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| Report Title: | Housing Strategy 2021-26: Building a Borough of Opportunity and Innovation |
| Contains Confidential or Exempt Information | No - Part I |
| Lead Member: | Councillor McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement |
| Meeting and Date: | Cabinet – 29 th of April 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 2021 - 2026 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. 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.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Delegates authority to the Head of Service in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement, to publish the Housing Strategy 2021-2026**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

| Option | Comments |
|--|---|
| <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>This is the recommended option</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>This is not recommended</p> | <p>Whilst section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 conferred the power on the Secretary of State to require local housing authorities to publish a housing strategy, this was repealed by section 29 of the Deregulation Act 2015. This means that there is no statutory requirement for the Council to have a Housing Strategy.</p> |

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 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.

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications in setting a housing strategy. However, adopting a strategy will ensure that the Council has set the context within which it will allocate its resources to support its ambitions in regards to Housing services within the Borough through the delivery plan.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the statutory requirement for English local authorities to produce a housing strategy as previously required by section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 5.2 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.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 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
- 6.2 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.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
- 7.3 The Housing Strategy includes objectives and associated actions to encourage sustainability and reduced carbon technologies, which supports the Council's climate change obligations.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 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. 48 Survey Monkey responses were received and collated in the first consultation round.
- 8.2 The public consultation on the Housing Strategy began on the 24th of December 2020 and will ended on the 3rd of February. A total of 134 Survey Monkey responses were received and collated on the second consultation round.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 2.

Table 2: Implementation timetable

| Date | Details |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 29 th April 2021 | Cabinet |

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by 1 appendix:
- The Housing Strategy 2021-2026

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by 1 background documents:

- Equality Impact Assessment - <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021-eqia-housing-strategy-2021-2026.pdf>

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

| Name of consultee | Post held | Date sent | Date returned |
|-------------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| Cllr McWilliams | Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement | 24 March 2021 | 29 March 2021 |
| Duncan Sharkey | Managing Director | 19 April 2021 | |
| Adele Taylor | Director of Resources/S151 Officer | 19 April 2021 | 20 April 2021 |
| Andrew Durrant | Director of Place | 19 April 2021 | |
| Kevin McDaniel | Director of Children's Services | 19 April 2021 | |
| Hilary Hall | Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning | 19 April 2021 | |
| Andrew Vallance | Head of Finance | 19 April 2021 | |
| Elaine Browne | Head of Law | 19 April 2021 | 20 April 2021 |
| Emma Duncan | Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer | 19 April 2021 | |
| Nikki Craig | Head of HR Corporate Projects and IT | 19 April 2021 | |
| Louisa Dean | Communications | 19 April 2021 | |
| Karen Shepherd | Head of Governance | 19 April 2021 | |

REPORT HISTORY

| Decision type: | Urgency item? | To follow item? |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Key decision date it was first entered into the Cabinet Forward Plan: October 2020 | No | No |

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**The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Housing Strategy 2021 - 2026:
Creating a Borough of Opportunity and Innovation**



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Foreword

The debate around housing often focuses too much on housing targets and loses focus on why building homes is so important to creating a thriving local economy and a strong community. Delivering new homes is about much more than hitting housing targets and a home is much more than an investment of bricks and mortar. A home is somewhere to keep warm; somewhere to seek shelter; somewhere to go to rest; somewhere to feel secure; somewhere to raise and protect children; and somewhere to live and enjoy life with friends and family. As policy makers, we cannot see homes simply as financial assets but as the building blocks of a happy society.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is one of the best places to live in the country with an abundance of beautiful green space, safe streets, low council tax, fantastic local schools, highly-quality support services, strong local businesses and employment opportunities, impressive infrastructure links, and wonderful communities. The huge success of our Borough has seen an influx of talented individuals, young families, entrepreneurs, and people seeking a slice of the good life. This has added to our Borough's economic strength, wealth of ideas, talent, and community spirit, which is welcome.

However this success has not been without some losers and no doubt some younger residents, vulnerable residents, and even some life-long residents, who have fallen on hard times, may feel that they have not benefited from the economic growth and success of our Borough. These are not people who have moved to an area they cannot afford, but local people, who feel they are shut out from taking a stake in their own community. We do not want to be a Borough where children of life-long residents feel they need to leave to get a place of their own; we do not want to be a Borough that does not have sufficient social housing to give our rough sleepers a second chance; we do not want to be a Borough where life-long residents are forced to move away because they can no longer afford to live here.

We want to be a Borough that delivers new homes not only for those coming into the Borough, but for those who are already here. We want to be a Borough that creates places that are not just bricks and mortar, but which promote health and wellbeing. We want to be a Borough that seeks to proactively support our vulnerable people by having a mixture of different homes with a mixture of affordability. A key part of this is seeking to deliver on our objectively assessed housing need, particularly relating to affordable housing, which means there will be a greater emphasis on delivering affordable homes for rent, particularly social rent.

The statistics around home ownership amongst young people are truly shocking and no doubt we all know someone who has been forced to move away to secure a home of their own or the children/grandchildren of someone we know. It is a sad situation across our country, but it does not have to be something we accept locally. By using council-owned land, we can work with joint-venture partners to deliver a mixture of different types of homes and a greater variety of price points, as well as including affordable housing products, such as shared ownership. We do not want to lose talented young people and stretch family support networks because of the unaffordability of housing in the Borough.

The global pandemic has shown that when the economy receives a significant shock the number of people requiring housing support increases with job losses, family breakdowns and homelessness all contributing. To ensure the Royal Borough responds to this and future economic shocks, it is important for the Borough to build up the amount of affordable rented units available and consider how best to deliver units through its own Property Company. This will ensure that all Royal Borough residents and families will be able to access high-quality affordable rented accommodation whilst they rebuild their lives.

Of course, government and local councils cannot deliver homes for everyone and there will always be a limit to what the state can reasonably deliver. By having good working relationships with developers and housebuilders, we can maximise investment into the Borough. Having clear strategies, including an adopted Local Plan, create clarity and clearly set out development and housing objectives. Honest and robust discussions can then take place on how to deliver on these objectives. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will soon adopt a new Local Plan and this new Housing Strategy, along with our Climate Change Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy, firmly set out our vision for the Borough's housing market.

Our vision is to create a Borough of opportunity and innovation with a clear focus on improving social outcomes and supporting vulnerable residents. Ensuring we have a stable, competitive, and effective housing market is crucial to achieve this. This new Housing Strategy sets out objectives for achieving our vision for the Borough and a series of practical commitments for how we will do this.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R McWilliams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Cllr Ross McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing

Executive Summary

Our vision

To create a Borough of opportunity and innovation with a clear focus on improving social outcomes and supporting vulnerable residents

There is a housing affordability crisis in the UK and in The Royal Borough our residents face particularly acute housing costs. The average house price in The Royal Borough is approximately £476,000, which is over 15 times the average UK salary (£30,420). This has made getting into sustainable rented accommodation and onto the house ladder difficult for many of The Royal Borough's residents. In order to address this key issue, The Royal Borough 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.

