

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	John Conway Head of Housing	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A14/035	
Wards Affected	All	18 th February 2015	
Title	HOUSING STRATEGY 2015/16 – 2019/20		

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Steve Bellamy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report does a number of things. It seeks to:

- a) Advise Members on the Housing Strategy consultation;
- b) Present the draft Housing Strategy 2015-20; and
- c) Seek endorsement of the Housing Strategy 2015-20, prior to adoption by Full Council.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Kettering's housing market as well as national policy has changed considerably since we last produced a Housing Strategy a number of years ago.
- 2.2 The purpose of our new Housing Strategy 2015-20 is to set out the main changes in the housing market, identify the key challenges in delivering new homes and housing services locally, and inform on what action will be required to help meet both current and future housing needs and aspirations.
- 2.3 The Housing Strategy 2015-20 will provide the over-arching strategic document to inform future housing related plans, strategies and policies.
- 2.4 Our three key strategic aims for our Housing Strategy 2015-20 are:
 - Increasing housing supply across all tenures
 - Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
 - Helping people to live independently
- 2.5 Accompanying the Housing Strategy will be a Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015-20 which will set out detailed objectives and outcomes for each of the themes above. The Action Plan will be kept under review and updated regularly in order to reflect changes in policy, practice or economic conditions

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3. HOW WE HAVE DEVELOPED OUR DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY

3.1 Kettering's Changing Housing Market

3.1.1 Over the past year we have been working with key stakeholders including customers and elected members on 'Kettering's Changing Housing Market' – a project to understand the main changes affecting our housing market and plan the way forward.

3.1.2 This has helped us to acknowledge the need to work in different ways.

3.1.3 We are now in a position to consider a range of longer term projects to help us achieve our objectives of a balanced housing market – these projects are contained within the Housing Strategy Action Plan, which acts as a working document for Officers.

3.2 Executive Committee

3.2.1 Separate reports have been taken to the Council's Executive Committee on our approach to the Housing Strategy throughout late 2014.

3.2.2 These reports outlined our new approach as well as detailing each of the three key strategic aims, the key challenges and the way forward.

3.2.3 Members endorsed each of these reports and the recommendations contained within.

3.3 Consultation Document

3.3.1 A draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan were published in December for consultation.

3.3.2 The consultation period on the Housing Strategy ran from 16th December 2014 to 3rd February 2015.

3.3.3 The documents were published on the Kettering Borough Council website and comments invited on them via either an online questionnaire, emailing directly to the Housing Strategy mailbox or in writing.

3.3.4 Kettering Borough Council officers and Members were advised of the consultation via email with links provided to the documents.

3.3.5 The consultation was also announced via social media outlets.



3.3.6 An initial presentation was given at our Tenant’s Forum in November 2014 on our new approach and again in January 2015, where the draft Housing Strategy was outlined and their views sought via the consultation process.

3.3.7 Key external stakeholders including Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Police, Kettering General Hospital, Nene Clinical Commissioning Group, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership, Local Authorities, Private Landlords, Housing Associations and Voluntary Sector organisations were sent the link to the consultation documents and were invited to comment.

3.4 Housing Conference

3.4.1 A Housing Conference was held on the 30th January 2015 to present the new approach to the Housing Strategy and to demonstrate some of the work that has been happening over the years within the Housing Service.

3.4.2 Over 100 individuals and organisations were invited to the Conference and on the day we had just over 60 delegates attend.



3.4.3 Delegates had the opportunity to feed into the workshops held on the day which covered each of the strategic aims of the Housing Strategy. The workshops were facilitated, with notes taken and three main messages from each were fed back at the end of the Conference.

3.4.4 A copy of the consultation questionnaire was included in the Conference packs and delegates were asked to complete it so that their views could be taken on board.

4 IMPACT OF THE CONSULTATION

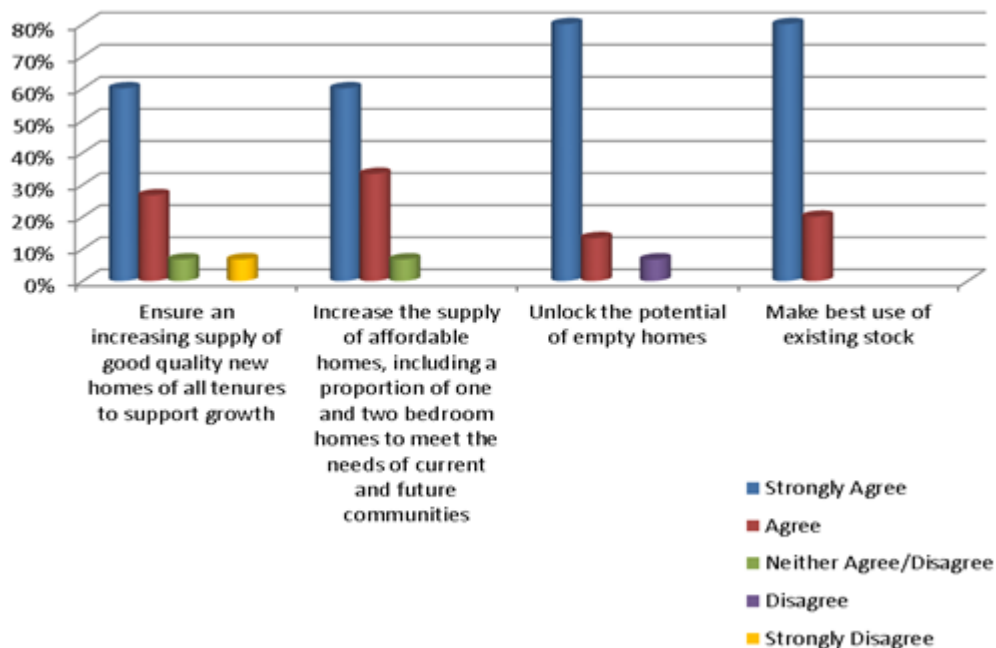
4.1 The aim of the consultation was to ensure that we have identified the key housing issues and priorities affecting the Borough and to ensure that our information is accurate and up to date. We want to make sure that the actions and objectives contained within the draft Action Plan will deliver the desired outcomes for the Borough.

