

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 27 March 2023

Title: Building a Better North Tyneside: The 2023-28 Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Portfolio(s): Housing	Cabinet Member(s): Councillor John Harrison
Report from Service Area:	Housing and Property Services
Responsible Officer:	Peter Mennell Director Housing and Property Services (Tel: (0191) 643 6395)
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

Following extensive consultation with a wide range of residents, service users and stakeholders, a refreshed Housing Strategy and refreshed Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy have been developed. The strategies support the delivery of the 'Our North Tyneside' Council Plan and provide a strategic direction to the delivery of homes in the borough and the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is not a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce a Housing Strategy, but the Strategy plays an important role in providing direction for a wide range of cross-cutting related services and shows that due regard has been given to the duties and responsibilities relating to housing and homelessness imposed on the Authority. The Housing Strategy for 2023-2028 will facilitate the strategic coordination of the Authority's activities that directly impact on current and projected housing need and support the delivery of 5,000 affordable homes in the Borough.

In contrast with the Housing Strategy, the Authority does have a statutory obligation to produce The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This updated Strategy for 2023-2028 has been developed having regard to the Council Plan.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approves:

- The Housing Strategy for 2023-2028 appended to this report at Appendix 1; and
- The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2023-2028 appended to this report at Appendix 2.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 20th January 2023.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2021-2025 Our North Tyneside Plan:

A thriving North Tyneside:

- We will reduce the number of derelict properties across the borough
- Support the regeneration of the borough

A secure North Tyneside:

- Provide 5,000 affordable homes
- We will tackle health and socio-economic inequalities across the borough including through our Poverty Intervention Fund to tackle food poverty
- Create safe and welcoming communities by tackling antisocial behaviour
- We will maintain the Council Tax support scheme that cuts bills for thousands of households across North Tyneside

A Caring North Tyneside:

- Provide support and advice to residents and tenants
- We will support local community groups and the essential work they do
- People will be cared for, protected, and supported if they become vulnerable, including if they become homeless

A Green North Tyneside:

- Deliver low carbon homes and secure funding for low-income households to achieve this.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Housing Strategy 2023-28

Background

This strategy builds on the success of the Authority's previous Housing Strategy for 2017-21 'A Great Place to Live'. It is informed by current and emerging national and local policies; it considers the Authority's Equally Well Strategy, and the emerging policy aims from the most recent Housing White Paper. It also references evidence of housing need and demand from the 2021 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

Our Priorities

The vision to 'Build a Better North Tyneside' and the 5 delivery themes were developed following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, partners, and residents. Within each theme, a set of actions are identified, and a detailed action plan will be developed and reviewed by Cabinet and the Housing Sub-Committee on an annual basis.

1. Deliver more Affordable Homes and Support Regeneration Plans

The Authority's Affordable Homes Programme has already delivered over 2,100 affordable homes since 2014 and this theme directly supports the delivery of the 5,000 homes target in the Our North Tyneside Plan. It highlights where the Authority will work with its partners and actively seek new opportunities to deliver affordable homes. It also recognises the important role of housing in regeneration and the Authority's Master Plans.

2. Prevent Homelessness and Improve our Specialist Housing Offer

It is well established that demand for supported housing is increasing, and this theme focuses on the Authority's approach to tackling homelessness and ensuring that its homes and services meet the needs of everyone in the Borough.

To prevent homelessness and support residents, the Authority has introduced specialist support roles to assist with preventing rough sleeping, providing support to those with mental health issues and those experiencing domestic abuse. There has been an increase in the amount of temporary accommodation on offer including an additional 5 properties in the rough sleeper's accommodation programme (RSAP). The Authority will continue to review its approach to rough sleeping, improve its accommodation offer and strengthen its partnerships.

The Authority will refresh its Housing Market Positions statements for older people, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and mental health to ensure that there is enough supply and demand for the growing population and specific client groups. In the last 5 years the Authority has delivered 329 specialist housing units for a variety of client groups including a specific extra care scheme for dementia. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 21 (SHMA) states that there is a projected need for 2,675 additional units of specialist older persons' accommodation by 2039.

3. Improve the Private Rented Sector and Tackle Derelict Properties

Poor quality housing can have a damaging effect on people's health and this theme focuses on driving up standards in the private rented sector and working with landlords to increase the quality of private rented housing. The theme also recognises the impact that empty and derelict properties can have to communities.

The Authority has had significant success to date reducing the number of empty homes and has seen the number reduce from 1,326 in 2019 to 846 in February 2023. This theme sets out the Authority's ambition to continue to target and reduce empty and derelict properties and where possible return them into use as affordable homes.

4. Lead the Way – Greener Homes to Support Carbon Zero by 2030

The Authority declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has set ambitious targets to further reduce its carbon footprint. The Authority has already made significant progress and has successfully attracted £9.4m in inward investment to deliver energy efficiency measures to over 800 homes across the Borough.

This theme builds on the Authority's successes to date by recognising the important role that the built environment and housing plays in supporting its ambition for the future. It details that the Authority will continue to build homes free from fossil fuel and actively attract further inward investment to support landlords improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

5. Support our Tenants and Residents and Improve Our Communities

This theme recognises the importance that housing, and the Authority's services play in creating and sustaining communities that are healthy, safe, clean, and green. This theme focuses on how the Authority can support tenants and residents through the current cost of living crisis as well as maintaining their independence in their homes. The Authority will continue to ensure that the Authority's housing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard and that it will work with private landlords to drive up quality standards in the private rented sector. The Authority will also focus on tackling issues related to damp and mould across homes in the Borough.

This theme is aligned to the potential housing regulation changes that are currently being consulted on through the Housing White Paper. It sets out clearly the Authority's commitment to ensure residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong. The Authority will continue to engage with its tenants, residents, and service users to ensure that its homes and services are received with a high level of satisfaction.

1.5.2 Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Background

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their area. This should be done in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, with the published homelessness strategy based on the results of that review and carried out at least every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced new legal duties for housing authorities focusing on the prevention and relief of homelessness, regardless of priority status.

The Authority recognises that it has a moral duty to tackle homelessness as it can have a detrimental effect on health, well-being, and community cohesion, as well as potentially increasing service costs for the Authority. Evidence demonstrates that investment in local homeless prevention services reduces the cost of mainstream homelessness services, which can cut across housing, health, criminal justice, and community safety.

The Authority's Priorities

The Authority's new strategic priorities have been identified following engagement and consultation with its Homelessness Forum and a wide range of stakeholders, Elected Members, officers, and third sector organisations who support people when they experience a 'housing crisis'.

Following a review of its achievements, outcomes and future challenges that have been identified throughout the lifespan of the previous strategy, the refreshed strategy has been produced to align with recent legislative changes.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough sleeping Strategy 2023-28 continues the vision to support the ambition to 'Build a Better North Tyneside' through three key themes:

1. End Rough Sleeping

This priority focuses on rough sleeping in North Tyneside, with the aim being no-one is bedded down outdoors. The Authority will continue to improve its interventions to prevent rough sleeping in the first instance wherever possible.

The last rough sleeper count in November 2022 identified one rough sleeper in the Borough. The Authority's offer includes specialist support, which is available to the most vulnerable via a support officer. There were 173 referrals resulting in seven rough sleepers recorded in 2021/22. The Authority will continue to identify where rough sleeping is occurring, and review and revise its response accordingly.

The accommodation offer for rough sleepers has been enhanced with the introduction of five properties through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). The Authority will consider any interim accommodation offers to achieve its aim of no rough sleeping in the Borough.

2. Our Accommodation Offer

This priority focuses on temporary, supported, and permanent housing solutions to continue to prevent rough sleeping and support people facing homelessness.

