

**TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 APRIL 2021**

Report Title	TEIGNBRIDGE HOUSING STRATEGY
Purpose of the Report	<p>To consider the draft Housing Strategy to make sure the proposed plans and actions address the Council's priorities and issues identified by partners, members, stakeholders and to note the response from the public consultation.</p> <p>The Committee is invited comment on issues, or actions that have been proposed as part of this work.</p>
Recommendation	The Committee RECOMMENDS to Executive that the Teignbridge Housing Strategy 2021-2026 (in Appendix A) is adopted
Financial Implications	<p>Please see Section 3 of this report</p> <p>Chief Finance Officer: martin.flitcroft@teignbridge.gov.uk</p>
Legal Implications	<p>The Council's housing strategy must be 'fit for purpose' in terms of providing an overall framework against which the Council will formulate other more specific policies affecting its housing functions, which will ensure that the Council is capable of meeting its statutory functions as housing authority. The Legal Team has not been provided with the draft policy to facilitate more specific comment, but has provided advice on the report content.</p> <p>Monitoring Officer: karen.trickey@teignbridge.gov.uk</p>
Risk Assessment	Please see the Business Impact Assessment (Appendix B)
Environmental / Climate Change Implications	<p>Please see Section 3 of the Business Impact Assessment (Appendix B) and Section 8 of the draft Housing Strategy (Appendix A)</p> <p>Environmental Protection Manager: david.eaton@teignbridge.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>James Toler, Strategy officer, Housing: james.toler@teignbridge.gov.uk</p>
Executive Member	Cllr Martin Wrigley: Martin.wrigley@teignbridge.gov.uk
Appendices / Background Papers	<p>Appendix A: Draft Teignbridge Housing Strategy Appendix B: Business Impact Assessment</p> <p>Supporting A: Results of the online survey Supporting B: 'You Said, We Did' Report</p>

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy sits beneath the Council Strategy and the Local Plan and supports cross organisational, collaborative working. It provides the structure against which the Council develops other, more specific policies affecting its housing function, for example, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Tenancy Strategy, the Empty Homes Policy, the Enforcement Policy and so on.
- 1.2 Housing is a high corporate priority and the strategy gives members a clear annual delivery plan that can be monitored on a quarterly basis.
- 1.3 The current Teignbridge Housing Strategy runs to April 2021 and we have refreshed our aims and objectives in a new strategy for your consideration. Revised actions are contained within the new strategy, which we propose to report quarterly and review on an annual basis, in consultation with members.
- 1.4 The actions within the current strategy will be reviewed in April 2021 and will be reported in the 2020/21 Q4, Council Strategy report, within the 'Roof Over Our Heads' theme.

2 REPORT DETAIL

- 2.1 The strategy sets out what the Council, and its partners, will be doing over the next five years to improve the housing situation for our current and future residents. It sets out the approach we will take with all of our partners to work towards our vision. These are grouped into five themes
- 2.2 The themes reflect the broad range of work that we do to meet local housing need, including developing affordable housing, maintaining housing standards, and helping people to stay independent in their own homes, whilst preventing homelessness. Within each theme officers have identified key aims of the Council, which are considered to directly contribute to the overall sense of community health and wellbeing in Teignbridge.

1 Build affordable homes

- 1.1 Build rented homes
- 1.2 Build homes for low cost ownership
- 1.3 Develop innovative and specialist homes

2 Improve homes

- 2.1 Improve housing conditions
- 2.2 Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- 2.3 Keep people independent at home

3 Prevent homelessness and address rough sleeping

- 3.1 Prevention
- 3.2 Intervention
- 3.3 Sustainment

4 Put our clients first

Cuts across all of the things we do

5 Tackle climate change

Cuts across all of the things we do

3 FINANCIAL, LEGAL OR OTHER IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Budget Report (Exec 11 Feb 2021, Full Council 22 Feb 21) supports the administration's priorities of Housing, Jobs and Climate Change

3.2 Government subsidy for housing disabled facilities grants through better care funding (received via Devon County Council) is assumed to continue at £1.0 million per annum, with the majority invested in grants towards the provision of disabled facilities and home and energy improvements. In addition, there is £2.0 million budgeted over the remainder of 2020/21 and during 2021/22 towards Warm Homes Fund schemes and Local Authority Delivery Green Homes Grants.

