

# Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

21<sup>st</sup> March 2019

Report for decision

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## Somerset Housing Strategy – Adoption and Delivery

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	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Christine Lawrence	4 March 2019
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Scott Wooldridge	4 March 2019

<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Somerset Housing Strategy (SHS) is the local response to the national housing crisis. It highlights key facts and challenges within the local housing market, before proposing a vision for homes and housing across Somerset that embraces strong and effective strategic leadership; a local economy that provides opportunity for all; homes in Somerset are good for your health: and a society that supports the vulnerable.</p> <p>To help resolve the housing crisis will require integrated systems leadership that embraces communities, housing, health and wellbeing, social care and town and country planning. It will require creativity and innovation (from all partners). It will necessitate solutions that are developed with residents, local businesses and communities.</p> <p>The preparation of the SHS began in July 2017, with the publication of district and countywide housing market profiles and a multi-agency workshop. A consultation draft was published in February 2018. The Health and Wellbeing Board considered the draft strategy on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2018. The consultation closed on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018. During the Summer (2018) we considered the consultation response and have made various amendments to the SHS.</p> <p>The SHS is developed by the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP). Public Health are active members of SSHP. SSHP is within the governance structure of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board. The SHS (appendix A) was approved by SSHP on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018.</p> <p>The next stage is for SSHP to develop a multi-agency delivery plan (work is underway) and for SSHP partners (if they choose) to develop their own response in the form of strategic housing action plans.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p><b>That the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Endorses the content of the SHS (i.e. it's Vision, Themes, Priorities and Objectives)</b></li> <li><b>2. Supports and informs the production of a SHS Delivery Plan that seeks to tackle the key strategic housing issues across the county</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations:</b></p>	<p>Housing has a major impact on health inequalities. In an ideal world all homes would be:</p> <p><b>Healthy:</b> warm, safe and free from hazards</p> <p><b>Suitable:</b> suitable to household size, specific needs of household members e.g. disabled people, and to changing needs e.g. as they grow up, or age</p> <p><b>Stable &amp; secure:</b> to call your own, without risk of, or actual, homelessness or other threat e.g. domestic abuse</p> <p>And all situated within <b>Healthy communities and neighbourhoods</b></p> <p>Unfortunately not all homes are like this. Unhealthy, unsuitable and insecure housing creates health inequalities and issues for the 'health system' by reason of fuel poverty, trips and fall hazards, overcrowding, mental health conditions (due to poverty and worry over rents/instability of tenure), domestic violence, homelessness etc</p> <p>The SHS seeks to help address these concerns for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of the Somerset population. It is essential that the Health and Wellbeing Board support the SHS and its implementation.</p>
<p><b>Links to Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy</b></p>	<p>The SHS is a cross cutting theme within Improving Lives</p>
<p><b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b></p>	<p>There is no statutory duty to create a Housing Strategy</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications, but the development of the SHS is of direct interest to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The SHS envisages strong leadership that will be used to address the housing crisis, which could result in new and innovative areas of work consistent with our aspirations for Improving Lives e.g. closer collaboration between Public Health, CCG, Social Care, district councils and local housing providers on health inequalities related to housing.</p>
<p><b>Equalities Implications:</b></p>	<p>There are significant equality and diversity implications. Understanding housing issues and the effect on those with protected characteristics, helps us to respond with interventions. The SHS is supported by a comprehensive EIA (see Appendix B) which has been used to help shape the priorities and objectives. The EIA is not a static document. Its content will</p>

	continue to inform the development of projects / activity within the Delivery Plan, and any supporting partner action plans.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	<p>Key risks as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The production and delivery of the SHS is coordinated by a small team of officers from across the public sector. Resources are stretched and most organisations are facing disruption through cuts, Transformation and staff turnover. Capacity (and progress) may suffer as a result Mitigation: We have already seen slippage as a result of such factors. Strong project management, regular performance monitoring and review, and a realistic work programme, are essential. This is a key responsibility of SSHP</li> <li>2. Key partners (e.g. some Registered Providers, housing developers) do not engage with the SHS, therefore jeopardising our ability to coordinate strategic housing activity and deliver improved outcomes for customers Mitigation: To continue to discuss the SHS at relevant partnership forums e.g. West Somerset Housing Forum, County Enablers, ENP Rural Housing Network etc. A launch event is planned for 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019, to which all local RPs will be invited. This event will be an opportunity to discuss delivery and partnership working.</li> <li>3. The SHS is too aspirational, with too much content that will not be delivered with limited and diminishing resources Mitigation: SSHP will undertake an initial prioritisation of all content, to inform the draft Delivery Plan. We shall continue this conversation with RPs (and other interested parties) at the launch event (see above). The Delivery Plan will contain a prioritised list of activity, and will be reviewed on an annual basis</li> <li>4. The needs of those with Protected Characteristics (i.e. those who may be vulnerable) are overlooked Mitigation: A comprehensive EIA has been developed. New projects will also be subject to EIA. SSHP will seek to improve the quality and robustness of housing intelligence, to inform EIA and project development</li> </ol>

## Background

- 1.1. The previous SHS was known as the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (SSHF). It was prepared in 2013 and had an end-date of 2016. It contains priorities relating to the availability of affordable housing, making best use of the existing housing stock, and supporting the vulnerable.
- 1.2. The SHS is prepared by the Somerset Strategic Housing Officers Group (SSHG) which reports to the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHP). SSHP is within the governance arrangements of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). HWB representatives on SSHP are Cllr Woollcombe-Adams (MDC), Cllr Turner (WSC), Tracy Aarons (MDC), Mark Leeman (TDBC/WSC)

and Louise Woolway (Public Health).

