

Appendix 2

City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024

Better Homes for All

Summary of consultation findings

Introduction

This report summarises feedback from the internal and external consultation on the draft City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024, which ran across June and July 2019 (including public consultation 10 June 2019 – 10 July 2019).

The first draft of the strategy was developed based on consultation with officers and partners, which has been further refined based on internal, stakeholder and public consultation including:

Presenting the draft strategy at Council leadership meetings and a range of fora, providing the opportunity for face to face discussion and feedback including:

Housing, Adults, Children's, Public Health, City Environment, Regeneration, Education Council Leadership Teams. Vibrant and Sustainable City Panel, Wolverhampton Homes Board, Wolverhampton Federation Tenants Association, Deaf Café, Autism Partnership Board, Corporate Parenting, Youth Council and Care Leavers Forum.

Emails sent to internal and external stakeholders including all councillors, Registered Providers, service providers and voluntary sector organisations offering the opportunity for them to feedback directly to the Housing Strategy team including face to face if preferred.

An online survey was made available to stakeholders and members of the public, and was promoted through various means, with hard copies available on request. 156 responses were received from the online consultation of which 88% identified themselves as residents.

The key messages resulting from the consultation are summarised below, having been incorporated into a revised City Housing Strategy document.

Consultation Feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback	Response
More and better homes - <i>Increasing the speed and number of new homes delivered to meet the needs of our communities and the growing number of households looking to work, study and settle here.</i>		
Infrastructure demands	<p>Should the required level of new housing be developed there will be clear demands on infrastructure to support that growth in terms of schools, GP services, public transport etc.</p> <p>Ensure the linkages between the Housing Strategy and the Transport strategy are made to ensure that where we are developing new housing there is appropriate infrastructure so that people can access services, employment e.t.c.</p> <p>Similarly, new housing developments need to have access to parks and open space as well as sufficient car parking.</p>	<p>The strategy recognises the need for the right infrastructure, transport, green spaces, leisure facilities and amenities to support communities.</p> <p>Wording in the strategy has been strengthened to demonstrate how this is achieved for example housing engage with Education when developing new homes to ensure there is/will be sufficient capacity within schools to support population growth.</p>
Design standards	<p>Emphasise design standards that support independence and enable people to live in their homes for longer for example space standards and the ability to adapt properties.</p> <p>Improve the quality of the environment developed around new build housing, better outdoor space size standards.</p> <p>Important to consult with local people to feed into designs of new developments, particular those with a disability.</p> <p>There was much support for modular constructed homes.</p>	<p>Whilst Lifetime Homes Standards have been superseded in England by inserts into Building Regulations the Strategy supports good design of new build housing that will enable an ageing population to live in their homes for longer, retaining their independence. The Delivery Plan commits to developing scheme development standards for homes that older people will find popular and build these into new homes developed.</p> <p>The Strategy acknowledges that the quality of the environment around homes and the importance of local environments as spaces help build resilient communities and this has been more explicitly expressed.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the Council's use of modern methods of house building and supports ongoing investigation and the use of off-site manufacture.</p>
Reducing carbon emissions	<p>Promote the commitment to improved energy and water efficiency, improved building design and use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, all in order to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to climate change, reduce overheating and reduce fuel poverty.</p>	<p>The Strategy has been strengthened to reflect on the Council's commitment and highlight the progress that has been made, for example our housing developments already meet at least 10% of their energy requirements through on-site renewable energy generation – this typically means that at least half of the buildings on each development have roof-mounted solar photovoltaic</p>

		<p>panels. We also require most housing developments to provide electric vehicle charging points. We are exploring the development of Passivhaus standard housing, which achieves optimum energy efficiency and produces close to zero carbon emissions. We take enforcement action to ensure that rented properties reach minimum EPC standards. All of which will address fuel poverty and provide warm homes that are affordable to run and minimise carbon output.</p>
A revitalised city centre	<p>Need to ensure the quality of city centre developments, with specific quality standards to ensure safe and healthy homes are developed, that encourage sustainable communities into the city centre.</p> <p>Housing growth within the city centre needs to be combined with an appropriate cultural offer to ensure people can be attracted into and will stay in homes created.</p> <p>Suggested a study of empty shops and properties above shops that could create single person accommodation.</p>	<p>The Strategy sets out the ambition that by 2026 Wolverhampton city centre will be transformed with a wide variety of quality shops and cultural attractions, 21st century offices, urban living and a City-scale public transport interchange.</p> <p>Wording has been added to emphasise the importance of the quality of these homes, with an action added into the Delivery Plan to investigate and develop quality standards for commercial conversions.</p> <p>An action has also been added to the Delivery Plan regarding research into the conversion of empty shops and accommodation above into use as housing (across the city).</p>
Development land	<p>Focus of development to be on brownfield land with a considered response to be developed on the potential for border development.</p> <p>Also make best use of empty properties, commercial and residential that could be converted and brought back into use to meet need.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy is underpinned by the Council's Core Strategy which adopts a brownfield focussed regeneration strategy and is further supported by the WMCA in their Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan (SIDP) as is reflected in the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The City Housing Strategy commits to bring new housing development forward in locations that support urban regeneration, minimise environmental impacts, reduce the need to travel, and are, or can be made, most accessible by public transport, cycling and walking, with brownfield land being reused where possible, and urban open spaces protected.</p> <p>The City Housing Strategy includes a sub section, 'Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use', which sets out the Council's commitment to reducing the number of empty properties in the City, having already brought back over 1,650 properties back into use since 2010. This is done by offering support to owners but</p>

		also making use of legal powers when necessary. New and innovative ways of addressing empty properties including commercial conversions will be set out in the Empty Homes Strategy which is being developed as a sub-strategy to the Housing Strategy, with the wording of the Housing Strategy being reviewed and strengthened.
Mixed communities	A continued commitment to creating mixed communities, when developing new housing estates.	Whilst the City is committed to creating mixed communities the strategy only mentioned this in relation to the city centre, and so this has been strengthened in the strategy.
Resilient communities	The role new housing development plays in developing connected spaces that encourage social interaction, reduce isolation and build those connections that enable residents to support each other.	The neighbourhood uplift programme partners with the voluntary sector to uplift areas, building capacity and increasing the resilience of communities and the importance of building resilient communities in terms of reducing isolation has been added into the Strategy and Delivery Plan.
Housing need	<p>Need for larger family housing including accommodation for intergenerational living so that families can care for those with social care needs.</p> <p>Need for family accommodation that is or can be adapted.</p> <p>Need for smaller homes, including bungalows to encourage downsizing, across tenures.</p> <p>Housing for older people, enabling them to stay within their local communities.</p> <p>Demand for affordable housing that reflects local incomes both to rent and buy.</p>	<p>The Strategy makes reference to the Housing Strategy evidence base report establishing the need for more larger homes for growing families.</p> <p>The Strategy and delivery plan commits to enabling the development of homes that include level access/adapted properties as well as £5.5m investment into adapting existing stock over the next five years.</p> <p>The Strategy and delivery plan recognises the specific need for Homes for people as they get older, both in their existing homes, in extra care housing as well as exploring other models.</p> <p>The Strategy makes clear its commitment to increasing the range of affordable housing in the city to buy and rent including the potential to invest in financial products that address local conditions and support local people to access homes to rent and buy. Further work to develop these options for the City is captured in the Delivery Plan.</p>
Joint working with local authority neighbours	In addition to working with our West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) neighbours, the strategy should recognise the need for joint working with our neighbours that are not part of WMCA, specifically South Staffordshire.	The need for ongoing joint working with South Staffordshire has been added to the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Improving schools	Rising standards and improvements in the educational performance of schools is having a positive impact on communities, confidence in the neighbourhood and contribute to the regeneration and desirability of neighbourhoods. Improving education in schools around housing options available to people when they enter adulthood and the responsibilities they will encounter.	The Strategy recognises the link between housing and schools and commits to the ongoing engagement particularly around the development of new housing as well as the contribution to schools and education in terms of the added social value housing investment can bring.
Safer and healthier homes - <i>Achieving high quality management and maintenance of housing, particularly for those renting in the City, whether that be a from a private or social landlord.</i>		
Fire safety	The Council's commitment to improving fires safety in/of homes, particularly to vulnerable people and older people's homes for example construction materials, hard wiring of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and sprinkler systems and work above minimum standards set by government. Promote fire safety measures in the design of new homes. Promote fire safety checks and measures in all rented homes.	Commitments are made within the Strategy to driving safety and its wider promotion. The Council's first focus had been the high-rise blocks, with a robust approach in place to monitor and manage the safety of tenants in their homes working in close partnership with the West Midlands Fire Service. Wolverhampton Homes publish the full fire risk assessment process and individual block assessments can be accessed on their website. Council high rise housing blocks are checked daily by concierge staff and plans are in place for the retrofit of sprinklers across Council owned high rise blocks. Work has been undertaken to identify the needs of vulnerable people in high rise homes and this will continue across the wider stock. Action has also been undertaken to inspect and assess the safety of private high-rise blocks in the City, and the Council continue to respond to any national changes arising from the Hackitt and Grenfell Inquiries. Wording has been added committing the promotion of fire safety measures in the design of new homes and the private rented sector.
Decent Homes	Need to review and revisit homes upgraded through the Decent Homes programme as more investment may now be needed.	The City Housing Strategy highlights the £206.5m we have invested in our housing stock since the end of the Decent Homes programme and the significant additional investment plans including the ongoing commitment to keeping the Council's existing homes in a decent condition through the replacement of

		kitchens, bathrooms, heating in addition to other investment priorities such as adaptations to help people with disabilities to continue to live independently and completion of structural repairs
Monitoring of managing agents	Need robust arrangements for ensuring the ALMO and TMOs operate in a compliant and efficient way, including tenant feedback.	<p>The strategy commits the Council to reviewing its landlord services delivery model to ensure that the services delivered to tenants are high quality, cost effective and add significant value to their lives.</p> <p>The strategy also commits the Council and its managing agents to improve tenant engagement in improving service delivery, with the strategy being further strengthened in terms of the role of tenant scrutiny as is reflected in the Delivery Plan.</p>
Private rented sector	<p>Emphasis on a well-managed private rented sector with improvements to choice, quality and security.</p> <p>Work to be done with landlords to house those in receipt of housing benefit/Universal Credit, with more done to support potential tenants to access this housing.</p>	<p>The strategy is committed to driving up standards in the private rented sector, with a separate sub-strategy to the Housing Strategy, the Private Homes Strategy being developed to set out in greater detail how this will be achieved.</p> <p>The Rent with Confidence programme and Private Sector Leasing scheme are working to ensure a wide range of property types are made available to meet the varied needs of residents in the city. Added to the delivery plan is the need for further research into the impact of Universal Credit and access to private rented housing and security of tenure, with resulting actions to be developed.</p>
Regulation	Local regulation and enforcement to manage and control rogue landlords and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), whilst providing support to good landlords.	<p>The Strategy and Delivery Plan highlights the potential use of selective and additional licensing in the private rented sector, which will be further supported and explored in the Private Homes Strategy.</p> <p>Support to explore selective and additional licensing where need can be demonstrated through robust evidence will be made more explicit in the strategy.</p>
Affordability	Support those who want to move from private renting into homeownership as often private rents can be more expensive than servicing a mortgage.	The Strategy makes clear its commitment to increasing the range of affordable housing in the city to buy and rent including the potential to invest in financial products as a local offer, that supports local people to access homes to rent and buy. Further work to develop these options for the City is captured in the Delivery Plan.

Quality of environments	Particularly refuse collection in areas with high numbers of HMOs	The Strategy asserts the importance of the quality of the environment for both existing and new housing developments. Selective and additional licensing are being considered for areas with high concentrations of private rented properties. Where this is detrimental to the local neighbourhoods, cases will be brought forward for the adoption of licensing schemes. A neighbourhood uplift programme partners with the voluntary sector to uplift areas. Commitments have been made to Heath Town and New Park Village in terms of investment and redevelopment.
Access to a secure home <i>A focus on the City's commitment to those residents that need additional support in accessing and sustaining secure accommodation.</i>		
Young people in care and care leavers	Make clear the Council's commitment to supporting the housing needs of Children and Young People in Care and to Care Leavers in making successful and sustainable transitions out of care and into adulthood.	The Strategy has been updated reflecting upon its commitment to Children and Young People in Care and to Care Leavers. The Council has an internal housing support service that provides high level housing related support to young people who are leaving care or are on the edge of care, which responds to the complex needs of vulnerable young people enabling them to move on to independent living through the Wolverhampton Young Person's Accommodation Forum. The Council is also committed to delivering the House Project, which will expand the range of offers available to our young people in care and care leavers and is based on cooperative principles through which adults and young people in and leaving care, work together to refurbish properties that become their homes, developing a long-term community of support.
Domestic Violence	Continued support for the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides support to households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing a 'Sanctuary' in the home as well as other support that supports victims to stay in their home or local area.	Wording in the strategy has been strengthened to reflect the Council's commitment to supporting victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes where they choose to do so, making use of/developing schemes that enable people to feel secure in their own home with support in the Delivery Plan for the Safe Homes Scheme.
Older people	Link to the NHS' Frailty agenda, by enhancing/developing housing and housing support services that support people to age well and remain living independently for longer. Frailty is	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect its support for a cross tenure approach to ensuring homes are free from hazards, receive necessary adaptations and that we are

	where someone is less able to cope and recover from accidents, physical illness or other stressful events.	tackling isolation in the development of services and new housing, that is aligned to the NHS' Healthy New Towns principles by planning, designing and developing higher quality places that promote physical activity, foster social connections and inspire healthy eating.
Autism	A commitment to ensuring the needs of those residents with a hidden disability such as autism are met, making reasonable adjustments to support residents to access advice, housing and support and ensuring that housing can be adapted to help meet their needs. A cross tenure approach, with links to Rent with Confidence for those tenants living in the private rented sector.	The strategy highlights Disabled Facilities Grants in terms of improving the ability for people with a disability to remain living independently, but this can appear to have a focus on physical disabilities. The Strategy has been strengthened to set out the support for meeting the housing needs of people with all forms of disability.
Prevention	The role housing/housing services plays in promoting wellbeing and supporting those residents with low level health and wellbeing needs, who perhaps are not in contact with social care services, and could help to prevent an escalation of needs and potential admissions to hospital.	The Strategy reflects on the Wolverhampton Better Care Fund and the links to Housing to provide individuals and families in Wolverhampton with the services and knowledge to help them to live longer, healthier and more independent lives and the contribution that housing can make by helping people to maintain and adapt their homes, in reducing hospital discharge times, preventing admission/re-admission (particularly from falls), and helping to reduce/delay expensive care packages.
Home Improvement Agency	Emphasise the work being done to create a holistic, joined up approach to services which support people to remain living at home. This includes the streamlining of Telecare services, making it available to a wider client group.	The Strategy highlights work being done to streamline services through the development of the Home Improvement Agency in the section Developing healthy homes through our Home Improvement Agency. This has been strengthened, added to the Delivery Plan with the inclusion of Telecare.
Assistive technology	Emphasising the value that technology will play now and in the future and the work the City is doing to embrace this for example the City as a 5G pilot area, exploring Smart City opportunities, using artificial intelligence to improve the services we offer the work Social Care are doing to understand how smart home technology, telecare and the internet of things can make a real difference to people's lives and support them to manage their health care.	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect on the growing importance of new and innovative technologies, particularly in support of social care aims.

Specialist housing	Develop specialist housing where there is a need	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to demonstrate its support for the development of specialist housing where needed and highlights the Council led delivery of an autism housing scheme and mental health housing scheme in the city.
Rightsizing	Where possible make best use of current stock for example larger or adapted properties by supporting people to right size into homes that better meet their needs.	The Strategy supports the development of a range of housing types to allow people to right-size into homes that best meet their needs. The Strategy supports the development of housing products that will enable people to do this in terms of housing to buy as well as a review of the Council's housing Allocations Policy to assist those living in/accessing social homes in the city.