

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee

11 November 2020

Annual Update on Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021

Report by Executive Director (Housing and Environment) (Report No. 20/215)

This report asks Committee to note progress in implementing the Local Housing Strategy for Perth and Kinross, previously approved at Housing and Health Committee on 25 May 2016. It also seeks approval for the revised Action Plan for 2020/2021 and sets out plans for developing the new Local Housing Strategy beyond 2021.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy and provide regular progress updates. The strategy must set out its priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related services over a five-year period.
- 1.2 The Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 was approved at Housing and Health Committee on 25 May 2016 (Report No.16/234 refers). The first annual progress update was reported to Housing and Communities Committee on 1 November 2017 (Report No.17/363 refers) with the second annual progress update reported to Housing and Communities Committee on 22 August 2018 (Report No. 18/255 refers) and the third annual progress update reported to Housing and Communities Committee on 15 May 2019 (Report No. 19/143 refers). This report provides the fourth annual progress update in implementing the strategy.
- 1.3 Our Local Housing Strategy was developed through a series of themed workshops to discuss the main issues and agree priorities with key stakeholders. This included local communities and tenants, housing professionals, health and social care partners, specialists in other related disciplines and contractors. Follow on workshops are held annually with partners to review progress and actions in the plan, where necessary.
- 1.4 A Local Housing Strategy Steering Group, comprising of Lead Officers for each of the themes within the Strategy, ensures the contribution of other services towards delivering the key priorities and outcomes within the strategy and in increasing the supply of affordable housing. This group meets quarterly and monitors progress towards the annual targets set in the strategy.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 The annual progress report for 2019/20 is attached in Appendix 1. The Local Housing Strategy has the following four strategic objectives. Key areas of progress in delivering the outcomes include the following:

Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities

2.2 Our aim is to deliver more affordable homes and manage existing stock to create homes of the size, type and in the locations where people want to live, with access to suitable services and facilities which encourage community integration.

2.3 During 2019/20, we have:

- exceeded the target of 150 and delivered a total of 215 social housing completions and 35 buy backs across the Perth and Kinross area;
- supported 275 households to move into more suitable accommodation either by transfer or mutual exchange;
- brought 139 vacant properties back into use with 26 of these completions through the Empty Homes Initiative (EHI)

2.4 The impact of these activities has been to meet housing need in the area, providing housing for many households. The additional social housing also enabled turnover within the overall stock. This has reduced waiting lists and met a range of housing needs in the area including overcrowding, alleviating homelessness and addressing medical need.

Housing and Homelessness

2.5 Our aim is to promote safe and secure communities for residents within Perth and Kinross with access to good quality, affordable accommodation with the necessary support in place to sustain them in their homes and prevent them from becoming homeless.

2.6 During 2019/20 we have:

- expanded membership of the Common Housing Register (CHR) to include Fairfield Housing Co-operative and Kingdom Housing Association;
- purchased a new product to replace the Housing Options Self-Assessment (HOSA). Development of this new product is underway to produce a tool which improves online housing applications and makes the management of existing applications easier
- continued the successful delivery of Home First which has a considerable impact on outcomes for homeless people and continues to be recognised as sector leading
- undertaken extensive engagement and consultation with our tenants around their priorities and future rent levels
- introduced a suite of measures to help improve tenancy sustainment

- trialled and introduced new measures aimed at making Perth and Kinross a safer place to live
- 2.7 The impact of these activities has been the delivery of a good performing, high quality value for money service for our tenants. We have minimised the impact, stigma and duration of homelessness on people in Perth and Kinross. Tenants indicate they are happy with the services we provide and feel we offer them a range of opportunities to participate in, and influence, our decisions.

Independent Living

- 2.8 Our aim is to support people to live independently at home for as long as possible with help from the community and local support networks.
- 2.9 During 2019/20 we have:
- undertaken 352 medical adaptations to council homes (95 major and 257 minor), such as the installation of safety rails and ramps and more major property alterations;
 - developed an Accommodation Modelling Tool and Framework to ensure the demand for housing for people with support requirements can be linked to the new build programme, vacancy allocation process for specialist provision and the allocation of some Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and Council accommodation;
 - developed a new booklet on housing options for older people and for people with support requirement needs that are looking to live independently
- 2.10 The impact of these activities has been to enable many households to access housing or remain in their homes, with support or adaptations and services that are suitable for their current and future needs, enabling them to live independently for longer.