- 1.3. The process of review began in late 2016. TDBC/WSC agreed to provide the Project Management expertise.
- 1.4. The first task was to build the evidence base (working closely with Somerset Intelligence/Public Health) and build partnership arrangements around leadership and governance. The following was undertaken during 2017:
  - Data collection resulting in the publication of a 'benchmarking report'
  - Preparation of 5 x district based Housing Market Profiles and 1 x County-wide Housing Market Profile
  - Engagement of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board on matters relating to health and housing
  - Stakeholder Conference (July 2017) at Taunton Rugby Club, involving 100+ people representing the housing sector and associated services. This conference ran 8 themed workshops on different aspects of housing issues / challenges
  - Consultation and engagement on all of the above
  - Ongoing development of an Equalities Impact Assessment
- 1.5. The above, in addition to national housing policy, provided the evidence base to the content of the draft SHS, which was published in February 2018. Since then we have:
  - Undertaken further consultation / engagement – for example, the draft SHS was considered by the 'scrutiny' functions of all district councils, as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board (x). We have also spoken to (and received support from) a range of partnerships such as the Safer Somerset Partnership, West Somerset Housing Forum, Exmoor National Park – Rural Housing Network, County Housing Enablers Forum etc etc
  - Considered the consultation feedback and provided a response to each comment – this report can be viewed on request
  - Refined the content of the SHS, and obtained 'sign-off' at SSHP on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018
  - Began the development of a multi-agency delivery pla

#### **1.6. Health and Wellbeing Board – the Housing Challenge**

It is not an exaggeration to state that we are now in a national housing crisis. This is accepted by all main political parties. Other than Brexit, Housing, along with the NHS, are top national priorities. Indeed, housing and health are inter-related – a key theme of the SHS. Housing conditions (safety, security, stability etc) play out massively on health inequalities. We need to rise to this challenge and certainly, we can be rightly proud of some of the initiatives that we are

currently developing/running:

- Embedding the SHS within Improving Lives
- Seeking to integrate housing within the Health and Care Plan
- Somerset Independence Plus (the new 'prevention' focussed housing adaptations service)
- Cold Homes toolkit (in development)
- Districts / housing providers working alongside SCC commissioned services/grant funded programmes to integrate health, social care and housing e.g. Positive Lives, Creative Solutions for Complex Needs, Pathways to Independence (P2I) and the Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS)

**1.7.** But, there is still much to do. There are challenges around the supply of homes (all tenures), the condition of some of our local housing, and how we support the most vulnerable in our society. These challenges will require HWB partners to continue to think creatively and radically.

**1.8.** A key theme of the SHS is leadership – that is, integrated systems leadership that incorporates housing, communities, health, social care and town & country planning. There is much work going on behind the scenes, involving conversations with (e.g.) Health and Wellbeing Board, the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Somerset Strategic Planning Conference and Somerset Academy.

**1.9.** Going forward it is suggested that the HWB support the following actions:

- SSHP (working with partners) to develop a multi-agency delivery plan that will seek to coordinate countywide housing activity and its integration with other systems such as health and social care. This will include a fresh look at systems leadership; who we need to be working with; barriers to effective working; and a review of current partnership arrangements. Particular pieces of project work are likely to include the following (among others):
  - The development of policy guidance for Health Impact Assessments
  - A review of the Youth Housing Strategy
  - The development of an Elderly Persons Housing Strategy
  - A county wide review of space standards, delivery of lifetime homes etc
  - Working to support the delivery of effective and sustainable support services
  - Working to integrate housing matters within the Health and Care

## Plan

- A review of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- To encourage the district councils (i.e. partners with specific/statutory housing responsibilities) to produce district housing action plans that will articulate how they (at a local level) will work with partners to respond to the national housing crisis through creative and innovative housing activity.
- To support SSHP partners with the production of refreshed housing market profiles, and to jointly agree arrangements for the monitoring of the SHS delivery plan

## **2. Options Considered and reasons for rejecting them**

- 2.1.** The SHS was developed through an ongoing iterative/consultative process. There was no need to develop options.

## **3. Consultations undertaken**

- 3.1.** Extensive consultation was undertaken, as explained at paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 above. The formal consultation response is available to view on the district council and county council websites
- 3.2.** A significant consultation event is planned for 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019, where (approx) 100 delegates will gather to help us refine the content of the SHS delivery plan. Further relevant consultations will be undertaken to inform the development of various workstreams within the SHS delivery plan.

## **4. Implications**

- 4.1.** There is no longer a statutory duty to produce a Housing Strategy. However, without one, we run the risk of failing to grasp and coordinate the strategic housing issues across the county. Without HWB support to the SHS we run the significant risk of not being able to galvanise the necessary leadership to bring systems together, and of being unable to tackle these deeply complex and difficult issues. This moment is a significant opportunity to deliver integrated systems thinking, and to bring partners together to make a real difference to the people and communities of Somerset

## **5. Background papers**

- 5.1.** Appendix 1 Somerset Housing Strategy
- 5.2.** Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment