

Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

Service / Policy:	Housing Strategy 2015 - 2020
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Section 1: Background Information

1.	<p>What is the proposal / issue?</p> <p>To ensure that the Council has a coherent Housing Strategy for Torbay including a short overarching narrative to show how the various pieces of the Strategy link to and support each other. It will consist of Housing Commissioning “My Home is My Life” which includes the Homelessness Strategy (statutory policy) and will also include high level delivery of Affordable Homes, Private Sector Leasing, Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency. The delivery will need to be realistic over a three year budget period.</p>
2.	<p>What is the current situation?</p> <p>The Housing Strategy (including the Homelessness Strategy) is part of the Council’s Policy Framework. It is felt that there is a requirement for an overarching Strategy to link the Key elements defined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan - Affordable Housing Funding and Provision • Social Commissioning - now described in “My Home is My Life” • Private Sector – improving the Quality/ Standards of provision. • Link to the Medium Term Resources Plan • Aligned Investment Plan <p>Local Plan (including Affordable Housing Funding and Provision)</p> <p>Work to establish a new Local Plan has included the testing a range of different growth scenarios, viability testing and a range of affordable housing options. This work has been, and continues to be, considered by an Independent Planning Inspector. The new Local Plan is due to be considered by the Council on 10 December 2015.</p> <p>The new Local Plan takes a jobs led approach, but also requires housing provision to keep pace with job creation. The new Plan includes a mechanism to increase housing supply if there is evidence to show that jobs growth is greater than expected or slow housing growth is deterring job creation / investment.</p> <p>Members have agreed all the above and, as such, need to ensure these policies / mechanisms form the basis of a delivery strategy. There has also been significant engagement on the above with the community, businesses and statutory organisations.</p> <p>In order to ensure delivery of jobs, homes and infrastructure, and secure income for the Council, the Council will need to maximise the use of its own assets – for the creation of</p>

employment space and for the delivery of new homes for example. Mechanisms for and options to achieve this will be explored further and reported to Members for decision. In addition, mechanisms such as town centre masterplan delivery will be utilised to deliver new jobs, homes and infrastructure on assets belonging to public sector partners and other 3rd parties.

The Local Plan provides the basis for a Housing Delivery Strategy and this may translate into a delivery over the life of this administration of:

- Town Centre regeneration through the delivery of masterplans in Torquay and Paignton and the delivery of projects in Brixham Town Centre.
- Around 1200 new jobs, within the three town centres and on sites such as Claylands, Edginswell Business Park, White Rock, Torquay Gateway;
- Around 1750 new homes, on sites that already have planning permission or are allocated in the Local Plan and as part of town centre regeneration proposals;
- New infrastructure, such as Edginswell Station and road improvements as funded by new development;
- Key sector growth, such as EPIC at White Rock, Hi Tech Centre at South Devon College, new hotels (Pavilion; Torwood St; Palace)

Two initial schemes to be delivered to test increase in revenue for this approach linked to debate on MTFP and use of existing capital, and the benefit of increasing types of housing stock as per housing needs analysis and JSNA, and ambitions of Local Plan.

Housing Commissioning: My home is my life 2015-20 for Vulnerable People including the statutory homelessness pathway following formal consultation.

The Council's approach to commissioning for vulnerable people and their housing needs is set out in "My Life is My Home". This document was endorsed by Torbay's Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 2 October 2015. It was recognised that good quality housing underpins other life chances, wellbeing and is a determinant of good health. Board members were informed the strategy was not just about bricks and mortar but the communities in which people live, their hopes for themselves and each other. The strategy addresses these challenges and takes new opportunities to set ambitious plans.

It aligns with earlier work on the child poverty strategy that council considered and adopted. Children need stable housing of a good standard in order to flourish and is critical to our long term expectations of improving the lives of vulnerable children and families. In a similar manner the built environment for elderly people to ensure independent lives for as long as possible need to align with our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including extra care housing, working with care homes to meet future demand, adapted housing and the best use of disabled facilities grant (part of better care fund).

It encapsulates the work done to improve housing standards in the private sector, building on the success of the Mayoral led initiative to combat rogue landlords and ensure private tenants have secure tenancies in good standard accommodation. It includes schemes for licensing and housing bonds, including preventing homelessness where possible.