House Condition, Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

- 2.11 Our aim is to support residents of Perth and Kinross to live in warm, dry, energy efficient and low carbon homes which they can afford to heat.
- 2.12 During 2019/20 we have:
- invested over £8.7 million in our housing stock including renewals of windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms, central heating and energy efficiency improvements;
 - continued to deliver our external and internal wall insulation programmes;
 - supported a range of local engagement events to promote grant funded initiatives to improve home energy efficiency levels for private owners and landlords

- continued to raise awareness about fuel poverty and work with Scarf to deliver our Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) service, providing free and impartial energy efficiency advice to households
- 2.13 The impact of these measures ensures that our tenants' homes meet the SHQS and are well maintained. In addition, many owners and private tenants are also benefiting from more energy efficient homes.
- 2.14 While good progress is being made towards delivering our outcomes, several challenges continue. These include:
- the outbreak of Covid-19 prior to the year-end has resulted in delays to many services and research projects. The impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt by many households into the next financial year and beyond;
 - there is a significant challenge faced by all services and communities in tackling and mitigating the impact of poverty. High housing costs and low incomes can be keys driver of poverty, and the pandemic has meant more households are now struggling to pay bills.
 - the geography of the area presents some specific challenges in relation to the availability of land for new housing. This requires a strong focus on collaboration with partners, to develop new housing to meet changing demographics, as 24% of residents are 65 years or older in Perth and Kinross (mid 2019 population estimates). National and local projections indicate a significant increase in our older population over the next 20 years. This will require continued close working with Health and Social Care colleagues to plan to meet these future demands.
- 2.15 We have consulted with professional stakeholders on the key priorities and actions for the strategy in the coming year. All feedback has been reviewed and the new action plan for 2020/2021 is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.16 We have been involved in discussions with other local authorities, Scottish Government, and internally in relation to the timeline for developing the new 5-year Local Housing Strategy for Perth and Kinross. Due to the significant impacts of the Covid19 pandemic, resulting in the inability to progress full consultation activity and a need to fully assess the impacts of Covid on our future priorities, it is proposed that we delay development of the new strategy for one year to 2022. Further details are included within Appendix 1.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Significant outcomes have been achieved throughout 2019/20 in delivering the key outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy. Working collaboratively with all our stakeholders has been key to the delivery of our success. This will be further enhanced as the Service plays its part in the development of the emerging Perth and Kinross Offer.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:

- notes the progress made during 2019/20 towards achieving the outcomes set out within the LHS (Appendix 1).
- approves the revised action plan for the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy (Appendix 1).
- approves plans for development of the new Local Housing Strategy to be delayed by one year to allow us to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and communities and produce a new strategy which responds to these challenges (Appendix 1).

Author

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Approved

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Barbara Renton	Executive Director Housing & Environment	30 October 2020

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	
Community Plan/ Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The Single Outcome Agreement for Perth and Kinross has five outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resource allocation. The following are reflected in the LHS:

- Giving every child the best start in life;
- Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives;
- Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

Corporate Plan

1.2 The new strategy reflects the Council's corporate plan objectives listed above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted on this report. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 Resource implications of this report relate to the local authority new build housing programme and the use of land currently in Council ownership.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 A report has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 A report has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council must discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:
- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
 - in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes; and in a way that it considers most sustainable

- 3.6 A report is has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>.

Legal and Governance

- 3.7 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications in this report.

Risk

- 3.8 The Housing and Environment Senior Management Team regularly review capital monitoring reports that highlight individual project progress and risk.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Elected Members of Perth and Kinross Council, Perth and Kinross Executive Officer Team, Senior Management within Perth and Kinross Council and all staff of Perth and Kinross Council were consulted on the draft strategy.

External

- 4.2 The following organisations were consulted on the draft LHS for 2016-2021:

- Community Councils
- Community Planning Partnership
- Registered Social Landlords
- Local Estate Agents
- Registered Private Landlords
- Scottish Government
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- National Parks
- Equalities Groups
- Registered Tenant Organisations
- Perth and Kinross Interested Persons Database
- Housing and Community Care Working Groups
- Homes for Scotland
- Private Landowners and Developers
- Residents of Perth and Kinross
- Other Partners Organisations within the Private, Public, and Third Sector

- 4.3 Internal and external partners were involved in reviewing the priorities and challenges to be addressed by the Strategy in 2019/2020 and an updated Action Plan has been developed.

- 4.4 The Tenant Committee Report Panel were consulted on this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communications plan has been prepared to work with operational teams on delivery of the outcomes within this strategy.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 There are no background papers.

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1

- Progress Update for 2019/20 on Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021
- Revised Action Plan for 2020/21
- Plans for Development of new Local Housing Strategy