There has been an increase in the number of people accessing temporary accommodation since 2020. The Authority is committed to continuing to improve its offer and have expanded its current accommodation pathways to include a 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' service, the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and the 'Sit-Up Service' to provide support to people who are rough sleeping.

3. Collaborative Partnerships

The Authority will continue to tackle homelessness within the Borough by strengthening its existing relationships with partner agencies and all organisations that contribute to early intervention to prevent homelessness within the Borough. This will include working regionally with other local authorities and exploring joint funding initiatives to further prevent homelessness.

the Authority will also continue to work in collaboration with a wide range of partners to effectively communicate information to aid those in need and provide signposting to other organisations who can provide help.

Monitoring our Performance

The Authority will continue to work closely with its partners to develop an annual delivery plan that will be formed from the key actions within this Strategy. The plan will be reviewed and revised each year to ensure any legislative changes are included. The North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Partnership will be responsible for monitoring delivery with annual updates on the Authority's performance that will be shared with the Housing Sub-Committee and Cabinet.

1.5.3 Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

A HIA is a structured, solution-focused and action orientated approach to maximising the positive and minimising the negative health impacts of new initiatives. It aims to identify and where feasible strengthen, the ways in which the proposal can promote and enhance health.

The Housing and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping strategies provide high level strategic frameworks to 'Build a Better North Tyneside'. The impact of housing and homelessness on health are well established and the strategic actions will undoubtedly provide the opportunities for better health outcomes across the borough.

A HIA was undertaken in consultation with Public Health colleagues, and this identified two actions that will be taken forward onto the scoping phase. The two key areas for further assessment are:

- Building 5,000 affordable homes
- Improving the private rented sector and tackling derelict properties

Further work will be undertaken to assess these areas in detail, specify the health impact to be assessed and the causal associations and develop a workplan to ensure delivery and identify the possible evidence required to help inform the recommendations and future action plans for our strategies.

1.6 **Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may approve the recommendations at paragraph 1.2 of this report.

Option 2

Cabinet may decide not to approve the recommendations at paragraph 1.2 of this report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 **Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

This option will directly support the delivery of the Our North Tyneside Council Plan by providing a clear, strategic direction for housing and homelessness prevention activity within the borough for the next 5 years along with fulfilling our statutory duties around homelessness.

1.8 **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Plan on Page 2023-2028

Appendix 2: Housing Strategy 2023-2028

Appendix 3: Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy Plan on Page 2023-2028

Appendix 4: Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2003-2028

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy 2003-2028 and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2003-2028

1.9 Contact officers:

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1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [Housing Sub Committee – Consultation on the emerging Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy presentation September 2022](#)
- (2) [Housing Strategy 2017-21](#)
- (3) [Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-21](#)
- (4) [Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\) 2021](#)
- (5) [The Homelessness Act 2002](#)
- (6) [The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- (7) [The Housing Act 1985](#)
- (8) [The Housing Act 1996](#)
- (9) [The Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, should any implications arise owing to the actions or projects described within the Housing Strategy or Homelessness Strategy they will be presented to Cabinet in a future report.

2.2 Legal

In accordance with section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 the Authority has a duty to assess the housing conditions and needs of the Borough.

The Authority is also obliged by section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002, to review its Homelessness Strategy within 5 years from the date of publication of the last such Strategy. It is also required to keep the Strategy under review and the Authority may modify it from time to time and publish the modifications or Strategy as modified as considered appropriate and to take the Strategy into account when exercising its functions relating to homelessness.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) requires local housing authorities to take “reasonable steps” to either maintain or secure accommodation for eligible applicants who are threatened with homelessness or are homeless.

