

Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading



Report of Head of Development, Regeneration and Housing

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To: CABINET

Dates: South: 7th December 2017 Vale: 8th December 2017

Joint Housing Delivery Strategy 2018 - 2028

Recommendation

That approval is given for the adoption of the Joint Housing Delivery Strategy 2018 – 2028.

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Cabinet a report on the results of public consultation on the draft Joint Housing Delivery Strategy
2. To seek approval for the adoption of the Joint Housing Delivery Strategy 2018 - 2028 by Vale Cabinet and South Cabinet.

Corporate Objectives

3. Contributing towards the delivery of the right balance of types and tenure of new homes to meet housing need and support economic growth.

Background

4. A draft joint housing delivery strategy has been developed with the support of a sound base of evidence arising from research undertaken by Wessex Economics Ltd who were commissioned by the councils.
5. A housing study plus five background papers produced by the consultants to support the development of the strategy were made available to the Scrutiny Committees for both South and Vale and all of these research documents were also made publicly available through the public consultation process.
6. The draft strategy has been previously presented to Cabinet members and Scrutiny Committees and the consultation plan was subsequently presented to Cabinet members. The consultation period ran for 4 weeks closing at midnight on Monday 23rd October 2017 with just under 200 completed responses received. The responses have now been reviewed and were presented to Cabinet members and a summary of the main issues raised is presented with this report.

Consultation summary

Methodology

7. The consultation sought to provide members of the public and interested stakeholder groups with the opportunity to comment on the draft Joint Housing Delivery Strategy and was carried out in line with the council's Public Engagement Charter.
8. The consultation was promoted on both council websites, via the council social media accounts, two press releases to local media, posters in libraries, leisure centres and other community venues, and by direct invitations sent to stakeholder organisations.
9. A survey questionnaire was available for completion on-line and the draft Joint Housing Delivery Strategy and the full suite of supporting evidence documentation was also accessible on –line. Paper copies of both the survey and draft Joint Housing Delivery Strategy were provided on request.
10. Stakeholder engagement also took place prior to the public consultation launch.
11. A stakeholder contact plan identified a range of organisations and people who may be affected by the strategy's proposals and to consider the appropriate level of contact with these groups, including 1-2-1 meetings, in order to better understand the views of these groups.
12. Specific events/meetings were set up to enable direct engagement with organisations and individuals.
13. The public consultation survey sought views on three main topics in relation to the draft strategy:
 - the challenges faced in delivering sufficient number of homes
 - the aims and objectives of the strategy
 - the actions set out within the ten-year action plan

Key findings

14. Overall, half of the respondents were in general agreement with the challenges, aims and objectives and the action plan, although it was clear from the repetition of certain comments that there are areas of significant concern to residents.
15. The most commonly raised issue was for the need for infrastructure to be in place ahead of housing development with concerns over the cumulative impact of house building on the environment
16. Disagreement over the number and need for new homes was also frequently mentioned.
17. These areas of concern produced the relatively few responses expressing strong disagreement with the strategy.
18. The draft housing delivery strategy explained that setting the numbers of homes to be delivered is not within its remit and that this is dealt with through the Local Plan process. However, it is evident that the majority of these concerns raised relate to planning policy matters and that there has been a general misunderstanding amongst these respondents on the purpose of the housing delivery strategy.
19. The aim of the strategy is to explain how the councils will work proactively to enable a wider range of housing opportunities to be delivered that will more closely meet the needs of residents with positive benefits to our communities, and that it is not about setting housing targets.
20. The need for more affordable housing due to the general lack of affordability of market properties was frequently commented on and several respondents saw the role of the councils as direct deliverers of affordable housing as important.
21. In general, the overall responses received demonstrate that a proactive approach by the councils in delivering the right type of housing as set out across the strategy's ten-year action plan will produce positive outcomes and help to build successful communities.

Equality Impact Check

22. The equality impact check concluded that the joint housing delivery strategy will not have a negative impact or discriminate.
23. The strategy includes actions to delivery specialist housing that meets the needs of specific groups including older persons.

Options

24. Do Nothing: Failing to adopt a housing strategy would mean that officers and members of the public are unaware of Council's objectives and priorities, and how they hope to achieve these, in relation to housing
25. Produce a different strategy from the one proposed: The proposed strategy is well founded on comprehensive independent research. It proposes clear actions that will achieve objectives identified as being highly relevant to improving the lives of local residents through the provision of better housing and more options as to the type of

housing available. The proposed strategy is in line with the findings of the background research.

26. Adopt the proposed strategy: For the reasons touched on above, the proposed strategy represents a well-balanced, realistic strategy that addresses the issues raised in the background research, bearing in mind the resources available to the Council to implement the strategy and encourage housing providers to deliver the type and variety of housing required at an affordable cost to local residents. The results of the public consultation have shown a positive response to the aims and objectives of the strategy and the proposed action plan.

Financial Implications

27. Production of the strategy and the subsequent cost of producing a published document has been/will be funded from existing budgets.
28. The majority of work set out in the action plan can be achieved using existing resources. Where additional resources may be required, it is anticipated that this will be through the usual 'growth bid' process.

Legal Implications

29. There are no known legal implications relating to adoption of the strategy

Risks

30. That the strategy does not have the desired impact i.e. by encouraging a change in the behaviour of housing providers and fails to achieve its stated objectives.

Other implications

31. None

Conclusion

32. Both South and Vale have been without an up to date housing strategy for a number of years, the omission of which reduces the councils' ability to defend their existing housing policies and to create new policies which will enhance future provision.
33. The work that has been undertaken to support the development of a new joint housing strategy has provided a clear set of recommendations with a focus on the need for the councils to take on the role of 'housing delivery enabler' to ensure that challenging housing targets can be met.
34. More importantly, the direction recommended in the action plan will enable the councils to be more in control over the future of housing developments in both districts.

Background Papers

- None