The Board acknowledged that housing had been the missing piece of the jigsaw when attempting to tackle the 'causes of the causes' of poor health and welcomed the strategy. The commissioning plan is based on needs via JSNA and a housing and health needs assessment.

Within the period of this administration the delivery expectation is:

- Provide adequate specialist housing for those needing care and support

- Improve the Living Environment and Quality of Life
- Provide an integrated approach and options for Housing Advice providing help when and where it's needed, and agree to consider pathway for DFGs and potential to reduce cost pressures on adults and children's services.
- Draft Homelessness strategy Priorities –
 - To maintain and improve measures to prioritise early intervention and prevent homelessness and crisis.
 - To meet accommodation needs of people with a housing need.
 - To ensure that service pathways are responsive, flexible and sustainable and to maximise integration and partnership working.
 - Reducing homelessness in specialist groups with individual needs

Private Sector - Fuel Poverty/Energy Efficiency/Standards, Private Sector Leasing

Delivery will partly depend on central government and its approach to resourcing this area via energy companies or direct grants. Local MPs to be asked to lobby government for the continuation of sustainable schemes for the benefit of local people.

In terms of the Council's approach to tackling fuel poverty and improving the energy efficiency of homes in Torbay, £9m has been secured across Devon (excluding Plymouth) under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to spend on energy efficiency measures. This has been achieved by the Devon Authorities working together via CosyDevon to establish a partnership with E.ON.

The larger energy providers have to achieve government targets to save carbon. This translates into them installing such measures as cavity wall, loft insulation, solid wall insulation etc. By working with E.ON CosyDevon has arranged for them to undertake a significant amount of work in Devon, with 65% of all the work being in our most deprived areas.

Private landlords, private tenants and homeowners can all contact CosyDevon to explore if they may be eligible. The scheme does not cover social landlords and social housing tenants. Although private landlords, private tenants and homeowners can apply, work will actively take place to generate leads to individuals and families living in fuel poverty in the most deprived areas of Torbay.

Within the period of this administration the delivery expectation is:

- A total of 1,133 energy efficiency measures in areas of highest fuel poverty and deprivation in Torbay. This will assist at least 535 households with cavity wall insulation, loft top up insulation, external wall insulation, and virgin loft insulation.
- A limited number of free replacement boilers will also be available to households receiving qualifying benefits whose boiler meets certain criteria..

Many of the measures will be free, however there will be criteria related to the boilers i.e. qualifying benefits. Solid wall insulation will also need a contribution which will link in with the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (GDHIF).

These measures apply to rented and owner occupier accommodation, but not Social Landlords.

To reduce reliance on Council support and use of Temporary Accommodation we will explore Private Sector Leasing as an alternative to commissioned temporary accommodation.

Link to Medium Term Resources Plan

Central government has made it clear that it sees one of the major resource blocks for local government as New Homes Bonus. Government policy is to support local government on the basis of growth, as opposed to Revenue Support Grant on the basis of need. Therefore housing in the form of New Homes Bonus and increase income from Council Tax needs to be considered as part of the mix of our resources for service delivery.

It should be noted that central government are primarily funding the New Homes Bonus by reducing other Council funding. As a result, this is not new money and the Council currently budgets centrally for the grant to offset the reduction in RSG.

In its MTRP the Council has forecast ongoing reduction in RSG and has assumed a 0.4% increase in new homes (approx 300 homes) per annum with an impact on both Council tax and new homes bonus.

It should be noted that the long term future of the new homes bonus has not been confirmed by central government and the current new homes bonus is for a six year period.

The actual impact on Council Tax income from a new home is dependent on a number of factors including the value of the house (Council Tax band) and the personal circumstances of the residents as reliefs such as Single Person Discount and Council Tax Support Scheme could apply. Harder to estimate will be the increased demand for Council services and the subsequent cost of that demand in terms of education, social care, waste collection, street cleaning etc. Conversely more population could result in more economic growth and more businesses which the Council could gain from increased NNDR income in the future.