Although the requirement to develop and publish a Housing Strategy is no longer a statutory duty for local authorities, it is imperative The Royal Borough develops a strategy that clearly states its housing ambitions and goals for the future benefit of the residents of The Royal Borough. The Housing Strategy has been fully consulted upon, ensuring that the ambitions of The Royal Borough reflect those of our residents, partners and colleagues.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Housing Strategy 2021-2026: Creating a Borough of Opportunity and Innovation sets out our plans to increase the supply of affordable and private sector housing, improve accommodation standards in all housing sectors and ensure that support is available in maintaining suitable, quality accommodation for those who need extra support. To this end our Housing Strategy is based around three core objectives, each with a number of specified commitments, and a robust action plan that will be regularly monitored and updated through the 2021-2026 period.

Our objectives

Deliver new homes - Deliver thousands of new high-quality homes with a mixture of tenures and sustainable infrastructure to provide a range of housing solutions for our residents

1. Deliver a mixture of housing tenures; social rent, affordable rent, private rented sector, shared ownership, ownership; maximising developments which deliver appropriate homes and adaptable spaces to suit the modern workforce, with ambition to deliver on our assessed need
2. Create homes for ownership by working with partners to create a ladder of housing opportunity, particularly for social housing tenants
3. Liaise with business to ensure we are building homes to support a modern workforce and to help support continued economic growth
4. Support house building in the appropriate location (as per the Local Plan) with the right infrastructure in place
5. Work with Registered Providers to monitor customer satisfaction to enable improved leaseholder and tenant satisfaction and services
6. Work with private sector landlords to improve accommodation standards in the private rented sector, including the provision of appropriate guidance
7. Assess the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities within the Borough and seek appropriate sites to increase supply and support sustainable communities
8. Expand the Property Company's house building programme to push forward social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects

Promote health & wellbeing - Use development to drive positive physical and social regeneration, maximise health and social outcomes and reduce health inequalities through the use of green technology and innovative built environments

1. Take a targeted approach to areas of high social and economic deprivation through regeneration, which improves the built environment and supports better education, employment and housing outcomes for existing and future residents
2. Improve health outcomes by supporting innovative designs that promote well-being and better health (including mental health) outcomes - particularly gardens and green open spaces
3. Incentivise developers to bring forward schemes that support our climate change obligations to achieve net zero by 2050, and to consider zero carbon technologies on our existing properties and new homes
4. Tackle digital inequality and digital poverty by working with housing associations to improve opportunities for their residents to benefit from super-fast broadband
5. Ensure residents with disabilities are not further impacted by their home environment by providing efficient and effective assessment and adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) process, maintaining strong partnership working for the successful delivery and implementation of grant-funded interventions
6. Assess the need for supported accommodation, including Extra Care, and review our supported accommodation provision to ensure we are able to offer accommodation to support better health and wellbeing outcomes

Support vulnerable residents to obtain and sustain accommodation - Increase support and prevention for homelessness by providing excellent customer service, a range of housing options and good quality temporary accommodation for those in need

1. Create a coalition of temporary accommodation landlords to provide sustainable, reliable, cost-effective temporary accommodation to support homeless households into long-term solutions
2. Strengthen working relationships with existing partner organisations and seek to develop new relationships in order to increase support provision to our residents
3. Consider the purchase of units of quality temporary accommodation to replace those leased from the private sector and ensure value for money
4. Optimise revenue available to create new services by monitoring funding opportunities and bidding for funding where this could fill gaps in service provision
5. Use technology to improve access to services and clearly demonstrate outcomes
6. To improve access to the private rented sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
7. Explore and optimise opportunities to support vulnerable residents in maintaining accommodation and reduce instances of repeat homelessness
8. Maximise effectiveness of the new 'Tap & Donate' scheme – *Tap 4 Lasting Change*

We will only be able to deliver on our ambitious Housing Strategy with the assistance of our partners and communities, who have already assisted us to develop the Housing Strategy through the consultation process. The Housing Strategy contains a live action plan which will be regularly monitored and updated throughout the 2021-2026 period. Copies of the current version of the action plan can be obtained using the contact details below.

Email: housing@rbwm.gov.uk

Telephone: 01628 683803

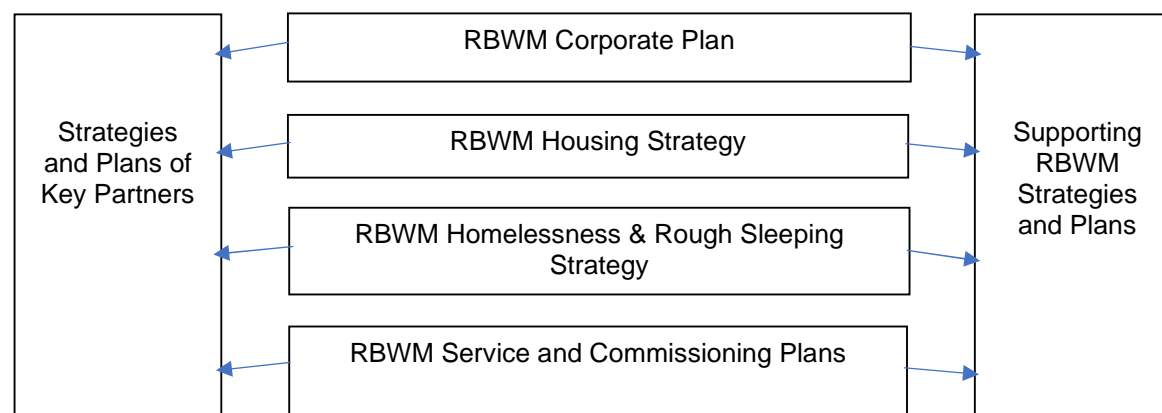
Write to: Housing Strategy, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF

Introduction

The population of the Borough had grown from 87,231 in 1951 to 145,100 by 2011 when the last census was carried out. The 20-year period from 1951 to 1971 saw a population increase of around 40,000. The Borough's estimated midyear 2019 population was 151,200 and this is projected to rise by midyear 2039 to 158,100.

The Royal Borough is building a Borough of opportunity and innovation with a clear focus on improving social outcomes and supporting vulnerable residents. Homes are a fundamental building block of stable lives and family units; poor or unsuitable housing impacts negatively on people's lives such that, without good quality housing, all aspects of life become more difficult and less manageable and our communities become less sustainable. The Housing Strategy seeks to ensure we have a strong housing market of all different tenures and types to meet a range of needs with high-quality products in sustainable, green built/open environments and necessary infrastructure will deliver better social outcomes and therefore a better place to live for our residents.

The Housing Strategy 2021 to 2026 is a high-level plan that sets the course for our services to develop in partnership in the coming years, whilst drilling down into those priorities to provide a detailed roadmap that will enable us to achieve our aims. It sets out our vision for housing, with inclusive actions which the Council and partners will deliver, and which are designed to ensure we meet the housing aspirations of our residents. The Housing Strategy forms part of the council's overall corporate plan, as depicted below:



The Council is a non-stock holding local authority, having transferred its housing stock in 1995. However, the Council has retained its strategic housing responsibilities and continues to act as the enabler of affordable housing in the Borough. It also delivers a range of vital services within a complex legal framework, including housing allocations and homelessness support, aids and adaptations, and ensuring decent housing standards.

