

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Cabinet – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014**  
**Housing & Homelessness Strategy**  
**Action Plan Update 2014-15**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Cllr Peter Jeffries, Housing &amp; Community Safety</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Martin Stacy, Housing &amp; Communities Manager</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>Cabinet agreed the Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy in July 2012. This is a 5 year Strategy, which sets out our vision, our outcomes and 5 key priorities for us to be able to deliver on those outcomes.</p> <p>Cabinet agreed for there to be regular updates on progress against the activities identified within the Strategy’s Action Plan. This is the first update since the Strategy was adopted, and it is proposed that there continues to be annual updates on progress within the Strategy until it is due for renewal in 2017.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>To approve the Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Update 2014-15.</b></p> <p><b>To agree to ongoing annual progress updates on the Strategy Action Plan until the Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy is due for renewal in 2017.</b></p>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Paul Jones; <a href="mailto:paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk">paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b>  <b>01242 775154</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Vikki Fennell; <a href="mailto:vikki.fennell@tewkesbury.gov.uk">vikki.fennell@tewkesbury.gov.uk</a></b>  <b>01684 272015</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>None as a direct result of this report</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Richard Hall; <a href="mailto:Richard.hall@cheltenham.gov.uk">Richard.hall@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b>  <b>07801123276</b></p>
<b>Key risks</b>	Please see Risk Register – Appendix 1

<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	The Strategy supports key outcomes identified within the Council's Business Plan – in particular: People have access to decent and affordable housing
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	The Strategy includes a commitment to reducing carbon emissions for new and existing housing provision.
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	None as a direct result of this report  <b>Contact officer: David Roberts; David <a href="mailto:Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk">Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</a></b>  <b>01242 264151</b>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-17 was approved by Cabinet in July 2012, at a time when a number of significant changes were being implemented nationally by the Coalition Government. These changes presented both challenges and opportunities locally. Our aim within the strategy was to minimise against the impact of these challenges, whilst making best use of any opportunities that were also identified.

## 2. Progress against our Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

- 2.1 Our Housing & Homelessness Strategy's Action Plan focuses on delivering a range of activities which support the following 5 priorities:

- Increasing the provision of new affordable housing
- Making best use of existing housing
- Improving access to and maintaining suitable accommodation
- Tackling homelessness
- Creating stronger, safer and healthier communities

Some activities are project-based, with a fixed end date in sight; others are likely to be ongoing throughout the period of our Strategy.

- 2.2 The sections below highlight some of our most notable achievements. For a comprehensive update on our activities, including new activities identified for the year ahead, please refer to Appendix 2 of this report: The Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Update 2014-15.

### 2.3 Priority 1 – Increasing the provision of new affordable housing

- 2.3.1 In 2012-13 a total of 101 new (gross) affordable housing units were completed, with a further 141 (gross) expected by the end of 2013-14. This includes the provision of Cheltenham's first Affordable Housing Extra Care Housing at Middleton House. Managed by Sanctuary Housing, this scheme provides a total of 49 affordable flats for older people with a range of care needs.

### 2.4 Priority 2 – Making best use of existing housing

- 2.4.1 **Tackling Empty Homes.** In 2012-13 alone, 118 homes in the private sector were brought back into use as a result of action taken by the Council. We have now also created a new post (funded out of revenues received from the New Homes Bonus) which is dedicated to reducing empty homes within the Borough.
- 2.4.2 **Improving the quality of private sector housing.** We continue to provide key statutory services for Cheltenham residents, responding to their needs by improving the general stock of private sector housing. In 2012-13, 242 homes were improved in the private sector as a direct result of enforcement action undertaken by the Council.
- 2.4.3 **Supporting vulnerable households within their homes.** Grants and loans have also been provided by the Council to support vulnerable occupiers who are unable financially to improve their homes, either by way of disabled facilities adaptations or by improving safety standards. In 2012-13 over 100 households were financially assisted in this way, totalling £708k in capital expenditure.

### 2.5 Priority 3 – Improving access to and maintaining suitable accommodation

- 2.5.1 We have reviewed and implemented changes to Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Allocations Scheme in light of the new freedoms in the Localism Act and the welfare reforms, and have also worked in partnership with the County Council's Supporting People Commissioners on the re-

commissioning of a range of housing-related support services, including:

- Direct access accommodation for homeless people with complex needs,
- Drug and alcohol treatment and support services,
- Flexible domestic abuse support services, and
- Community based support services for households in need of housing-related support within their own homes.

**2.5.2** In addition, we have reviewed our contract with Supporting People for the delivery of older people's housing related support services (via Cheltenham Borough Homes), resulting in a new one year contract to oversee the transition of service provision to more flexible support arrangements, subject to consultation with stakeholders and future Cabinet approval.

## **2.6 Priority 4 - Tackling homelessness**

**2.6.1** Statutory homelessness has continued to fall since the approval of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy in 2012, and our performance in preventing homelessness has risen. The result is record low levels of households placed in temporary accommodation (11 as at 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013). These achievements are against a backdrop of rising homelessness and increasing use of temporary accommodation nationally.

## **2.7 Priority 5 – Creating stronger, safer and healthier communities**

**2.7.1** Cheltenham's community partnerships (i.e. the Positive Lives and Positive Participation Partnerships) have helped to bring about a more integrated approach between housing and community organisations, through the development of a number of Task & Finish Groups. These have included a review of the potential impact of the welfare reforms, street begging and the piloting of a strengths based approach to community development for older people, (overlapping with activities currently being undertaken by Cheltenham Borough Homes in their review of how they deliver Supporting People funded older people's housing related support services).

## **3. Next steps for the year ahead**

**3.1** For further information on progress to date and next steps for the year ahead on issues not previously included within the original Strategy Action Plan, please see Appendix 2 of this report.

## **4. Consultation and feedback**

**4.1** The updated Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan has been compiled following involvement from Officers within Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Homes. It has also been circulated for feedback to a range of organisations within the Housing & Support Forum.

## **5. Performance management –monitoring and review**

**5.1** Subject to Cabinet approval, progress against the Housing & Homelessness Strategy's Action Plan will continue to be reviewed annually.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Martin Stacy, martin.stacy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 775214</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment 2. Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Update 2014-15



The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the Council does not regularly monitor progress against the activities and outcomes identified within the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-17, then the effectiveness of the Strategy will be unclear and the opportunity to review activities in light of any emerging issues could be missed.	Jane Griffiths	6.3.14	3	4	12	reduce	Ongoing review and monitoring of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy	31.3.15	Martin Stacy	
<p><b>Explanatory notes</b></p> <p><b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p><b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p><b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											