Aligned investment plan

To ensure a coherent housing plan the Council needs to align its investments with delivery. Some local authorities have used potential income from asset disposal to build more housing and support an acceleration of delivery.

One option would be to use part of the social fund reserve to improve our prevention outcomes.

The Affordable Housing budget currently stands at circa £1.6m. This money can be used to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing

Income and revenue generation is going to be necessary to ensure certain services are sustainable going forward. Currently decisions on investment proposals can take a significant amount of time as they fall outside of the agreed budget which limits our ability to respond to market led opportunities. One proposal would be for the Council to allocate an amount of money to an investment fund. Proposals would then be put to a panel administering the fund who will assess the merits of any proposal against a clear set of criteria. The criteria would be treasury management led and will no doubt include a minimum rate of return.

Homelessness Strategy

The intended outcomes of the Homelessness Strategy are:

- There is a corporate commitment to fulfilling the duties and responsibilities placed upon the Local Authority by the Housing Act and the Homelessness Act, and to preventing homelessness
- Early Intervention/Prevention of homelessness is a priority for all Council departments and partners
- All Local Authority Services and Commissioning are responsive to legislative change

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunities are identified and pursued, through an effective partnership with the community and voluntary sector • There is a better understanding of the health needs of the homeless population. Gaps in service are identified and targeted measures are developed to improve health and reduce presentations to A&E • The Council's overall spend on homelessness is understood, and resources are appropriately targeted • There is a productive partnership between Torbay Council and the Private Sector to enable all client groups to access good quality affordable accommodation • The Devon Home Choice application process is accessible to all • There is a varied and affordable temporary accommodation option • Ensure no families are in B&B for over 6 weeks • Ensure no 16/17 year olds are placed in B&B • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for hospital discharge to reduce delayed discharge • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for people leaving prison • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for rough sleepers/single homeless people • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for young people • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for people with mental health issues • A responsive flexible and sustainable pathway is in place for people fleeing domestic abuse • Frontline staff in ASC, mental health services and probation are trained to work with people who are facing homelessness or homeless • The Housing requirements of the Care Act are met in Torbay • The number of rough sleepers is reduced • Rough sleepers are safeguarded • People with mental health issues or complex needs are appropriately supported within the housing pathway and have access to appropriate accommodation • People who are banned from, or refused by Leonard Stocks have support to access and maintain accommodation • People fleeing domestic abuse are appropriately housed and supported • People with a housing need have increased opportunities to become involved in Education, Employment and Training • Safeguarding of Children in households with a Housing Need is evidenced across services • Early Intervention is a priority to reduce Numbers of households with dependent children in emergency accommodation
<p>3.</p>	<p>What options have been considered?</p> <p>The development of the Housing Strategy has been discussed with councillors through a series of meetings of the Joint Commissioning Policy Development Group.</p> <p>In terms of the Homelessness Strategy, a needs assessment has been undertaken and considered.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>How does this proposal support the ambitions and principles of the Corporate Plan 2015-19?</p> <p>The principles within the draft Corporate Plan need to be considered in preparing a Housing Delivery Strategy given that it is recognised within the</p>

	<p>“My Life is My Home” that good quality housing underpins other life chances, wellbeing and is a determinant of good health and that growth is part of government policy for the finances of local government.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>Housing is a key ingredient of our community and the local plan has been consulted on. In terms of the Homelessness Strategy, the people who will be most affected are those who are homeless but to a lesser extent, our partners (both statutory and community/voluntary) are affected.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>How did you consult?</p> <p>The first draft of the homelessness strategy was written after consultation with service users (current rough sleepers, people in temporary accommodation and members of the public who have been homeless), partners from statutory services (e.g. police, probation, mental health services etc) and community and voluntary groups involved in delivering services for homeless people.</p> <p>Consultation was also carried out after a first draft was written. The first draft was put on the website and also sent to partners and service users.</p>

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

7.

What are the financial and legal implications?

The production of a Homelessness Strategy is a Statutory requirement.

The revenue resource for the procurement of a Hostel provision has been approved by the Executive Lead for Business in August 2015

There is currently £1.6m allocated within the Council's Capital Plan for affordable housing.

Overall, the proposed Housing Strategy will be delivered through partnership and market arrangements.

8.

What are the risks?

- Lack of appropriate accommodation to meet the need of Homeless people
- Lack of choice of affordable homes to meet the housing need
- Increase risk of safeguarding interventions for Adults and Children
- Increase in numbers of households living in poor quality accommodation, and associated Health issues.
- Increase use of Temporary Accommodation

Whilst the Housing Strategy and its supporting elements mitigate against these risks, reducing public sector finances mean that the Council will continue to act as an enabler and if demand continues to increase the risks will remain.

9.

Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012

The ongoing constraints on funding available to the Authority means there is a clear expectation in the Tender documentation that Providers seek additional funding or a contribution to costs through charitable sources and working in partnership with the voluntary sector in order to support the delivery of the services.

10.

What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?

In developing the Housing Strategy consideration has been given to the Local Plan, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Housing and Health Needs assessment, House Condition Survey and the MOU Housing and Health. Consideration has also been given to the national data relating to Homelessness.

There is accepted knowledge that families cannot have a stable start in life without stable and suitable housing and that older people and those with disabilities require flexible and suitable housing as their care needs change. Housing generally needs to be warm and affordable with the right supply to support the economy.

Summaries of the evidence and data in relation to housing need are included in both the draft Housing Strategy and My Home is My Life. The Housing and Health Needs Assessment is included as an appendix.

11.	What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out? In relation to the consultation on the Homelessness Strategy, 13 questionnaires were returned and a number of e mail replies were also received. Most of the points raised were minor. There was overall agreement with the priorities set in the strategy. Some points made were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The strategy needed to include more around young people• More needed to be included about risk around rough sleepers• More needed to be included around the issue of local connection
12.	Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions The first draft of the Homelessness Strategy was written after consultation with all groups so is written with the information obtained at that point in mind. From the consultation after the first draft, information was added around young people, risk and local connection and several pieces of factual information were added.

Equality Impacts

13	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people	The overall Housing Strategy will benefit families by supporting some more affordable housing and for some older people by delivering more extra care units.		The strategy does not set out any special measures relating to age. There is a youth homelessness strategy which specifically looks at this issue
	People with caring Responsibilities	The overall Housing Strategy will benefit some people through the provision of extra insulation and warm homes as grant aid for these schemes allows.		The Homelessness strategy does not really effect people with caring responsibilities as people who are homeless are not being cared for by anyone.
	People with a disability	Some benefit for some people with extra care housing schemes.		All council procured/ commissioned accommodation ensures access that is suitable for use by wheelchair users .
	Women or men	Homelessness Strategy pinpoints needs of women and actions around this		
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			Strategy will not affect people who are black or from a black and minority ethnic background
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			Strategy does not introduce any measures that will have a differential affect on anyone due to their religion or lack of belief
	People who are lesbian,			Strategy does not introduce any

gay or bisexual			measures that will have a differential affect on anyone who is lesbian gay or bisexual
People who are transgendered			Strategy does not introduce any measures that will have a differential affect on anyone who is transgendered. Services are not gender specific
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			Strategy does not introduce any measures that will have a differential affect on anyone due to their marital or civic partnership status
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			Strategy does not introduce any measures that will have a differential affect on anyone due to being pregnant/on maternity leave
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	The Strategy Delivery plans have actions that intend to improve the financial situation for those with a housing need across all tenures, especially for vulnerable people and help reduce poverty.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	The Strategy is aimed at Improving the quality of homes and their warmth, insulation, standard and supply. The Homelessness Strategy identifies positive actions to work with rough sleepers with the aim of reducing numbers. This would have a positive effect on the community.		

14	Cumulative Impacts –	Energy grants which have been used successfully are reliant on pro-active work across Devon and the	
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	<p>Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)</p>	<p>future ability of Torbay to gain from grant aid scheme which re not under our direct control. Temporary Accommodation funding needs to be assessed in light of new emerging central government policy affecting partner RSLs as well as welfare and housing benefit changes affecting private landlords.</p>
15	<p>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)</p>	<p>Unknown impacts of further changes to welfare reform and to the supply of housing due to changes in RSL and housing benefits rules. Could have a negative impact on delivery of strategy and timescales.</p>