In exercising its functions relating to homelessness the Authority must have regard to the Homelessness Code of Guidance published by the Secretary of State. Failure to have an updated Homelessness Strategy may impact the Authority’s ability to defend challenges to decisions made under the homelessness legislation.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Internal consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Member for Housing and with other Elected Members through attendance at Housing Sub Committee on 20 September 2022. The Sub Committee were presented with a wide range of information relating to the Strategic Housing Market Needs Analysis to inform discussions relating to housing need and demand and homelessness in North Tyneside. The draft priorities within both strategies were discussed with the Committee providing feedback which has been incorporated within the review process.

The Strategic Property Group which comprises of the Elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Members for Finance and Resources, Housing, and Regeneration as well as the Directors for Housing and Property, Regeneration and Economic Development and the Environment were consulted on the draft priorities in October 2022 with officers being engaged in the development of both Strategies as part of the consultation process, through completion of surveys and service priority discussions.

A Health Impact Assessment screening session was held on both Strategies in February 2023. Attended by both Housing and Public Health officers, the session supports the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 'Equally Well' in its aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. Following the initial screening, further assessments will be undertaken on actions arising from the strategies to consider further opportunities to protect the health of residents.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

A comprehensive programme of consultation has been undertaken to support the development of the proposed Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Consultation was undertaken using a range of methods ensuring that it was accessible to all.

A public online consultation ran from the 15 December 2022 until 2 February 2023 offering residents and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on both strategies. 74 responses were received in total with most responders agreeing with the proposed priorities and themes. There were several suggestions made by responders that were incorporated into the final documents and additional actions will be included in future action plans. Our consultation identified that respondents recognised the progress the Authority has made to date and the future challenges that facing the Authority with regards to funding and land availability.

A focus group was held to discuss the strategies with tenants, residents and stakeholders on the 31 January 2023. The attendees were supportive of both strategies and agreed with the proposed themes. The attendees provided valuable contributions on the language used to describe our rough sleeping provision and resulted in amendments to the proposed actions in the final version of the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The priorities within the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping strategy were discussed at our Homelessness Forum with a range of stakeholders that provide services to reduce homelessness. The stakeholders were all supportive of the aims of the proposed strategy.

Our strategies have been informed by the Residents Survey that was conducted in 2021. 39% of respondents felt that affordable, decent housing was an important factor in making a place somewhere good to live, which represents an increase of 8% on 2019. This supports the theme within the strategy to deliver more affordable homes. 64% of residents indicated they were satisfied with the choice and quality of housing available in North Tyneside, however satisfaction with the choice and quality of private rented homes is significantly lower. Continuing to improve the private rented sector in the borough remains a key priority within our Housing Strategy.

2.4 Human rights

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights, (the Convention) which is incorporated into the Human Rights Act 1998, states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and their home and correspondence.

Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Convention relates to the protection of property and states that every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.

Both the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy were developed having regard to the human rights of those who would be affected by the implementation of each Strategy.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment covering both strategies has been completed and confirms that no negative impacts are identified, this can be found in Appendix 3 of this report.

Individual Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on all potential projects and policies resulting from the Strategies.

The Strategies were developed having due regard to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

2.6 Risk management

Risks associated with the Housing Strategy 2022-28 and Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028 have been considered.

2.7 Crime and disorder

Both strategies emphasise the need to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping, although rough sleeping numbers remain low, the perception is that rough sleeping and street activity can make areas feel unsafe. There is also a commitment to continue to tackle anti-social behaviour to improve communities.

The Housing Strategy supports the delivery of high-quality homes and improving communities and the built environment. This includes designing homes and communities that consider the impact of crime and disorder through planning requirements and ensuring that homes are sustainable and safe.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The Authority declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and the Housing Strategy 2023-2028 encompasses a theme around greener homes to support carbon zero by 2030. Housing is one of the main producers of greenhouse gases, so commitments have been put in place such as new council homes to be free from fossil fuels from 2025, having a fabric first approach on retro fittings and continue to maximise grant funding. These will also contribute to the wider Authority carbon zero 2030 plan.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Director(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Assistant Chief Executive X