3.3 £6.6 million has been allocated to the Council over three years for the first half of the Teignbridge 100 housing scheme for affordable and social housing. This is in accordance with the priority actions outlined in the latest Council Strategy for delivering affordable and social housing, whether through direct delivery or working with developers and housing associations. This work has already commenced as the programme covers the previously approved capital schemes at Drake Road, East Street and Sherborne House, Newton Abbot. The pipeline covers a range of urban and rural sites, including the Dartmoor National Park. A separate report will be coming to members regarding the Teignbridge 100 in June 2021.

3.4 A shared equity scheme funded from £0.7 million of external planning contributions as approved at Full Council in November 2019 is also included

4 CONSULTATION

4.1 The consultation exercise was undertaken for 5 weeks, from 17 Feb to 24 Mar 2021. The consultation details were sent via the following groups and platforms:

- Affordable Housing Partnership (27)
- Devon Home Choice applicants (978)
- Gypsy and Traveller Forum
- Living Options
- Members' Newsletter (47)
- Housing Partner Newsletter (136)
- Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council (social media)
- Senior Voice of Devon
- Staff Newsletter (600)
- Teignbridge Association of Local Councils
- Teignbridge Council website, Facebook and Twitter
- Teign Housing (social media)

- Town and Parish Councils (50)
- Welfare Reform Group* (47)

*The Welfare Reform Group includes local agencies, such as the Department of Work and Pensions, registered providers, foodbanks, SSAFA, British Legion, Cass Pluss (court advocacy), SW Water, Citizens Advice, Community Voluntary Service and Young Devon.

4.2 574 people took part in the survey, from which we received 300 comments and questions, to which officers have responded. Surprisingly, it shows a six fold increase in the response rate that the Council received for the previous strategy in 2015.

4.3 Of these around 62% were specifically related to planning policy, and a further 10% were related to other Council initiatives, such as parks, green space, litter and maintenance of its towns. Officers will pass the comments to the relevant departments. Any planning policy related queries will be included in the preparation of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, which will go out for consultation in the summer 2022.

4.4 The online survey results demonstrate a strong endorsement of the strategy's five themes detailed earlier with 'build affordable homes' being considered the highest priority, closely followed by tackling climate change and improving homes. These are all encapsulated in the Council's desire to deliver its own housing delivery programme of low carbon, low cost homes and links closely to the Council's aspirations defined in both the Council Strategy and Local Plan

- Build affordable homes 64%
- Tackle climate change 55%
- Address homelessness and rough sleeping 54%
- Improve homes 52%
- Put our clients first 29%

4.5 The 300 comments and questions can be categorised under the following topics:

Topic	Count	%
Open countryside	50	17%
Eco and environmental	48	16%
Infrastructure	41	14%
Affordability	34	11%
Brownfield, empty and 2nd homes	32	11%
Housing stock	23	8%
Other	18	6%
Design	17	6%
Allocations	13	4%
Homeless	6	2%
Disability	6	2%
Market homes	5	2%

Private rent	4	1%
Rural	3	1%
Total	300	100%

4.6 Officers have summarised a response for the most frequent comments, where more than 10 were received.

4.7 Open countryside

The Council has successfully challenged the Government's most recent proposal to amend the way in which housing numbers are calculated that would have seen the Council's housing requirement in the district double to 1,532 homes a year. This approach has now been dropped by the Government and the district's current housing requirement is 760 homes per year. These homes will help to meet the housing needs of many people who live and work in our district, arising from: a growing local population; an increasing elderly population, who are living longer and reducing the turnover of housing stock, and a reduction in household sizes because of more people living alone and inward migration. Officers are currently looking at how new homes will be distributed around the district over the next 20 years and will be consulting on these proposals in the Part 2, Draft Local Plan consultation in the summer 2021.

