



## Cabinet

Report of: Councillor Nick Neilson  
Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing

Report to:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date:	<b>7 September 2017</b>
Subject:	<b>South Kesteven District Council's Draft Housing Strategy (HS3)</b>

<b>Decision Proposal:</b>	Non-Key decision
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Nick Neilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing
<b>Report author:</b>	Paul Thomas Executive Manager Development and Growth <a href="mailto:p.thomas@southkesteven.gov.uk">p.thomas@southkesteven.gov.uk</a> 01476 406162 Date: 4 August 2017
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Anne-Marie Coulthard Business Manager Environmental Health <a href="mailto:a.coulthard@southkesteven.gov.uk">a.coulthard@southkesteven.gov.uk</a> 01476 406319 Date: 14 August 2017
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Tracey Blackwell Strategic Director <a href="mailto:t.blackwell@Southkesteven.gov.uk">t.blackwell@Southkesteven.gov.uk</a> 01476 406058 Date: 17 August 2017
<b>Approved for publication</b>	Councillor Nick Neilson Date: 17 August 2017

## **SUMMARY**

This report sets out how the Council's new draft Housing Strategy ("the Strategy") and Housing Strategy Action Plan ("the Action Plan") have been developed in collaboration with Members and representatives from the housing industry.

This report proposes a wide-ranging approach to consultation in order to encourage the greatest possible participation from residents and other key stakeholders from within and outside of the district.

Any feedback from the Communities and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2017 will be reported to the Cabinet so that it is able to make an informed decision as to whether the draft Strategy and Action Plan is suitable for wider consultation and engagement.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Cabinet approves for consultation purposes the appended draft Housing Strategy and Housing Strategy Action Plan, having taken into consideration any comments received from the Communities and Wellbeing committee, in accordance with the appended consultation strategy.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing to approve the final version of the Housing Strategy and Housing Strategy Action Plan, subject to a positive recommendation from - and/or any minor changes required by - the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

## **1. BACKGROUND TO REPORT**

- 1.1. The current Housing Strategy for South Kesteven lasts up to 2018. However, much has changed over the last 6-12 months (including, but not limited to: a new Government focus on housing delivery, a new Planning Act, a Housing White paper and changes to the legislation around private rented accommodation) meaning that an early review of the strategy was considered appropriate.
- 1.2. Alongside these changes, the Council is progressing the £2.2m HRA development programme. The provision of 27 new homes for social rent across 3 sites is on target to be completed during 2017/18.
- 1.3. Two Housing Summits were held at the start of the year to consider these broad issues, as well as the specific challenges facing the South Kesteven housing market. Of particular concern was the decline in the number of new homes being constructed against a growing and ageing population.
- 1.4. Members were briefed on the outputs of these Summits at a Councillors' briefing session on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

- 1.5. The comments made at the briefing session informed the first draft of the Housing Strategy which was presented to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
- 1.6. The Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the content of the draft Housing Strategy; provided feedback on the Strategy's key outcomes; endorsed a series of roundtables with sectors of the housing industry; accepted proposals to consult more widely with the residents and businesses of South Kesteven; and noted the proposed timeline to progress the Housing Strategy to adoption.

### **The Roundtable Discussions**

- 1.7. A series of five housing roundtable discussions were held between 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July, involving Developers, Registered Providers, Other Local Authorities, Landowners and Landlords.
- 1.8. Councillor Nick Neilson chaired the roundtable discussions, with a small number of Members attending to participate in the debate.
- 1.9. Six key themes arose from the five housing roundtable discussions:
  - **Planning**; including the time taken to make planning decisions and the degree of uncertainty that exists throughout the planning process. Specific reference was made to the role of statutory consultees, particularly in respect of consistency and timeliness of advice received, and that of the Development Management Committee, with regards to the timeliness of decisions on applications.
  - **Opportunities to work together**; reference was made to the value of the Council 'stepping-in' with its expertise when required. Registered Providers in particular would look for the Council to assist on large or complex sites; either by bringing the relevant parties together to remove barriers or, potentially, to fund or forward fund significant infrastructure requirements.
  - **A role for the Council in the private rented market**; there is an opportunity for the Council to lease direct from landlords to maintain the provision of a high quality supply of rental properties and to provide stability in the rental market with landlords receiving a guaranteed income.
  - **The need for a tailored approach**; it is recognised that issues and opportunities are very different across our four market towns and across rural areas. These diverse local markets need to be considered in the application of policies and actions.
  - **The importance of land issues**; this featured in all of the roundtables and included land values, availability and the barriers that prevent it being brought forward for development.
  - **A desire to meet again**; the success of the roundtables was such that all five expressed desire to continue the discussion as the Strategy moved to adoption and implementation.

