

Braintree District Council draft Housing Strategy

Portfolio Area: Housing and Wellbeing
Report Presented by: Councillor Lady Newton

Background Papers: None
Corporate Implications: Please refer to table at end of report
Options: None
Risks: None

Executive Summary

The councils Housing Strategy is attached in draft form. The document was originally circulated mid June 2009 to stakeholders (predominantly by email but hard copies of the draft housing strategy were sent in the members mail-out on Thursday 2nd July).

The attached version includes a summary of the changes made and the revised strategy indicating where new wording has been inserted following the closure of consultation period mid September 2009.

If members agree that the revised strategy is to be published, officers will:

- Complete the action plan that accompanies the document; *and*
- Update the housing context document already published to include relevant background information; *and*
- Publish and circulate final Housing Strategy and the associated documents

Decision

Members are asked to approve the Housing Strategy and agree that it should be prepared for publication and circulation.

Detail

Please see separate report.

(Link to additional supporting documents that will be available on the council's website to be inserted).

Corporate Implications				
Financial:	Actions arising from this strategy may have financial implications but publication of the document itself has no direct impact.			
Legal:	Actions arising from this strategy may have legal implications but publication of the document itself has no direct impact.			
Equalities & Diversity:	An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out regarding the draft Housing Strategy using the sub-regional template.			
Customer Impact:	Actions arising from this strategy may impact customers but publication of the document itself has no direct impact.			
Environment & Climate Change:	Actions arising from this strategy may impact the environment and climate change but publication of the document itself has no direct impact.			
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Local Committees	Yes	Partners	Yes
	Public	Yes	Staff	Yes
Key Decision:	Yes			
Public/Private Report:	Public			
Officer Contact:	Tim Lucas			
Designation:	Housing Research and Development Manager			
Ext No:	2124			
Email:	timlu@braintree.gov.uk			

Summary of draft housing strategy consultation period

Consultation period

Start	Mid June 2009
End	Mid September 2009

Consultation methods used

Online (Eform)
Officer meetings
Public meetings and events
Discussion boards

The housing duties of the council are wide ranging and we want to ensure that the final Housing Strategy for the Braintree District represents these responsibilities.

The draft housing strategy was circulated to stakeholders for consultation from mid June 2009 and included members, BDC staff, housing associations operating within the district and a number of statutory and voluntary organisations. The consultation period closed on 18th September 2009.

Housing Issues and Options

Prior to the circulation of the draft Housing Strategy, we published the Housing Issues and Options document in April 2009.

The document acted as a precursor to the formal consultation period for the draft housing strategy and discussions around the document included:

- Local Action Group (LAG) – for people with learning disabilities: Housing Issues and Options document as an agenda item
- Housing Task Group - a subgroup of the LAG including providers, ECC, voluntary agencies and carers: to discuss the Housing Issues and Options document in greater detail
- Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC)

Consultation workshops

Four workshops were organised as part of the consultation process to discuss some key housing issues. Internal and external officers from a number of different agencies and organisations and a number of service users were invited and attended the following workshops:

- Rural Housing: Friday 26th June 09
- Physical and Social Environment: Monday 29th June 09
- Older People: Friday 17th July 09
- “Housing Strategy: Opportunity for older people to debate housing issues” (jointly coordinated with Care and Repair England and Greenfields Community Housing): Tuesday 8th September 09

On agenda/discussed at

- Braintree, Witham and Halstead Local Committees.
- Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board
- Health, Housing and Wellbeing Board

Eforms

- Eforms were developed to capture feedback and comments from stakeholders online.

Reponses received

Aside from the feedback and comments made during the consultation workshops or meetings, responses were received from the following stakeholders:

- Go East
- Sturmer Parish Council
- Councillor J. O'Reilly-Cicconi
- Councillor J. Baugh
- Greenfields Community Housing

Key changes

The key changes that have arisen out of the consultation process are:

New Actions
Action 2.2: Promote Gateway to Homechoice to minority groups to ensure maximum participation
Action 2.4: Work with partner organisations to identify the most useful reports and information available through 'Gateway to Homechoice'
Action 2.8: Work with the organisations in Gateway to Homechoice to make sure the scheme represents value for money
Action 5.4: Work with planning colleagues to meet the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller's: access to advice, identify sites, consult where we can to identify housings role
Action 5.10: Work with other agencies and organisations to make sure that the waiting time for assessments and for adaptations are minimized
Action 6.3: Make sure that local people with a strong local connection are given priority for new rural housing schemes
Action 6.6: Develop our web-site to make sure that people can access the neighbourhood services they need easily