

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Portfolio Holder for Housing

REPORT NO: CHSC0021

DATE: 21 January 2010

TITLE:	Housing Strategy 2010-2013	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Policy Framework	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Paul Carpenter, Housing Portfolio Holder	
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INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:	Referred to in paragraph (7) below:	Full impact assessment Required: Yes
Equality and Diversity		
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Existing strategy	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended the Council approves the content of the proposed Housing Strategy document attached at Appendix 1.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT/DECISION REQUIRED

SKDC's current Housing Strategy 2005-2009 was developed in 2005 and now needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and reflects current national and local policy and the context of strategic housing within South Kesteven and Lincolnshire as a whole.

A working group under the Communities PDG was tasked to review the current position and develop proposals for a new Housing Strategy. The document attached represents the outcome of discussions presented to Cabinet through the working group, public consultation with stakeholders and community representatives.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Statutory guidance

[Creating Strong, Safe, and Prosperous Communities](#) published by Communities and Local Government, on 9 July 2008, encourages local authorities to take full and proper account of housing as part of the strategic vision for the area. This reflects Government's view that housing and the local authority strategic approach to housing should be embedded within place shaping.

The guidance also confirms that, where possible, housing strategies and homelessness strategies, should be incorporated within Sustainable Community Strategies, whilst allowing local authorities discretion about how this should be achieved.

Within the guidance, local authorities have discretion about how, when, and in what format they document their housing strategy. However, whatever format is chosen refreshed strategies are expected to:

- fully reflect the wider vision of the authority and its partners
- reflect a clear and evidenced approach
- provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments.

Since delivery of the strategic housing role relies on joint-working with partners, authorities are encouraged to work across boundaries/ sub-regionally in considering how to address the needs of all local people across all tenures.

In Lincolnshire, local authorities have been working together to develop the Lincolnshire Housing Strategy, which provides an overview of housing across the County. The Lincolnshire Housing Strategy is a sub-strategy of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and is monitored through the Lincolnshire Local Strategic Partnership's overview of the SCS.

The South Kesteven Housing Strategy takes those themes of the Lincolnshire Housing Strategy with particular relevance to South Kesteven, and develops these into locally deliverable action plans for the next few years.

Development of the strategy

In March 2009 a brief report was brought to the Communities policy development group seeking views on how to develop the new strategy document.

It was agreed that a specific working group should be set up to review the existing strategy, consider the evidence base relating to housing issues in the District, identify key themes and options for a new housing strategy and action plan, and put forward proposals to Cabinet for consideration.

The Housing Strategy Member Working Group met during the spring and summer and considered the existing strategy, emerging government policy and the evidence base, and put forward five key themes for wider consideration and consultation.

During the summer a number of workshops were held with stakeholders, including

parish and town councils, housing associations and private developers, private landlords, other housing providers and housing support providers, and voluntary sector agencies to discuss the themes, the issues and the options which had been identified. Attendees were introduced to the main issues in the district by way of a number of "Evidence base sheets" which highlighted key facts and statistics.

The Housing Strategy 2010-13

The SKDC Housing Strategy 2010-13 will be unlike previous housing strategies in that it will sit under the Lincolnshire Housing Strategy. It is therefore not relevant to reproduce significant amounts of information regarding the make up of the district or data about how the housing market functions as all of this is available through the Lincolnshire Housing Strategy evidence base (available at [web address]). It is proposed therefore that the new housing strategy contains some key information and statistics represented graphically, and then states the main issues facing the District and the options which have been considered as appropriate to deal with these.

The bulk of the Strategy is therefore proposed as a detailed action plan setting out what action is to be taken, what outcome is anticipated, what resources will be required, and the timeframe for delivery. The themes originally proposed have been merged following consultation to create three themes (Meeting a range of needs for housing and support; Maximising our resources; and Delivery of a quality, affordable housing environment) around which action will be focussed.

The action plan aligns the level of action to be undertaken with the likely availability of resources given current financial constraints. This approach will enable sharper monitoring of the strategy against realistic deliver targets going forward.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not developing a local housing strategy

The requirement to develop a strategic vision for housing is set out within the Local Government Act 2003 and further defined through statutory guidance "Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities". It is possible to incorporate the housing strategy entirely within the Sustainable Community Strategy, however this was not the approach taken in South Kesteven when the SCS was last refreshed and as such there is still a requirement to document the strategic vision for housing in the local area.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

All the actions within the Housing Strategy will be contained within existing allocated service budgets and have been factored into budget setting proposals.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)

n/a

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken of all housing services as part of the implementation of the housing strategy. Services within Tenancy Services have already begun to pilot the new Service Area Equality Impact Assessment approach to looking at diversity issues, and actions to improve services for tenants have been identified through this route. A similar process for the remaining housing services will be carried out during the early part of 2010/11.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

n/a

9. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

The actions that arise following the adoption of the Housing Strategy will be considered within the financial parameters of the service area and will be incorporated into the service and budget planning process for the future financial year. Any actions arising in the current financial year will be met from existing resources.

10. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER

The provision of a Housing Strategy is not only a statutory requirement in accordance with s.87 of the Local Government Act 2003 but also assists the good governance of the Council the delivery of housing provision. Any strategy should be produced in accordance with the guidance issued under s.226 of the Housing Act 2004.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER

n/a

12. APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy document content

