

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

8 JUNE 2016

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND
PARTNERSHIP SERVICES**

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-2018

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Council of the outcome of formal consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy 2016-2018 and to recommend the Strategy for approval.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The implementation of this Strategy will help to address the following emerging Corporate Priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy;
- Helping people to be more self-reliant; and
- Making smarter use of resources.

3. Background

3.1 Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have a strategic role to play in the functioning of the local housing market. The principal way this can be delivered is through a Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

3.2 The strategic housing function incorporates an enabling role, with the local authority working in partnership with other public, private and third sector organisations to deliver suitable housing and to develop innovative solutions to address local housing needs.

3.3 The Local Housing Strategy sets out the locally agreed, long term vision for housing and it provides a statement of local strategic housing-related priorities and outcomes, set against a framework of national legislation, plans and strategies.

3.4 The current Local Housing Strategy has been in place since 2009 and requires revision in order to take account of new legislation introduced by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

4. Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 On 24th November 2015 Cabinet approved formal consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy and agreed that comments and views would be presented to Cabinet following this consultation exercise.
- 4.2 The consultation period ran from the end of December 2015 until the end of March 2016 and both online and written submissions were encouraged, from the public and also from professional stakeholders. The consultation was advertised through the Council's website, Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as stakeholder forums and distribution lists.
- 4.3

- 4.4 At the close of the consultation 30 responses had been received, 25 via the Council's online consultation process and 5 via written responses from stakeholders.

Respondents completing the online questionnaire were asked 9 questions to which there were Yes/No/Don't Know response options, with the ability to add any comments that the respondent wished to make on individual questions. In addition, a further question allowed respondents to make any further comments on the draft Strategy in general, together with optional questions on the respondent themselves. The 25 on-line responses to the individual questions are highlighted below, the number in brackets refers to the number of responses, together with the percentage that represents.

Is the strategy written in a plain language that is clear and easy to understand? (25 respondents)

Yes (18) – 72%
No (4) – 16%
Don't Know (3) – 12 %

Does the Strategy treat all persons, including those who are vulnerable, in a fair and transparent way? (25 respondents)

Yes (14) – 56%
No (7) – 28%
Don't Know (4) – 16%

Do you think there are any omissions from 'the challenges ahead' contained in section 4? (24 respondents)

Yes (6) – 25%
No (11) – 46%
Don't Know (7) – 29%

Do you agree with the priority to 'take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness'? (24 respondents)

Yes (16) – 67%
No (7) – 29%
Don't Know (1) – 4%

Do you agree with the priority to 'make the best use of existing homes'? (24 respondents)

Yes (22) – 92%

No (1) – 4%
Don't Know (1) – 4%

Do you agree with the priority to 'work with partners to deliver the right type of new housing'? (24 respondents)

Yes (17) – 71%
No (4) – 17%
Don't Know (3) – 12%

Do you agree with the priority to 'help vulnerable people stay as independent, safe and secure as possible in accommodation that meets their needs'? (24 respondents)

Yes (19) – 79%
No (4) – 17%
Don't Know (1) – 4%

Do you agree with the priority to 'create sustainable town centres through housing led regeneration'? (23 respondents)

Yes (15) – 65%
No (5) – 22%
Don't Know (3) – 13%

Do you think any key priorities are missing? (24 respondents)

Yes (9) – 37.5%
No (9) – 37.5%
Don't Know (6) – 25%

Type of respondent (24 respondents)

An individual (22) – 92%
An organisation (2) – 8%

Do you currently live in Bridgend County Borough? (22 respondents)

Yes (22) – 100%
No (0) – 0%

- 4.5 In addition to the numeric responses indicated above, there were comments from the 25 online respondents, together with the 5 respondents who replied directly in writing (and not using the designated questionnaire). These representations are included at **Appendix 2**, together with a reasoned response, decision and action, where applicable.
- 4.6 Following the representations, decision and action, the draft Strategy has been amended and the amended version is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**
- 5.1 None.
- 6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken following the consultation on the Local Housing Strategy, and in particular, its relevance to the Council's public equality duties and potential impact on protected equality characteristics. It has determined that the Strategy will have no negative impact on protected equality characteristics.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The cost of publishing the Strategy will be met from the identified service budget, including Welsh translation; however costs will be minimised by publishing the document on line only.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Council is recommended to:-

8.1.1 Note the representations and responses to the formal consultation attached as Appendix 2;

8.1.2 Approve the amended and updated Local Housing Strategy following the consultation exercise.

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Background documents None