This strategy is intended to act as a guide for investment and a framework for project management, meeting locally identified needs, including the wider support needs, that contribute to individual housing crises. It is aligned to various health and wellbeing priorities, at a national, sub-regional, and local level, because good housing is a proven determinant of healthy communities. The success of this strategy will have a direct bearing on the health and wellbeing of our Borough and will contribute to reduced costs to the National Health Service and other parts of the wider system of public services.

It is expected that developers and housebuilders seeking planning permission will give due regard to the Housing Strategy and set out their response.

Key objectives



Deliver new homes

Deliver thousands of new high-quality homes with a mixture of tenures and sustainable infrastructure to provide a range of housing solutions for our residents.



Promote health & wellbeing

Use development to drive positive physical and social regeneration, maximise health and social outcomes and reduce health inequalities through the use of green technology and innovative built environments.



Support vulnerable residents to obtain and sustain accommodation

Increase support and prevention for homelessness by providing excellent customer service, a range of housing options and good quality temporary accommodation for those in need.

Objective 1: Deliver new homes

In order to ensure that our residents can access good-quality affordable accommodation it is essential that priority is given to driving development within the Borough which will provide a mixture of ownership, shared ownership, social housing and private rented sector opportunities. This development should include making best use of existing properties as well as optimising new build opportunities.

What we will do:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Commitment 1 | Deliver a mixture of housing tenures; social rent, affordable rent, private rented sector, shared ownership, ownership; maximising developments which deliver appropriate homes and adaptable spaces to suit the modern workforce, with ambition to deliver on our assessed need |
| Commitment 2 | Create homes for ownership by working with partners to create a ladder of housing opportunity, particularly for social housing tenants |
| Commitment 3 | Liaise with business to ensure we are building homes to support a modern workforce and to help support continued economic growth |
| Commitment 4 | Support house building in the appropriate location (as per the Local Plan) with the right infrastructure in place |
| Commitment 5 | Work with Registered Providers to monitor customer satisfaction to enable improved leaseholder and tenant satisfaction and services |

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| Commitment 6 | Work with private sector landlords to improve accommodation standards in the private rented sector, including the provision of appropriate guidance |
| Commitment 7 | Assess the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities within the Borough and seek appropriate sites to increase supply and support sustainable communities |
| Commitment 8 | Expand the Property Company's house building programme to push forward social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects |

How we will deliver:

In line with these commitments, we commit to carrying out the following actions:

- To strengthen our Housing Enabling function and work with our Registered Providers and Developers to look at future developments and the viability of mixed tenure housing, including lifetime homes
- To fully assess the housing need within the Royal Borough, using a variety of data streams, to ensure we have robust plans in place to generate appropriate housing pathways
- To review locally available home ownership products and work with Registered Providers to maximise home ownership opportunities for all
- To refresh the empty property strategy to ensure all properties of all tenures are brought back into use where possible, also considering the approach to second homes
- To liaise with local businesses to ensure their workforces can access good-quality and appropriate housing and that suitably skilled employees are attracted to the Borough

- To ensure there is an adequate supply of keyworker accommodation in the private rented sector and suitable home ownership opportunities including try-before-you buy and submarket rents through a tenure-blind staircasing approach
- To maximise developer contributions and ensure appropriate local infrastructure is funded, having regard to promoting wellbeing
- Work with our Registered Provider partners to monitor customer satisfaction data to improve services to leaseholders and tenants
- To develop an offer to landlords to support utilisation of the private rented sector and drive up standards
- To give due regard to levels of air pollution surrounding proposed developments close to busy roads following the recent ruling related to air pollution in Lewisham, in order to provide safe homes for our communities
- To determine when it is appropriate to pursue lifetime homes, using a range of data

Objective two: Promote Health & Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our residents is of paramount importance. We believe that a considered approach to development coupled with the delivery of suitable infrastructure - along with maximisation of open spaces - is of benefit to the whole community and will promote the wellbeing of all of those who live in, work in or visit the Royal Borough.

What we will do:

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| Commitment 9 | Take a targeted approach to areas of high social and economic deprivation through regeneration, which improves the built environment and supports better education, employment and housing outcomes for existing and future residents |
| Commitment 10 | Improve health outcomes by supporting innovative designs that promote well-being and better health (including mental health) outcomes - particularly gardens and green open spaces |
| Commitment 11 | Incentivise developers to bring forward schemes that support our climate change obligations to achieve net zero by 2050, and to consider zero carbon technologies on our existing properties and new homes |
| Commitment 12 | Tackle digital inequality and digital poverty by working with housing associations to improve opportunities for their residents to benefit from super-fast broadband |

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| Commitment 13 | Ensure residents with disabilities are not further impacted by their home environment by providing efficient and effective assessment and adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) process, maintaining strong partnership working for the successful delivery and implementation of grant-funded interventions |
| Commitment 14 | Assess the need for supported accommodation, including Extra Care, and review our supported accommodation provision to ensure we are able to offer accommodation to support better health and wellbeing outcomes |

How we will deliver:

In line with these commitments, we commit to carrying out the following actions:

- To assess levels of deprivation within the area to ensure a targeted approach to regeneration
- To work with our Registered Providers to ensure those in the most deprived areas have a voice and that we work together to tackle health inequality
- To target areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour or crime and consider whether regeneration could minimise these issues and make better use of space
- To use the housing enabling function to encourage the use of zero carbon technologies
- To work with our registered providers to increase access to high-speed internet connectivity
- To work closely with the RBWM Property Company Limited to ensure social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects are promoted in line with our assessed need

- Review the current provision and need for sheltered accommodation, taking into consideration the wider social housing requirement and need for Extra Care accommodation

Objective three: Support vulnerable residents to obtain and sustain appropriate accommodation

A culture of prevention activity and sensitive support is at the heart of our community services in The Royal Borough. The introduction of the Care Act 2014, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy and the forthcoming Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) 2021-24 Strategy are paving the way to ensure that all households have access to appropriate and sustainable accommodation - an ethos which is echoed here in The Royal Borough.

