

Report Title:	<b>Housing Strategy 2020-25: Building a Borough of Opportunity and Innovation</b>
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Lead Member:	Councillor McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement
Meeting and Date:	Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning and Tracy Hendren, Head of Housing and Environmental Health Service
Wards affected:	All

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## REPORT SUMMARY

1. There is a housing affordability crisis in the UK and in RBWM our residents face particularly acute housing costs. The average house price in RBWM is approximately £476,000, which is over 15 times higher than the average UK salary (£30,420). This has made getting into sustainable rented accommodation and onto the house ladder difficult for many RBWM residents. In order to address this key issue, RBWM has submitted a Local Plan for inspection and requires a Housing Strategy to clearly set out the Council's priorities for addressing the housing challenges our residents face.
2. To this end and building on the Council's draft Local Plan and the recently adopted Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Housing and Environmental Health Service completed a comprehensive Housing Strategy evidence base and undertook an initial round of consultation with councillors and partner organisations."
3. The draft Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 has been developed around three key objectives; Deliver New Homes; Promote Health & Wellbeing; Support Vulnerable Residents to Obtain and Sustain Appropriate Accommodation. The Strategy's Delivery Plan will be monitored and reviewed, including updates which will be published annually.
4. If approved the draft Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 will undergo a formal public consultation to listen to the views of all our residents on this critically important issue. The feedback we receive will be collated and analysed. The final Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025 will be considered by Cabinet for adoption following the public consultation period.
5. Although the requirement to develop and publish a Housing Strategy is no longer a statutory duty for the Council, it is imperative the Council develops a strategy that clearly states its housing ambitions and goals for the future benefit for the residents of the Royal Borough.

## 6. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and provide feedback for consideration as part of the consultation.

## 7. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>Publishing a Housing Strategy is strongly recommended. It is vital for the Council to provide a clear and accessible statement of intent to its staff, residents and stakeholders, reflecting its firm commitment to meet the identified housing needs of the Borough.</p> <p><b>This is the recommended option</b></p>	<p>The Council is committed to delivering best practice housing services and to doing all it can to meet the identified housing needs of the Borough. It is considered best practice for a local housing authority to set out its future strategic plan in a housing strategy and for that strategy to have been developed through evidence and consultation. The draft Housing Strategy supports the aims to improve opportunity and innovation in the Borough, as reflected in the title.</p>
<p>There is no requirement to publish a Housing Strategy and therefore there is the option of not publishing a strategy, however this is strongly discouraged.</p> <p><b>This is not recommended</b></p>	<p>Whilst section 87 of the Local Government Act 2002 conferred the power on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities to publish a housing strategy, this was repealed by section 209 of the Deregulation Act 2015. This means that there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy.</p>

## 8. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 Adopting the Housing Strategy will enable the related action plan to be implemented, monitored and fed back through the appropriate channels. The action plan will highlight the agreed priorities for housing within the Borough

through full consultation and adoption at Cabinet. Without adoption of the strategy there will be no delivery plan mechanism in place and no opportunity for monitoring. The action plan will be SMART, including milestones, ownership and proposed outcome dates enabling demonstration of its effectiveness.

## **9. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 1.2 No financial implications.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.3 Having a Housing Strategy and associated action plan will enable the Borough to be prepared and mitigate any legal risk, preventing the risk of challenge.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 1.3 Two key risks have been identified in the development of the Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025. These risks are, to an extent, beyond the Council's control and relate to:
- a) The potential for economic factors leading to an increased demand on statutory services
  - b) Future changes to national policy and in particular planning policy which could impact on the Council's ability to deliver new housing that meets locally identified needs
- 1.4 The Housing Strategy includes actions to support risk management in this context and the risk will be managed as part of the delivery of the strategy.

## **12. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

- 1.5 The strategy will impact positively on significant numbers of individuals in housing need by increasing the supply of affordable homes in the Borough, preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping and creating sustainable and diverse communities
- 1.6 The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
- 1.7 The Housing Strategy includes objectives and associated actions to encourage sustainability and reduced carbon technologies, which supports the Council's climate change obligations.

## 13. CONSULTATION

- 1.8 Members and partner organisations were consulted on the Housing Strategy in November 2020, including the option to complete a Survey Monkey survey to state their views and to attend a consultation event to discuss in person. 40 Survey Monkey responses were received and collated in the first consultation round.
- 1.9 The public consultation on the Housing Strategy began on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and will end on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February.

## 14. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**Table 2: Implementation timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2021	<i>Public consultation ends</i>
14 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	<i>Final Housing Strategy copy drafted</i>
25 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	<i>Housing Strategy presented to Cabinet</i>

## 15. APPENDICES

- 1.10 This report is supported by three appendices:
- The draft Housing Strategy
  - The Equality Impact Assessment
  - Consultation feedback from partners and Member consultation