

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 26th October 2023

Title: Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion’s vision and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years.

Purpose of the report: For Council to consider the draft housing strategy following consultation.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

BACKGROUND: Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have a strategic role to play in the way the local housing market functions. One of the key ways for this to be delivered is through a Local Housing Strategy. The intention is for the local authority to play a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenure and ensure the delivery of appropriate housing and related services in order to meet local need.

The current Local Housing Strategy has been in place since 2018 and was a 5-year plan. As a result, the Housing Strategy has been reviewed and updated. The review has involved Senior Officers of the Housing Service, key Partners, and Corporate Managers from across the Pwrth’s together with data collection and analysis.

The updated Housing Strategy sets out the vision for a further 5 years:

“There will be sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents’ needs now and in the future.”

The purpose of the Local Housing Strategy is to set out a clear vision for housing within the County, along with the key priorities which identify and respond to the challenges ahead for the 5 years, 2023 – 2028.

The Strategy recognises the important role that Housing plays together with the influence it has on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and the wider community and remains considerate to the Welsh language and culture. It is important that we understand and consider the demands of future generations, their needs, and preferences and how they can be catered for. We need houses that can be adapted, and which can sustain people at different stages of their lifetime. This will go a long way to ensure a healthier population, alongside better use of existing housing stock, and improved standards and living conditions.

We need to provide quality housing which is suitably located which will enable people to live at home for longer; this has the potential to create more resilient and connected communities and should be seen as a key component in delivering the vision set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In addition, the Strategy remains considerate of local Strategies, in particular the Ceredigion Corporate Strategy and the Through Age Wellbeing Strategy.

Key challenges have been identified within the Housing Strategy. The national picture of the economic recession, legislative changes and the Pandemic recovery will all play their part in impacting the local issues affecting Ceredigion, identified as follows:

- High housing costs
- Ageing population
- Homelessness
- Rurality
- Poor transport availability
- Skills and labour shortage in the Construction industry

In addition, the impact of the Phosphates issue in the County means we will need to think differently about how we increase the housing stock, whilst continuing to improve living conditions and supporting our residents. Therefore, using all the evidence collated, we have developed 2 main priorities, with 2 objectives each:

- Increasing supply and improving housing conditions
 - Provide housing that meets our communities' needs.
 - Ensure residents are living in good quality, suitable and sustainable accommodation.
- Supporting residents in their own homes and communities
 - Ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatable.
 - Provide timely and appropriate support to maintain independent living.

The Strategy will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders, who play a crucial part in the realisation of the Strategy. To monitor our progress and success, an Action Plan will be developed and shared on a regular basis through our Strategic Housing Partnership and as and when appropriate, share with Leadership Group and Scrutiny.

CONSULTATION:

Following agreement from Scrutiny and Cabinet, public consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy began on 5th May and ran until 30th June 2023. The Consultation Survey asked a total of 10 questions, which can be seen in the attached document. The Consultation returned a total of 40 responses, 34 within the Survey and 6 by email. However, the questions within the Survey were not mandatory, hence not all totals equal the number of respondents. The responses to which have been shared with a corresponding Housing Team response. Typing and grammar errors within the public responses have been amended for reader ease, however, the content and context remain as they were submitted.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS:

The Consultation asked whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with the Vision, Priorities, Objectives and Actions proposed within the Strategy. For each area the majority of responses were positive and in agreement, which can be seen in the attached response form. Therefore, the Housing Service remain confident that these directions are fit for purpose and do not require changing.

A key theme to be identified from the consultation responses was empty properties. This area has been recognised by the Housing Service and given due consideration and priority within the Housing Strategy and therefore, it is positive to see agreement on this area of work within the responses received.

Several responses received within the consultation are not within the remit of the Housing Service or the consultation and therefore, the relating service has been contacted for awareness and response, where appropriate.

As part of the consultation survey, respondents were also asked to consider the impact of the Housing Strategy on the Welsh language. Whilst it is recognised that some responses are directed towards priority for the Welsh language, we are confident that the Strategy will not have a negative impact on the language and therefore have not made any changes to this aspect of the Housing Strategy.

HOUSING STRATEGY ADDITIONS:

As a result of the consultation, and internal reviewing, the following additions have been made to the Housing Strategy:

- Page 8 – Total Social Housing Grant spent added.
- Page 13 – Actions updated to include and recognise benefits of working with communities.
- Page 37 – Physical Adaptation Grant information added.

With these additions strengthening the Strategy it is viewed that, with agreement, this will be the final document adopted and published.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.

Yes

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment

Long Term: The term for the Strategy is 5 years. After which it will be reviewed to ensure it is still meeting residents needs and amended accordingly. The development of housing addresses longer term issues.

Short term needs are addressed through immediate response and support provision.

Collaboration: The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Partners and will continue to need their support in order to fully maximise the potential of

the Strategy and its delivery. The Strategy can only be realised through the partnership working in both Public and Third Sector.

Involvement: We have sought involvement through a workshop held regarding the Strategy, in which stakeholders were invited and encouraged to contribute to the development of the Strategy. Updates on the progression of the strategy will be provided regularly and considered at the Strategic Housing Partnership. Formal Consultation has been undertaken and responses considered.

Prevention: The Strategy embodies the aim of prevention in order to maintain independence and sustainable communities. Housing Support services will play a big role in prevention and escalation.

Improving and adapting peoples home conditions will promote independence and sustainability. The Strategy will have a positive impact, improving the quality of housing which is suitably located which can enable people to live at home for longer; it has the potential to create more resilient and connected communities and improve people's health and wellbeing. With a high density of Welsh speakers within the County, there is a need to ensure, as far as possible, that housing needs fosters and strengthens the language.

Integration: The Housing Service is fully embedded in the Through Age Wellbeing model, holistically working with other services for a person focussed outcome. The Strategy encourages collaboration and partnership working to ensure delivery of its key priorities.

The Strategy has been developed with Partners and will continue to be monitored through the Strategic Housing Partnership meeting to ensure delivery of key outcomes

Recommendation(s):

To recommend to Council to approve the Housing Strategy for adoption.

Reasons for decision:

To enable the Council to fulfil the requirements in relation to the strategic housing function.

Overview and Scrutiny:

The Strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny on the 18th September and unanimously voted in favour of recommending to Cabinet and Full Council for adoption.

Policy Framework: N/A

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

Finance and Procurement implications: N/A

Legal Implications: N/A

Staffing implications: N/A

Property / asset implications: N/A

Risk(s): N/A

Statutory Powers:

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Background Papers: N/A

Appendices:

Appendix A- Draft Housing Strategy

Appendix B- Integrated Impact Assessment

Corporate Lead Officer: Greg Jones, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cymorth
Cynnar

Reporting Officer: Llŷr Hughes – Corporate Manager – Housing Services &
Cerys Purches-Phillips – Senior Housing Officer – Strategy & Monitoring

Date: 03/10/2023