What we will do:

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| Commitment 15 | Create a coalition of temporary accommodation landlords to provide sustainable, reliable, cost-effective temporary accommodation to support homeless households into long-term solutions |
| Commitment 16 | Strengthen working relationships with existing partner organisations and seek to develop new relationships in order to increase support provision to our residents |
| Commitment 17 | Consider the purchase of units of quality temporary accommodation to replace those leased from the private sector and ensure value for money |
| Commitment 18 | Optimise revenue available to create new services by monitoring funding opportunities and bidding for funding where this could fill gaps in service provision |
| Commitment 19 | Use technology to improve access to services and clearly demonstrate outcomes |

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| Commitment 20 | To improve access to the private rented sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness |
| Commitment 21 | Explore and optimise opportunities to support vulnerable residents in maintaining accommodation and reduce instances of repeat homelessness |
| Commitment 22 | Maximise effectiveness of the new 'Tap & Donate' scheme – <i>Tap 4 Lasting Change</i> |

How we will deliver:

In line with these commitments, we commit to carrying out the following actions:

- To deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- To introduce regular landlord forums to ensure relationships with local landlords are strengthened and maximise the potential for the placement of homeless households
- To work with our registered provider partners to enable them to support us with temporary accommodation needs for homeless households
- To set up a regular charity and volunteer liaison meeting to ensure the voluntary sector are fully supported and are effectively engaging with the Royal Borough
- To work with the RBWM Property Company Limited to ensure opportunities for the purchase of temporary accommodation options are maximised

- To enhance the service plan for Housing & Environmental Health Services, to include new services and provisions that require funding, and to monitor opportunities for funding and develop bids in line with the plan; also ensuring the Royal Borough is equipped to respond quickly and appropriately to such opportunities
- To work with our IT team to ensure we are making the best use of available technology and that residents are supported to use such technology, including self-help tools
- To review our private rented sector offer and ensure the offer is comparable with our neighbouring authorities
- To refresh the Allocations Policy to ensure that it meets all legislative requirements, taking into consideration the transfer lists help by our Registered Provider partners
- To continue to use technology to find innovative ways of working with partner organisations and maximising support to vulnerable residents, such as the new Tap 4 Lasting Change initiative
- To work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to secure additional funding for John West House and consider investment plans to improve the support offer further

Resources

The strategy can only be delivered successfully in partnership, working alongside the private, public, community and voluntary sectors. The Council continues to work closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England to ensure it is well placed to secure additional short-term funding from any housing related bid rounds, particularly when it will directly contribute to the objectives set out in the Housing Strategy 2021-2026.

Monitoring and updating the strategy

This strategy has been developed in partnership and sets out a 5-year plan. During this period, new priorities may emerge, and new national policy landscapes may be introduced. Whilst we can anticipate that key themes will remain relevant during this period, the way we deliver them may need to change. For this reason, it is important that the Housing Strategy remains under review and that it is kept up to date.

The Housing Strategy delivery plan is intended to be a live document, to be updated as necessary and as actions are completed and the plan evolves. An updated version of the action plan will be published on the Council's website and shared with our partners each year, setting out the achievements and the challenges of the preceding year, along with any significant recommended changes to the action plan that may arise from emerging demand, guidance, legislation or policy.

The Delivery Plan

The Housing Strategy delivery plan 2021-2026 sets out specific, measurable, achievable and time-phased (SMART) actions that contribute to meeting the overarching aims. The approach to monitoring and review ensures that in addition to SMART actions and targets, there will be regular evaluation and review (SMARTER). The delivery plan is a live document and will be subject to change during the life of the strategy.

Local Policy Context

Local Plan

One of the central functions of the Local Plan is to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing development in accordance with the requirements of the Structure Plan. It is equally important, however, that the scale and location of new housing development is consistent with the Green Belt and other environmental objectives of the Plan.

Good quality housing is a fundamental need that plays a significant role in shaping our lives and our communities. A home is a vital part of people's lives and contributes to creating a safe, healthy and prosperous society. The planning system can play a positive and supporting role in the delivery of homes to meet the full range of housing needs of society, within the wider framework of sustainable development. The Borough Local Plan is a vital tool in addressing the scale, distribution and type of new homes that need to be provided up to 2033.

The Borough Local Plan aims to accommodate a significant increase in housing provision over the plan period. This includes working with other agencies such as central government, to ensure the optimum use of surplus land and facilities to accommodate need as well as working with Neighbourhood Plan groups to identify further sites for housing. This is placed against a background of positively seeking opportunities to meet housing need and the Borough Local Plan takes a proactive approach to providing for the identified level of need across the Borough.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Following a review of homelessness in the Royal Borough, the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-2025 was published. The strategy sets out a collaborative approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Royal Borough over the next five years working closely with partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

The Strategy highlights the Council's firm belief that the most effective way to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping is to prevent it from happening.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-2025 sets out five key priorities:

1. Reducing the number of people becoming homeless
2. Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation
3. Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options
4. Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street
5. Improving the customer service provided to people approaching the housing service

An initial Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy forum to consider the strategy action plan took place in September 2020 and was attended by stakeholders and partner organisations from across the Royal Borough. The Strategy action plan is a live document updated quarterly through the forum.

Local Context

Homelessness presentations

Homelessness is caused by a complex interplay between a person's individual circumstances and adverse 'structural' factors outside their direct control. Structural causes of homelessness are social and economic in nature and are often outside the control of the individual or family concerned. The structural causes of homelessness include poverty, lack of affordable housing and policy changes. There are often multiple and complex reasons for the loss of a home, but common causes of homelessness acceptances amongst applications to the council are: end of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST), relationship breakdown or friends or family no longer able to accommodate.

In Windsor and Maidenhead in 2018/19, the main reasons for approach were rooted in the ending of an AST with interpersonal issues, such as relationship breakdown or friends and family no longer willing to accommodate being the next largest reason for approach.

In 2019/20 a total of 648 households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness approached the Council for assistance. In 2020/21 a total of 908 households have already approached the Council for assistance; this is an increase of 40% on the previous year.

Rough sleeping in the Royal Borough

The annual rough sleeping snapshot provides information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night between 1 October and 30 November each year and some basic demographics details (age, gender, nationality). These statistics provide a way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and assessing change over time.

Local authorities across England take an annual autumn snapshot of rough sleeping using either a count-based estimate of visible rough sleeping, an evidence-based estimate meeting with local partners, or an evidence-based estimate meeting including a spotlight count in specific areas. This methodology has been in place since 2010.

In 2019, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead reported a total number of 40 individuals sleeping rough in the Borough on the evening of the spotlight count. This was an increase of 264% on the previous year. 2020's spotlight count is due to take place on 24 November with reported rough sleeping numbers expected to be significantly lower than the previous year as a result of the Government's *Everyone In scheme*.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has implemented a successful three stage rough sleeper pathway designed to ensure that rough sleepers are able to access the right support at the right time; from initial identification through to independent accommodation. The Government's *Everyone in* scheme, designed to ensure nobody slept rough on the streets of England during the Covid-19 pandemic, placed significant strain on the capacity of the Council's rough sleeper pathway, to which the Council has quickly responded securing an additional £145,000 funding under the Government's *Next Steps Accommodation Programme*.

Partnership working; RBWM Property Company Limited

Council's always need to utilise resources more efficiently whilst still delivering on key objectives – not least enhancing their communities, creating attractive, safe and economically prosperous places and meeting the urgent need for new housing.

The vision of RBWM Property Company Limited is to deliver a regeneration programme of residential and commercial assets for the Borough with a focus on affordable housing. The diverse development pipeline being coordinated by RBWM Property Company Limited now comprises over 4,000 homes which comprises a combination of joint venture sites, enabling provision and the company's own affordable development programme, guided by a design-led placemaking approach including:

- 4,257 homes over 14 sites
- 2,664 market sale
- 1,269 affordable homes
- 324 market rent

Our achievements so far

Rough sleeper pathway

In December 2019 The Royal Borough implemented a three-stage rough sleeper pathway for those who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. A full assessment is undertaken for those admitted to stage one of the pathway to ensure that support needs are fully understood and tailored support in place. Individuals move through the pathway via a range of intensive support including but not limited to support with life skills, budgeting, cooking, assistance with tackling substance misuse, help to address mental health issues and support with training and employment needs.

Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding

The Rough Sleeping Initiative was first announced in March 2018 to make an immediate impact on the rising levels of rough sleeping. In January 2020, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced allocations of a £112 million Rough Sleeping Initiative fund to provide local support for those living on the streets. Councils across England received a share of the funding.

In 2020, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was allocated £490,000 Rough Sleeper Initiative funding. The funding was the second round of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding allocated by the government, with £86,000 Rough Sleeper Initiative funding being allocated in 2019. The 2020 funding allowed The Royal Borough to embed the pathway within the approach including supporting the pathway with accommodation options and intense support staff.

Alternative giving scheme

The Royal Borough has now launched an alternative giving scheme which residents and visitors are encouraged to use instead of making direct cash payments to individuals begging on the street. The funds raised from the alternative giving scheme will be used to support local services who contribute towards ending rough sleeping and multiple disadvantage.

Maidenhead Regeneration

Maidenhead has arrived at an exciting period of change as ambitious plans for regeneration become a reality and the council, together with its partners, looks to build a town for everyone. The Royal Borough's joint venture partner for the Maidenhead Golf Course site is CALA Homes, whose business is based upon the principle of 'people and community first'. CALA Homes have developed a proven model of genuine partnership to help deliver regeneration objectives and investment in other areas of the community.

Subject to allocation in the Borough Local Plan and planning permission being granted, the site will deliver more than 2,000 homes, including 30% affordable, as well as a new primary and secondary school, public open space, community hub and supporting infrastructure. The golf course offers a highly sustainable location to provide housing in the Borough with excellent transport links, including short walking distance to forthcoming Crossrail services at Maidenhead railway station and the wider town centre amenities.

Implementation of an online housing register

A clear, transparent and customer centric housing register application and allocations process is a fundamental requirement of any local authority housing department.

Prior to 2020, residents in housing need wishing to apply to join Royal Borough of Windsor's housing register were required to complete a paper application and produce physical copies of supporting documentation. In 2020 the Housing Service successfully implemented an online housing register which also provided residents with the ability to upload information from the comfort of their own home using a handheld device such as a mobile phone. At any time, applicants can log into their customer portal account to view the status of their application and complete tasks such as updating their contact information or providing information about a change in their circumstances.

The newly implemented system not only helps to ensure a smooth application process for residents but also enables the Council to demonstrate the application of its current housing allocation policy, in line with statutory requirements.

Affordable housing delivery with breakdown

The Borough is considered to be one of the most prosperous areas in the country with very high house prices and lack of supply, particularly with regard to affordable housing. The Borough enjoys a close proximity to London with excellent transport links, a great number of employment and leisure opportunities and a vibrant local economy, and this serves to increase demand for housing which in turn leads to increased house prices.

The high cost of home ownership in the Borough has always presented an issue of affordability for many of the Borough's residents and leaves many people unable to afford market housing. In addition, the high cost of renting on the open market leaves many local people unable to afford this tenure and can lead to increasing dependency on benefits. This increases the demand for the provision of affordable housing. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment shows that there is a need for an additional 434 new affordable homes in the Borough every year.

The Council successfully completed the following affordable housing delivery in previous years:

- 2019 / 20 – 70 units comprising 62 shared ownership units and 8 units for affordable rent
- 2020 / 21 – Projected to be 58 by year end comprising 51 shared ownership units and 7 units for social rent
- 2021 / 22 – Projected to be 77 by year end comprising 15 units for social rent, 25 for affordable rent and 37 for shared ownership

Disabled Facilities Grants

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means-tested grant for people with a permanent disability of any sort – including physical and learning disabilities, sensory impairment and mental illness.

Disabled Facilities Grants can be used to fund work such as:

- installing a walk-in shower
- installing a stair lift

- converting a downstairs room to an accessible toilet or bathroom
- adding ceiling track hoists
- widening doorways
- fitting handrails
- making outside steps easier to use or installing ramps
- improving central heating or adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.

In 2018/19 a total of 79 Disabled Facilities Grants were completed

In 2019/20 a total of 69 Disabled Facilities Grants were completed

By December 2020, a total of 11 Disabled Facilities Grants had been completed for the 2020/21 year

Local testing and contact tracing

We want to keep our residents as safe as we can from COVID-19 until better treatments for Covid-19 and/or a vaccine is available and, as such, have developed a comprehensive outbreak plan.

The outbreak plan has eight key themes:

1. Prevent and manage outbreaks in specific individual settings e.g. schools and care homes
2. Prevent and manage outbreaks in other high-risk locations, workplaces and communities
3. Deploy local testing capacity optimally
4. Deliver contact tracing for complex settings and cohorts
5. Access the right local data to enable the other themes and prevent outbreaks
6. Support vulnerable people and ensure services meet the needs of diverse communities
7. Take local actions to contain outbreaks and communicate with the general public
8. Keep our workforce safe

Effective local testing and contact tracing is imperative to all three Housing Strategy objectives. It will enable those working in the construction industry to work safely, regenerating and developing the homes identified within strategy objective one. It will support and promote the health and wellbeing of all residents in the Borough as identified within strategy objective two and it will help to ensure continuity of support for vulnerable residents in the Borough.

Our challenges

Home ownership

The average income for all Windsor and Maidenhead residents working full time is £743.20 per week (gross). This breaks down to £890.70 per week for males and £595.90 per week for females. The lower quartile property in Windsor and Maidenhead is £465,000. Households in the Borough therefore require an income of £109,500 to afford one of these properties (based on 30% of gross income spent on a mortgage). Achieving home ownership in Windsor and Maidenhead is a challenge; even for people earning above the average income.

| | 2021 | 2018 | 2013 | 2008 | 3-year change | 13-year change |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|----------------|
| Windsor & Maidenhead | £475,721 | £465,000 | £338,000 | £307,000 | 2% | 35% |
| South East | £342,420 | £321,113 | £234,000 | £215,000 | 6% | 37% |
| England | £249,309 | £240,000 | £188,000 | £179,950 | 4% | 28% |

<https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi> (Accessed 31 March 2021)

As indicated in the chart above, average house prices in the Borough have increased by 2% over the last 3 years and 35% over the last 13 years. The increases over this time have been higher than those experienced regionally and nationally. Whilst the Bank of England suggested that the impact of Britain's exit from the European Union could impact property prices by as much as 30%, currently there are no clear indications that house prices will reduce in the Borough.

According to the UK house price index the average house price across England was £249,309 in January 2021. The average house price in the South East was £342,420. The table above shows the average house prices in Windsor and Maidenhead are significantly higher than the rest of the country (excluding London). Access to home ownership is a major challenge for people looking to secure owner occupation in Windsor and Maidenheads. This is not only true for those on low incomes, but also those whose earnings exceed the average national income and average income for the area.

