and achievable. Climate change, post-COVID recovery, health and wellbeing, economic opportunities, and equality of opportunities are at the heart of all our actions.

Each of these aims and priorities are supported by detailed actions showing how and when specific projects will be delivered and monitored.

The Action Plan is a live, evolving document, it will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to make sure it reflects its current context.

Update	Action/Project	Comments
Complete	Social Letting Agency	This has been explored and deemed unaffordable within current budgets. The lettings team carry out much of this work. Explore additional private leasing scheme with an RP
Incorporate	Accreditation and regulation of supported housing projects	50% of supported accommodation in North Somerset signed up to accreditation scheme in light of new legislation making this a legal requirement at Bill stage.
Incorporate	Develop schemes and review incentives make best use of the social housing stock	Landlord incentive to be operational with RP's to encourage downsizing
Remove	Referral to West of England Works	WoEW are no longer operational so this has been discontinued. It could be restarted if a similar course becomes available.
Incorporate	Increase registered providers stock in North Somerset to provide homes for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees	A further 15 homes for refugees (LAHF)
Incorporate	Develop a robust and consistent approach to PRS landlord incentives for local residents and refugees	Agree a suite of landlord incentives to ensure a consistent approach throughout North Somerset and counteract the difficulties faced with a lack of affordable options in the PRS. Aim to keep the LHA under 20% over the awarded level
Extend	Develop an Affordable Warmth Delivery Plan to help alleviate fuel poverty	Delayed due to the impact of fuel price increases and wider cost of living pressures. NEA approached to help with development
Extend	Bring empty properties back to use.	Advice to owners, loans approved to bring back into use. Government proposes extending the council tax premium to properties left empty for 12+ months; which could increase income to resource dedicated post to work with owners but leading to robust

		enforcement e.g. compulsory purchase
Extend	Provide support to maintain independent living by facilitating the delivery of adaptations/move-on options in partnership with social care	Older and disabled people offer improved in line with long-term social care reform “People at the Heart of Care” (Dec 2021) Housing needs for families of disabled children are responsive and bespoke where possible Local Plan adopted with policies supporting older people’s housing and residential annexes

4. Consultation

Cllr Ho Marris
DLUCH
CLT

5. Financial Implications

None

Costs

All within budget.

Funding

Funding for additional schemes to be available by the Homeless Prevention Grant and funding associated with the asylum seekers and refugee of which North Somerset has been awarded as the LAHF and can claim from DLUHC depending on those supported into housing.

LAHF – capital funding to support with Afghan/Ukrainian refugees settling in NS.
HPG – along with HPG of £599,991 for 23/24 a ‘top up’ amount of £390,000 has been awarded to support with additional schemes considering COL pressures and refugee resettlement.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

Ensure North Somerset Council fulfils statutory duty to prevent homelessness by providing housing solutions

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None

8. Risk Management

Reduced funding 2024/25

9. Equality Implications

None

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10. Corporate Implications

None

11. Options Considered

North Somerset Council is committed to carrying out an annual review to the strategy.

Author:

Sarah Stillwell, Head of Housing Solutions

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-08/Housing%20Strategy.pdf>