4.8 Eco and environmental

All applicants for major developments (i.e. more than 10 homes, or more than 2,500sqm commercial floor space) are required to submit a carbon reduction plan showing how they will meet the latest carbon standards for the district. There is a carbon calculator available on the Council's website to assist with this. It is prescriptive as to how the carbon reduction is achieved as inevitably some schemes are more suited to different technologies or sustainable travel approaches than others. In future, the Council will follow the Government's Future Homes Standards when they are introduced to meet nationally required carbon reduction standards. Drainage and flooding are both addressed through planning policy. National policy requires the Council to (a) sequentially test sites which are at risk of flooding to identify whether there are other locations where the development can be located and (b) apply an exceptions test if they satisfy the sequential test to ensure that any flood risk can be satisfactorily managed

4.9 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is considered alongside plans for new development and all existing Local Plan allocations are supported by policies that require specific types of infrastructure to be provided, whether that be roads, schools, community facilities etc. Members will appreciate that all new dwellings, or commercial premises a subject to what is effectively a tax on new development called the Community Infrastructure Levy. This money is retained in the Council's budget for infrastructure projects in the district.

4.10 Affordability

Open market housing (in particular the contribution via affordable housing planning obligations) is the main route to securing the delivery of affordable housing. However, affordable housing is also provided using government grants and the Council's assets, including land. The proposed housing strategy proposes a mix of Homes England grant and local housing investment, such as council land and assets, with a view to establishing affordable rents for Teignbridge residents on low incomes. Affordable homes account for between 20-30% of the district's total new housing supply.

4.11 Brownfield, empty and second homes

Unfortunately, there isn't sufficient brownfield land (only 11.85 hectares) across the district to provide all the homes Teignbridge needs. The Council is committed to helping owners of existing empty housing to bring such empty homes back into use as part of increasing available housing in the district. Since 2008 the Council has reduced empty homes by 53% to 345, representing 0.5% of the district's housing stock. To enable higher council tax levies on second homes would require changes to legislation. The Council currently charges the maximum 100% council tax allowable for second homes.

4.12 Housing stock

A new Local Housing Needs Assessment is being commissioned by the Council this year that will provide up to date information on the types of housing we need in the district (e.g. number of bedrooms, family housing, accessible housing etc). This evidence will inform the new Local Plan that is due to be adopted in early 2024. It will contain policies which require different types of housing depending on what the evidence shows.

4.13 Design

Design is a key theme of the emerging Local Plan and reflects heightened government emphasis on improving the quality of our built environment. The emerging Local Plan proposes a raft of new policies, all aimed at improving the aesthetics and usability of new developments and public spaces, including shop front design, street layouts, preferred materials, parking standards, and provision of green infrastructure, for example, open spaces, play areas and allotments etc. In regards to parking, the Council currently does not have any minimum standards, but is proposing to introduce these through the updated Local Plan. The Council also has generic policies that require any displaced parking as the result of new development, to be replaced on other land or otherwise compensated (e.g. via improvements in public transport and transport routes, including cycling lanes) where appropriate.

4.14 Allocations

Affordable homes acquired from developers by way of planning obligations usually provide for allocation priority of homes towards residents with reference to local parishes, surrounding parishes and then Teignbridge as a whole. Social housing is also usually managed by registered providers and allocations are governed by the Devon Home Choice allocation policy, which again specifies that affordable housing is prioritised to those with a local connection.

5 AMENDMENTS TO THE STRATEGY

5.1 The attached draft strategy has been updated to accommodate amendments that have occurred as a result of consultation with the public, partners and stakeholders. In summary they are:

- a. Include demand statistics for applicants on the Housing Register that require wheelchair access to their homes, including an action to deliver 5 affordable homes a year that are fully wheelchair accessible (p14)
- b. Clarification around differing climate change proposals within the current Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan (p6, 27)
- c. Reinforce partner approach and that we are open to all methods of affordable housing delivery, such as community land trusts, co-operatives etc (p9, 11)
- d. Updating the number of housing allocations by using numbers submitted to government (p10,11) and recognising that the Housing Reduction Act (2018) meant that local authorities had to change their approach to recording homelessness prevention numbers (p23)

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Council has a proud history of providing affordable housing, improving housing conditions and tackling homelessness. The refreshed strategy describes how the Council will continue to expand our innovative approach to deliver solutions to meet the wide variety of housing need in our communities.