Market Rents

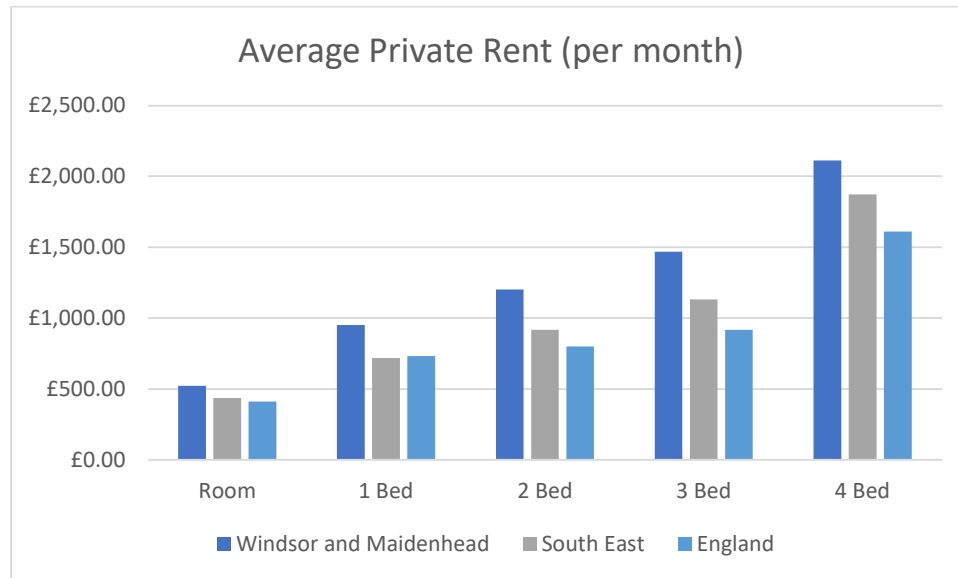
There is an insufficient supply of social rented housing for all of those who need it and there is therefore a heavy reliance on private rented sector housing within the Borough. House prices within the Borough are above the national average, meaning that households who are priced out of the market are also turning to private rented sector accommodation rather than seeking to purchase a home.

The tables below identify that residents in The Royal Borough require an annual income of £26,863 to access a lower quartile private rented sector property in the Borough with rental costs equating to 54% of their income:

| | RBWM Average Rent | 80% of Average Rent (affordable rent) | 50% of Average Rent (social rent) |
|---|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Monthly rent | £1,252 | £1,002 | £626 |
| Annual Rent | £15,024 | £12,019 | £7,512 |
| Affordability threshold: 30% gross income on rent (annual) | £50,080 | £40,063 | £25,040 |

ONS, Private rental market summary statistics in England

Average private rented figures in Windsor and Maidenhead are substantially higher than both the South East and England, which impacts on the amount of affordable private rented accommodation locally. As there is a lack of affordable market rented properties in Windsor and Maidenhead, any decline in properties available could result in a rental price increase reducing the affordability of private rented properties in the future.



VOA, Private rental market summary statistics: April 2018 to March 2019

Affordable housing

Registered Providers (RPs) charge Affordable Rents set at up to 80% of the open market rent in keeping with the MHCLG and HCA Affordable Homes Programme Framework.

Due to changes in the welfare system, which includes extending the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) limit to social landlords, capping benefits at £20,000 (£13,400 for single people), reducing the amount of Housing Benefit the under 35s with no children will be entitled to (from a 1 bedroom flat to a room in a shared house), and the high cost of 4-bedroom properties in Windsor and Maidenhead, this impacts on the affordability of wider Registered Provider properties.

In Windsor and Maidenhead, the cost for a single person aged under 35 years renting a 1-bedroom property with a registered provider is on average £121 per week. In comparison, the Local Housing Allowance rate for a shared room is between £89.75 and £109.71 per week, depending on the location within the Borough.

The Council is continually working with Registered Provider partners to try to address the ongoing affordability issues within the Borough. In addition, it is apparent that for households affected by the benefit cap, becoming economically active must be a priority with employment for 16 hours or more per week triggering exemption from the benefit cap.

There is a very real risk for out of work households, and particularly larger out of work households, that all available housing options in Windsor and Maidenhead will become too expensive. This could result in households having to move to other areas in order to secure housing they can afford.

Demand for housing

The Windsor and Maidenhead Housing Register provides an indication of the current housing need within the Borough. The register is composed of households seeking housing association rented accommodation and housing association tenants who are not tenants of either Abri or Housing Solutions.

In December 2019 there were, on average, 900 applicants on the housing register. Of these, just under 30% were registered as requiring 1-bedroom accommodation. 70% of applicants on the housing register have dependent children, with over 50% of households being registered for 2 bed accommodation.

| | 1 bed need | 2 bed need | 3 bed need | 4 bed need | 5 bed need | 6 bed need |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Households registered at December 2019 | 292 | 456 | 103 | 30 | 0 | 0 |

Breakdown of Windsor and Maidenhead's Housing Register as of December 2019

The statistics above do not correlate with the available accommodation in the Borough. On average, 62% of nominations are for 1-bedroom accommodation, 16% for 2-bedroom, 13% for 3-bedroom and only 12% registered for sheltered accommodation.

The Council is currently reviewing the housing register data available with a view to reviewing the housing allocation policy in 2021.

The Borough's largest Registered Providers, Abri and Housing Solutions, manage their own internal transfer lists. Work will be undertaken to ensure the housing register and transfer lists are more closely aligned. As of December 2020, their identified needs are:

| | 1 bed need | 2 bed need | 3 bed need | 4 bed need | 5 bed need |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Households on transfer list December 2020 | 127 | 163 | 179 | 43 | 10 |

Housing supply

The UK is in the midst of a housing crisis. 2019 marked 100 years since the Addison Act was passed, which introduced the notion of councils building social housing on a large scale. 5.5 million social homes were built over the next century, but the trend has slowed massively since the 1980s. In 2018-19, only 6,287 social rented homes were built.

The need for a large-scale social housebuilding programme is increasingly recognised by organisations across the political spectrum but a number of issues must be overcome to build the next generation of affordable homes. These include but are not limited to:

- The price of land which has increased fivefold since 1995 and effectively makes building social housing considerably more expensive and limits the 'social value' that can be captured through the planning system
- The availability and viability of land
- A reduction in the capacity of local government as funding has decreased, reducing the ability to develop new homes in the way they may have done previously
- Developing at the scale and speed we need to, while embracing new environmentally sustainable methods necessary to curb the carbon emission contributions of housing and construction in the UK

National Policy Context

Since 2011 there have been significant national policy developments that have impacted on our residents and the services that The Royal Borough provides.

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011

The National Housing Strategy for England, Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England was published in 2011. The Strategy set out ideas on the then Government's preferred shape of housing provision, which centred on 'the primacy of home ownership; social housing as welfare; and an increasing role for the private rented sector'.