## **The updated Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan**

- 1.10. Comments provided by the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and the discussions that took place at the roundtable (including the 6 themes set out above) have all informed the draft Strategy and Action Plan (appendix 1 and 2, respectively).
- 1.11. Comments made by the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 will be presented to Cabinet through an update paper.
- 1.12. Any changes required as a result of comments received from the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and/or the Cabinet will be incorporated into the draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan prior to it being publicised for consultation from the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

## **Consultation Strategy**

- 1.13. A proposed Engagement Strategy is appended to this report (appendix 3).
- 1.14. Further engagement is planned and will include a survey, press release, articles in Council publications, direct contact with specialist service providers, strategic partners and a further event for Council Members.
- 1.15. Engagement will take place between 14<sup>th</sup> September and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

## **Timetable**

- 1.16. The full timetable to adoption is set out below:

Strategy, Action Plan and Consultation Approach to Cabinet to approve for Consultation	7th September 2017
Consultation on Draft Strategy and Action Plan  To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-convened Letting Agents Roundtable (date tbc)</li><li>• Parish Update: distributed w/c 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017</li><li>• SK Today: distributed w/c 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017</li></ul>	14th September, to 26th October 2017
Results of Consultation to Community OSC	7th November 2017
Final Strategy and Action Plan to be approved by Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing	14th November 2017

## **2. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1. The Council's current Housing Strategy runs from 2013 to 2018; and the Council could continue to deliver against this strategy until the specified end

date. However, Members have already been appraised of the recent, significant, changes in housing policy which have necessitated an early review of the strategy in order to ensure that the Council's approach to strategic housing remains relevant and deliverable.

### **3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The resources required to produce the strategy are being met from within existing service area budgets.
- 3.2. Any other resource implications will be considered alongside the development of the Housing Strategy Action Plan and any other relevant delivery plans (such as the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan)

### **4. RISK AND MITIGATION**

- 4.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

<b>Category Risk</b>	<b>Action / Controls</b>
Delivery of Corporate Plan priorities for housing growth	The refreshed housing strategy and associated action plan provide the mechanism to facilitate and drive forward the development of a wide range of homes, while supporting wider opportunities for growth within the district.

### **5. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING etc.)**

- 5.1. There are not considered to be any direct equality issues arising from this report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are not considered to be any direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report

### **7. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 7.1. The direct financial implications of developing and adopting the strategy will be met from existing budgets. Longer term there may be more significant financial considerations specifically for the Council as a social landlord where it would seek to support the delivery of specific outcomes. These options will be considered in due course and incorporated into future budget setting proposals

### **8. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 8.1. Since the repeal of section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 on 26 May 2015 there has been neither a statutory or regulatory provision imposing a

requirement to have a Housing Strategy, however, it is nevertheless recognised as best practice to do so.

## **9. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES**

- 9.1. The Housing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed across, and with, a number of Business and Service Areas.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1. Appendix 1: Draft Housing Strategy for Consultation
- 10.2. Appendix 2: Draft Action Plan for Consultation
- 10.3. Appendix 3: Housing Strategy Engagement

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1. Report HS1: South Kesteven District Council's Housing Strategy, report to Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017.
- 11.2. Report HS2: South Kesteven District Council's Housing Strategy, report to Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017.