

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 18th January 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## **Draft Housing Service Plan 2023-2024**

### **Report summary:**

This report presents the draft Service Plan for the Housing Service covering the period 2023-24.

The Service Plan is a document produced annually and sets out the key achievements over the past year and the forthcoming issues to be faced by the Service.

A range of service improvements and carbon reduction aspirations are identified through a number of objectives.

The Plan also considers service challenges and pressures strategically, including climate change implications, the implications of the Social Housing White Paper, the new Building safety Act and the ambitions to increase the supply of social housing with the role of the newly formed Housing Task Force team.

The Service Plan is presented in draft form for the Housing Review Board's consideration.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes  No

Policy Framework      Yes  No

### **Recommendation:**

**To consider, comment on and approve the Housing Service Plan for 2023-24.**

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To enable the Housing Review Board to influence the production of the Service Plan prior to it being finalised.

Officer: Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Assistant Director – Housing.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning

- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

**Equalities impact** Medium Impact

**Climate change** High Impact

The Service Plan contains a section on climate change.

**Risk:** Medium Risk; Part of the content of the Service Plan is intended to focus on identifying and addressing the risk involved in the delivery of a housing service and detailing how this will be managed.

**Links to background information .**

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

**Housing Service Plan 2023-24**

- 1.1 For some time now all the Council's services have organised an annual service planning exercise and produced a service plan, which sets out details of what the service does, achievements and future challenges and targets.
- 1.2 The Service Plan is produced using a corporate template and it shows how the service improvements link with the Council Plan/Statement of Intent. The template has been modified this year to focus on issues integral to the Council Plan. The Plan identifies the key service objectives, challenges ahead and outlines areas of performance that we should measure. It also considers efficiencies, key risks, training needs, equalities, opportunities to do things differently, and workforce planning. The template has been slightly adapted this year to have more of a focus on the objectives that continue as part of our day to day service delivery (section 3.1) with a clearer definition of new projects that will commence or have greater focus during the life of this service plan (3.2).
- 1.3 The Service Plan links closely with our Housing Strategy and is designed to complement a number of other housing plans and policies as part of how we manage our own housing stock and the services we deliver. There is also a strong link with the Council's Public Health Strategic Plan to ensure we help more people be and stay healthy, enhance self-care and community resilience and integrate and improve support for people in their own homes. There is also a strong link to both the Poverty Strategy and the council's Climate Change aspirations, section 5 of the plan specifically focuses on this.
- 1.4 The Service Plan is intended as a working document and the service managers will cascade the contents of the plan at their team meetings and reflect priorities in staff objectives. It is a good discipline to complete an annual statement of what the Service expects to achieve, set out in a structured way using a template and involving staff, service users and members in the process.

- 1.5 The Plan presented contains many challenges that are continuing and it has been important to reflect a realistic view of this as opposed to being over-ambitious with what we set out. The high vacancy rate we have experienced during 22/23 has impacted on many areas of the service and there is the need for us to ensure our core areas of service delivery are being maintained. The objectives are split between the three front-line areas of the Housing Service (housing services, property and asset, housing needs and allocation).
- 1.6 The headlines for the Service Plan include:
- Reflecting on the success of our 2019- 2023 Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Consult on and publish a new 2024- 2028 Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.
  - Off the back of the launch of our new Resident Involvement Strategy 2023- 2027, ensuring we implement and prioritise the direction of travel that the Strategy dictates.
  - Recognition of poverty as a significant factor in people's lives.
  - Revision of the HRA Business plan.
  - Delivering and concluding the Stock Condition Survey
  - A focus on ensuring our void process is efficient, providing quick turnarounds and that we are maximising rental income.
  - Emphasis on the importance of compliance and keeping tenants safe in their homes.
  - Robustly managing the Integrated Asset Management Contract in order to ensure high levels of tenant satisfaction.
  - Review our approach to damp and mould and ensure we are delivering the objectives set out in our damp and mould policy.
  - Continuing with the future proofing of Home Safeguard with a realistic view of risks ahead including the next phase of the digital switchover, refresh of the marketing strategy and growth plans
  - A review of our Community Development offer and plans to grow this area of the service.
  - Acting on the climate change agenda and building towards a carbon neutral council.
  - Delivering the next phase of the carbon reduction programme for our housing stock.
  - A review of some frontline areas of service delivery to ensure we are delivering effectively, Estate Management and Sheltered housing are specifically mentioned.
  - Embedding and ensuring we are ready for the changes coming as part of the Social Housing Act.
  - Continue to grow the Housing Task Force and see new housing delivery.
- 1.7 The Housing Leadership team have enjoyed being able to refresh the Service Plan as a way of setting out how we plan to get through what looks to be another challenging year ahead with a number of uncertainties in relation to national housing policy as well as competing demands impacting on our financial position.
- 1.8 It is worth pointing out that we have considerably increased the number of performance measures as listed in section 3.3, this is in line with a new refreshed approach to reporting on performance and being able to have better oversight and assurance around a number of areas of the service. This increase in measures provides a more robust approach to ensuring we have a realistic view of performance and can help us identify more quickly areas that require focus as well as areas we are performing well in.
- 1.9 In creating this plan we have sought input from the Portfolio Holder and we are holding a specific consultation day with tenants on the 21<sup>st</sup> December in order to give our tenant volunteers the opportunity to input. We can feedback to the Board in January the outcome of this consultation exercise.

1.10 I welcome the Housing Review Board's input into the Service Plan before it is finalised.

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**Financial implications:**

At the same time as preparing the draft service plans, draft budgets have been prepared for member consideration. Service plans and budgets are aligned and link back to the Council Plan.

**Legal implications:**

There are no legal implications on which to comment in the report