

HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW

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Summary

The inaugural Housing Strategy for the new unitary Shropshire Council was published in April 2009. The Strategy covers the period 2009-2011 and makes a commitment to review the strategic action plan on an annual basis and report back to residents and other stakeholders. This review is the fulfilment of that commitment and considers progress achieved so far on the action plan and also looks forward to the next 12 months. The review also identifies recent changes at a national, regional and local level relating to housing which are, or will, influence how we deliver services both now and in the future. The Review will also feed in to the development of a Sub-Regional Housing Strategy, which will be published in 2011.

Recommendations

- A. That Cabinet note the Housing Strategy Review attached as appendix A and the commencement of the preparation of a Sub-Regional Housing Strategy in partnership with Herefordshire Council.

Report

1. The Housing Strategy Review provides an update on the progress of the Shropshire Housing Strategy action plan over the last 12 month period and therefore complements rather than replaces the Housing Strategy.
2. Examples of key achievements highlighted within the Review include:
 - o The development of 159 new affordable homes between 1 April 2009 and 31 December 2009
 - o The development of the Rocks Green affordable housing scheme in Ludlow which won the Inside Housing/ Chartered Institute of Housing 'Most Sustainable Larger Housing Project of the Year' award in 2009

- Completion of a comprehensive needs analysis of vulnerable people in February 2009. The analysis has informed the development of the Commissioning Framework for Supporting People
 - Obtaining Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits to develop 400 units of Extra Care Housing for older people and additional accommodation for people with dementia. Work is continuing in order to fully secure funding
 - Helping over 6,000 households to benefit from the Keep Shropshire Warm initiative since Autumn 2007
 - Providing an additional 12 Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2008 and 2010
 - An increased focus on homelessness prevention which has resulted in a reduction of homelessness acceptances
 - Establishment of a young persons' mediation service which helps to keep the young person in the home environment or keep them there while a planned move takes place
 - Establishment of the repossession prevention fund through £76,000 of funding with Just Credit (credit union) for owner occupiers and Shropshire Housing Alliance for private rented and social housing
3. The Council's Housing Strategy was developed as an interim response to the housing challenges faced by the Council prior to the development of a longer term Housing Strategy on a Sub-Regional basis, with Herefordshire Council from 2011.
 4. This review of the Housing Strategy will feed into the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy, which will be overseen by the West Housing Market Area Executive.
 5. The Executive comprises of Housing and Planning Portfolio holders and housing and planning officers from both Shropshire and Herefordshire Councils as well as key stakeholders from a range of organisations including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM). Prior to its dissolution on 31 March, 2010, West Midlands Regional Assembly was also represented. Arrangements will be made to ensure continued appropriate representation from the new regional bodies.
 6. Following Cabinet approval of the Housing Strategy Review, the findings of the Review will be presented to a range of stakeholder groups. This will include the West Housing Market Area Standing Conference; the Consortium of Shropshire Tenants and Shropshire United Residents Executive.

List of Background Papers

Shropshire Housing Strategy 2009-2011: Foundations for the Future

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The contents of this report are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998

Environmental Appraisal

No significant environmental factors

Risk Management Appraisal

No significant risk factors

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Extensive consultation was undertaken in order to inform the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy Review will be presented to a range of stakeholder groups in order to update on the progress of the Housing Strategy.

Cabinet Member

Councillor Malcolm Price – Portfolio Holder for Housing

Local Member

Not applicable

Appendices:

Appendix A - Housing Strategy Review