

SUBJECT:	Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness)
REPORT OF:	Councillor Liz Walsh (Healthy Communities)
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Martin Holt – Head of Healthy Communities
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All or specify individual wards affected by the item of report</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to publish and implement a Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) and to seek comments on the draft strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That Cabinet authorises the Head of Healthy Communities to prepare a Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness).**
2. **The Members consider the draft joint strategy and provide comments as appropriate.**
3. **That officers undertake a 6 week consultation exercise on the draft strategy joint strategy.**
4. **That Cabinet authorises the Head of Healthy Communities to prepare a finalised joint strategy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities for submission to Council for approval**

2. Executive Summary

Not applicable

3. Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The current Housing and Homelessness Strategies for Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council need to be reviewed and updated in view of the current housing situation across the two districts and new statutory requirements that are coming into force.

3.2 The joint Member Housing Workshop on 3rd February 2016 highlighted a range of issues to be taken forward in the development of a joint strategy. The Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy and Joint Temporary Accommodation Framework have already been agreed by the Councils. The Joint Housing Strategy (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) will complete the picture and sit alongside these documents to provide the overall strategic framework for the Council's housing service.

4. Content of Report

- 4.1 The Council has a range of statutory and legal housing duties encompassing meeting affordable housing needs, providing homelessness advice and support, tackling poor housing conditions and assisting households with repairs and adaptations.
- 4.2 The Joint Member Housing Workshop in 3rd February 2016 focussed on three key areas of the Council's housing responsibilities:
- Affordable Housing
 - Homelessness
 - Housing Standards (Private Sector Housing)
- 4.3 Following on from this workshop, a Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2021 was drafted and adopted by the Councils. For the other two key areas, Affordable Housing and Homeless, a number of specific tasks and actions were taken forward including drafting and agreeing a Joint Temporary Accommodation Framework. However, the development of a formal Joint Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) Strategy was held back because a range of new legislation and guidance was launched during 2016/17 including the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Homelessness Reduction Bill. Officers wanted to monitor the progress of these as details emerged and get a clearer idea of the potential implications for the Council before bringing forward a draft strategy for consultation. Following Royal Assent being granted for the Homelessness Reduction Bill, it is now felt appropriate to move forward with the Joint Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) Strategy.
- 4.4 A draft Joint Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness) Strategy has now been drafted and is contained in **Appendix ****. This draft strategy will provide the framework for a wider consultation with key partner agencies. Following this strategy will be revised as appropriate and finalised for adoption by both Councils.

5. Consultation

The basis of the development of the draft Strategy is the joint Member Workshop that took place on 3rd February 2016. The draft document will be subject to a formal 6 week consultation period with partner agencies.

6. Options

- 6.1 The Council has a specific statutory duty to publish a Homelessness Strategy. Therefore, if the Council does not proceed with preparing and authorising this Joint Housing Strategy document then it will still have to draft a Homelessness Strategy.
- 6.2 The Council could choose instead to continue to operate its own separate Housing strategy and policies. However, operationally, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council are facing many of the same housing issues and there are efficiencies in the authorities taking a joint approach to addressing these issues. If the Council was to continue to operate a separate strategy, this would be out of step with the single shared housing service. This would also be out of step with the other documents which have been

adopted since the joint Member Housing workshop, namely the Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2021 and the Joint Temporary Accommodation Framework

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Financial – The Strategy does highlight the potential resources available to support service delivery but it does not propose any formal funding allocations or additional spend. The proposed consultation will be funded within current budgetary estimates.

7.2 Legal – The Council has a range of statutory housing duties and legal responsibilities and this Strategy (along with the Joint Private Sector Housing Strategy 2017-2021 and the Joint Temporary Accommodation Framework) provides a clear framework for the activities required to meet these duties and responsibilities.

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

This report links to the Council aims of:

- Working towards safe and healthier communities
- Striving to conserve the environment and promote sustainability

9. Next Step

The draft strategy will be amended to reflect Members comments and will then be subject to a six week consultation period. The final version will then be agreed by the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and will be reported to Council for approval.

Background Papers:	It is a legal requirement that we make available any background papers relied on to prepare the report and should be listed at the end of the report (copies of Part 1 background papers for executive decisions must be provided to Democratic Services)
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