The Strategy presented both existing initiatives and policies, and introduced a series of other interventions and approaches, along the following themes:

- Increasing supply, more homes, stable growth
- Social and affordable housing reform
- A thriving private rented sector
- A strategy for empty homes
- Quality of housing experience and support
- Quality, sustainability and design

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 provided new freedoms for Councils in terms of how they manage and develop housing. It provided greater local discretion in the management of waiting lists, the discharge of homeless duty and provided the freedom to offer fixed term tenancies. As part of the Localism Act, local authorities were required to produce a Tenancy Strategy and were provided more flexibility to use the private rented sector to house homeless households.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

In 2012 the Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent. The Act legislated for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. It introduced a wide range of reforms that were designed to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler around three principles:

- creating the right incentives to get more people into work
- protecting the most vulnerable in our society
- delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer

The Government introduced a cap on the total amount of benefit that working age people can receive so that no workless family can get more in benefit than the average weekly wage earned by working households. The cap applied to the combined income from out-of-work benefits plus child benefit and tax credits. Changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act also affected tenants who were under occupying in the social rented sector with housing allowances restricted to the number of bedrooms designated as appropriate for the household.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

In 2014 the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act came into effect and brought with it a number of measures to give local authorities, police and landlords the ability to tackle anti-social behaviour at a local level. These measures include the ability to close residential premises that are involved in the distribution of illegal drugs or extreme anti-social behaviour; the ability for landlords to seek mandatory possession of residential premises where it can be evidenced that the occupants are involved in local criminality; and, the ability for the courts to issue injunctions to prevent individuals from attending places where they are causing anti-social behaviour or conducting criminal activity, which may include positive requirements - that the individual must engage with the local substance misuse service, for example.

Care Act 2014

A fundamental component of the Care Act is the 'suitability of accommodation' in meeting the at home care and support needs of older and vulnerable people. The Act and the accompanying regulations and guidance outline how housing can support a more integrated approach and set out local implementation requirements by April 2015.

Of particular note:

- A general duty to promote wellbeing makes reference to suitable accommodation
- Housing not just the 'bricks and mortar', also includes housing related support or services
- Housing must be considered as part of an assessment process that may prevent, reduce or delay an adult social care need
- Information and advice should reflect housing options, as part of a universal service offer
- Care and support delivered in an integrated way with cooperation with partner bodies, including housing

Housing and Planning Act 2016

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 provides the necessary legislation for government to implement the sale of higher value local authority homes, starter homes and a number of other measures, mainly intended to promote homeownership and boost levels of housebuilding in England.

Key measures include:

- Extension of the right to buy whereby housing associations can extend the right to buy to their tenants on a voluntary basis. The Act enables the government to make payments to associations to compensate them for the cost of the discounts on offer
- Starter homes - a new type of affordable home ownership product available exclusively for first time buyers aged over 23 and under 40 and will be sold at 20 per cent below normal market prices. The Act created a general duty on all local authority planning departments to promote the supply of starter homes in their area
- Mandatory use of fixed term tenancies; The Act requires that most new local authority tenancies are granted for fixed terms of between two and 10 years
- The Act included a package of measures to help tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 brought in a package of measures aimed at reducing and relieving homelessness and placed new duties on local authority housing services to actively work with households to prevent or relieve homelessness. When

a household is identified as being at risk of homelessness, local authorities must provide them with a personalised housing plan and confirm in writing that they are subject to a Prevention Duty under the Act. The Prevention Duty last for at least 56 days or until the household actually become homeless. For households who are already homeless or whose homelessness has not been prevented, a Relief Duty under the Act is owed, and a personalised housing plan is required in addition to support in finding alternative accommodation.

The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

In 2018 the Government published its *Rough Sleeping Strategy* in which it set out its commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. The strategy called on central and local government as well as businesses, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together in new ways. The strategy was backed by £100 million of funding and marked the beginning of the government's ambition to ensure no one has to sleep rough again.

Homes England Strategic Plan 2018-2023

In 2018, Homes England published its five-year strategic plan which sought to:

- Support the affordable housing market
- Provide investment products, including for major infrastructure
- Unlock and enable land
- Deliver home ownership products, such as Help to Buy
- Supporting Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)
- Address the barriers facing smaller builders
- Provide expert support to priority locations

Domestic Abuse Bill

The Domestic Abuse Bill is currently progressing through the required stages to make its contents a legislative requirement. The new Domestic Abuse Act will place duties on local authorities to assess the need for abuse support locally, produce and publish a strategy and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. A Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will need to be formed from local partnerships to advise on the formation of the strategy.

Coronavirus

On 26 March 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness wrote to local authorities asking them to urgently accommodate all rough sleepers and focus on the provision of adequate facilities to enable people to adhere to the guidance on hygiene or isolation, including for those who are at risk of sleeping rough.

Furthermore, in May 2020, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing requested that when arranging move-on accommodation for people sleeping rough, local authorities provide short-term accommodation whilst looking for long term options. The impact of this being an increased number of individuals with complex needs requiring accommodating, in the short and longer term, by the local authority.

In the Royal Borough we have successfully moved all of our rough sleepers from the streets and have provided them with accommodation, support and move on plans to ensure no-one needs to return to the streets. This has put significant pressure on existing resources and work is ongoing to ensure additional funding is sought from Government as required so that services can be maintained at an excellent standard.

Action Plan

The action plan will be regularly updated and monitored by the Housing Strategy Group.

| Commitment | Related Actions | Review date | Housing Lead | Key Partners |
|--|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.1 To strengthen our Housing Enabling function and work with our Registered Providers and Developers to look at future developments and the viability of mixed tenure housing, including lifetime homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider taking a Preferred Partners approach to development within The Royal Borough | 31 st December 2021 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Registered Providers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consider examples of good practice across the wider Berkshire authorities, sub-regionally and nationally | 31 st March 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | |
| 1.2 To fully assess the housing need within the District, using a variety of data streams, to ensure we have robust plans in place to generate appropriate housing pathways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake a detailed local housing needs assessment | 30 th September 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Census, Registered Providers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop pathway plans for different household types/needs | 31 st December 2022 | Housing Operations Manager | AfC, Optalis, Probation, CCG |
| 1.3 To review locally available home ownership products and work with Registered Providers to maximise home ownership opportunities for all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet all Registered Providers active in The Royal Borough to discuss home ownership options | 31 st March 2023 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Registered Providers |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct a review of available home ownership products and availability at the local level | 30 th September 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | |

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| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1.4 To refresh the empty property strategy to ensure all properties of all tenures are brought back into use where possible, also considering the approach to second homes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review, refresh and publish the empty property action plan | <p>31st December 2021</p> | <p>Housing Strategy & Residential Services Manager</p> | |
| <p>1.5 To liaise with local businesses to ensure their workforces can access good-quality and appropriate housing and that suitably skilled employees are attracted to the Borough</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To utilise the data from the Census 2021 to inform local housing delivery. To collate the information and generate a report for consideration by Members | <p>31st September 2022</p> <p>31st January 2023</p> | <p>Housing Managers</p> <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | |
| <p>1.6 To ensure there is an adequate supply of keyworker accommodation in the private rented sector and suitable home ownership opportunities including try before you buy and submarket rents through a tenure blind stair casing approach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the definition of keyworker within The Royal Borough To review keyworker information on housing waiting lists and from the Census to identify the need for keyworker housing | <p>31st October 2021</p> <p>31st January 2022</p> | <p>Housing Strategy & Residential Services Manager</p> <p>Housing Operations Manager</p> | <p>RBWM Property Company, Registered Providers</p> <p>Registered Providers</p> |
| <p>1.7 To maximise developer contributions and ensure appropriate local infrastructure is funded, having regard to promoting wellbeing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare an annual report on our infrastructure spend that exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and monitors impacts on health and wellbeing | <p>31st March 2022</p> | | <p>Infrastructure, Sustainability & Transport</p> |

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| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>1.8 Work with our Registered Provider partners to monitor customer satisfaction data to improve services to leaseholders and tenants</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage our Registered Provider partners to develop, and report on, customer satisfaction • To establish a joint working group between RBWM and Registered Providers to move forward joint strategic goals and improve customer satisfaction | <p>31st December 2021</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>Registered Providers</p> |
| <p>1.9 To develop an offer to landlords to support utilisation of the private rented sector and drive up standards</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor the action plan in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy to ensure progression of a private rented sector offer | <p>31st March 2022</p> | <p>Housing Operations Manager</p> | |
| <p>1.10 To give due regard to levels of air pollution surrounding proposed developments close to busy roads following the recent ruling related to air pollution in Lewisham, in order to provide safe homes for our communities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct a review of available information on local air pollution levels and identify where this may affect local communities, particularly in relation to proposed new developments | <p>30th August 2021</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>Planning</p> |
| <p>1.11 To determine when it is appropriate to pursue lifetime homes, using a range of data</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the Housing Enabling function to work with developers to provide lifetime homes if there is a demonstrated need following the needs assessment specified in 1.2 | <p>30th November 2021</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>Registered Providers & Developers</p> |

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|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2.1 To assess levels of deprivation within the area to ensure a targeted approach to regeneration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess levels of deprivation as part of the needs assessment specified in 1.2 and use this to inform future development decisions | 30 th November 2021 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | |
| 2.2 To work with our registered providers to ensure those in the most deprived areas have a voice and that we work together to tackle health inequality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage our Registered Provider partners to work with those in the most deprived areas and to tackle health inequalities | 30 th June 2023 | Housing Operations Manager | Registered Providers & Public Health |
| 2.3 To target areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour or crime and consider whether regeneration could minimise these issues and make better use of space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the needs assessment and work with RPs and developers to ensure targeted regeneration is considered in any future development plans | 31 st May 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Registered Providers & Developers |
| 2.4 To use the housing enabling function to encourage the use of zero carbon technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consider examples of good practice across the wider Berkshire authorities, sub-regionally and nationally in relation to zero carbon developments | 31 st December 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Planning & Climate Change Groups |
| 2.5 To work with our registered providers to increase access to high-speed internet connectivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage and support our Registered Provider partners in increasing access to high-speed internet connectivity in existing and new-build developments | 30 th June 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Registered Providers & Developers |

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Housing Strategy 2021 - 2026
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|---|--|--|--|---|
| 2.6 To work closely with the RWBM Property Company Limited to ensure social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects are promoted in line with our assessed need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the needs assessment and the Enabling function to promote social regeneration and neighbourhood renewal projects to the Property Company | 31 st December 2022 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | RBWM Property Company |
| 2.7 Review the current provision and need for sheltered accommodation, taking into consideration the wider social housing requirement and need for Extra Care accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collate information on the need for sheltered and Extra Care accommodation as part of the needs assessment specified in 1.2 | 30 th September 2021 | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Optalis & Registered Providers |
| 3.1 To deliver the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan quarterly with partners. To update the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy annually | 30 th June 2021 (next date) 30 th November 2021 | Housing Operations Manager Housing Operations Manager | Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Forum Partners |
| 3.2 To introduce regular landlord forums to ensure relationships with local landlords are strengthened and maximise the potential for the placement of homeless households | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce landlords' forums for local landlords and lettings agents, to be held on a bi-annual basis | 31 st October 2021 (first forum) | Strategy & Enabling Officer | Local Landlords & Letting Agents |

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| <p>3.3 To work with our registered provider partners to enable them to support us with temporary accommodation needs for homeless households</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct a review of temporary accommodation requirements for the Borough and to develop a procurement plan to include our Registered Provider partners | <p>31st March 2022</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>Registered Providers</p> |
| <p>3.4 To set up a regular charity and volunteer liaison meeting to ensure the voluntary sector are fully supported and are effectively engaging with the Royal Borough</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To Chair and support the voluntary sector quarterly meetings to promote engagement for the benefit of residents | <p>30th June 2021</p> | <p>Housing Operations Manager</p> | <p>Voluntary Sector</p> |
| <p>3.5 To work with the RBWM Property Company Limited to ensure opportunities for the purchase of temporary accommodation options are maximised</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the needs assessment to inform requirements and work with the Property Company to maximise opportunities for procurement | <p>31st December 2022</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>RBWM Property Company</p> |
| <p>3.6 To enhance the service plan for Housing & Environmental Health Services, to include new services and provisions that require funding, and to monitor opportunities for funding and develop bids in line with the plan; also ensuring the Royal Borough is equipped to respond quickly and appropriately to such opportunities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the Strategy & Enabling Officer maintains a list of current requirements across the service and is the dedicated point of contact for future funding opportunities | <p>31st September 2021</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | |

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| <p>3.7 To work with our IT team to ensure we are making the best use of available technology and that residents are supported to use such technology, including self-help tools</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with our Transformation Team to review the available technology and ensure residents can access functional systems, including to self-help tools | <p>31st December 2021</p> | <p>Housing Managers</p> | <p>Transformation Team</p> |
| <p>3.8 To review our private rented sector offer and ensure the offer is comparable with our neighbouring authorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review current standards to provide a better-quality accommodation in the private rented sector To produce a Private Rented Sector Access Strategy | <p>31st July 2022 28th February 2023</p> | <p>Strategy & Enabling Officer Strategy & Enabling Officer</p> | <p>Residential Services</p> |
| <p>3.9 To refresh the Allocations Policy to ensure that it meets all legislative requirements, taking into consideration the transfer lists help by our Registered Provider partners</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To refresh and review the current Allocations Policy To review the Registered Providers transfer lists and consider our approach to social housing transfers | <p>31st May 2022 31st May 2022</p> | <p>Housing Operations Manager</p> | <p>Registered Providers</p> |
| <p>3.10 To continue to use technology to find innovative ways of working with partner organisations and maximising support to vulnerable residents, such as the new Tap 4 Lasting Change initiative</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the quarterly Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Forums to discuss emerging initiatives that can support vulnerable residents | <p>31st March 2026</p> | <p>Housing Operations Manager</p> | <p>All key operational partners</p> |

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| <p>3.11 To work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England to explore opportunities for funding for John West House or alternative provision and to consider investment plans to improve the support offer further</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To regularly monitor opportunities for funding relating to the provision of accommodation for homeless residents | <p>31st March 2026</p> | <p>Housing Strategy & Residential Services Manager</p> | <p>MHCLG & Homes England</p> |
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Our Core Values

In 2020 The Royal Borough adopted a new set of corporate values to reflect our culture and help draw us together as an organisation.