4.2 Responses from the consultation have been collated and changes made to the draft document as felt necessary. There is overwhelming support for the new approach to our Housing Strategy and the strategic aims and objectives contained within it.

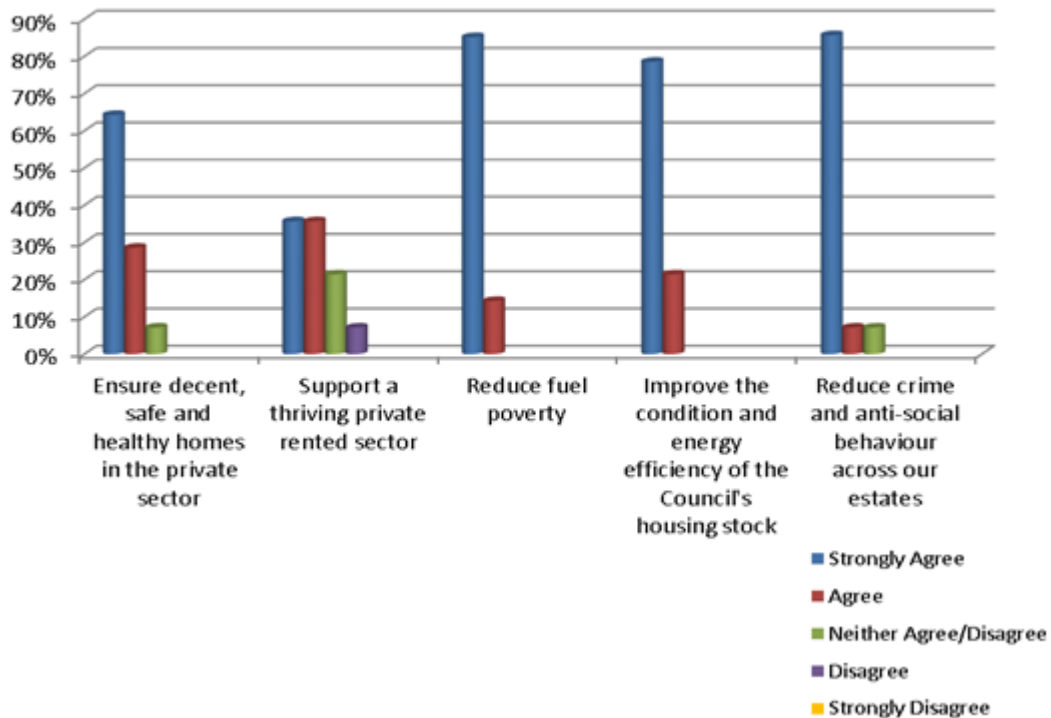
4.3 Through the consultation survey responses the following is noted:

4.4 For each Strategic Aim respondents were asked to indicate to which extent they agree/disagree with the objectives contained within each aim. The results are indicated below:

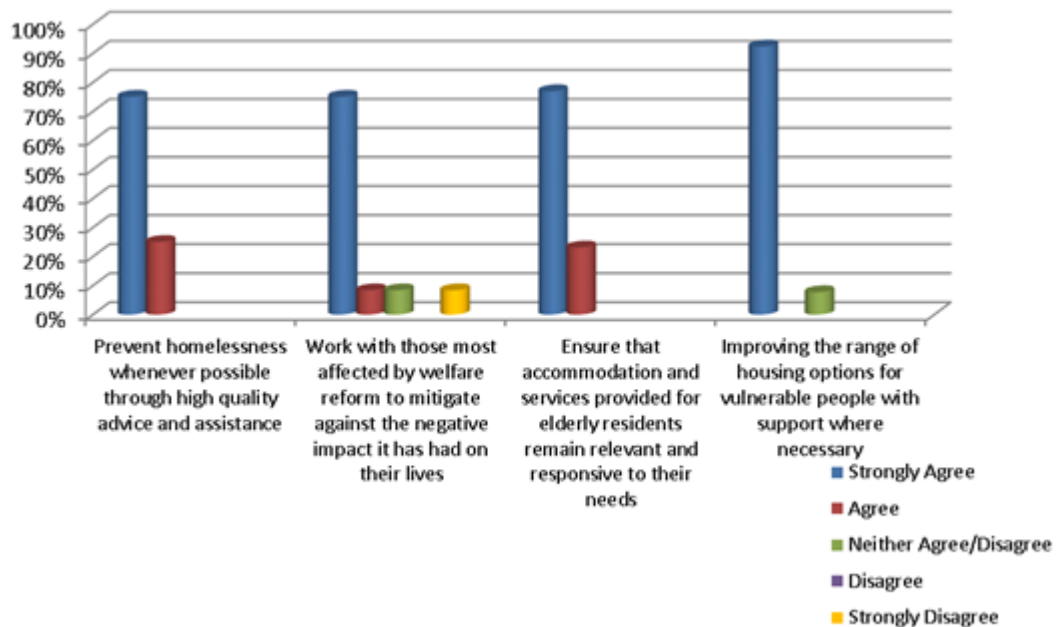
Strategic Aim 1: Increasing housing supply across all tenures



Strategic Aim 2: Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes



Strategic Aim 3: Helping people to live independently



- 4.5 Respondents to the online survey in the main strongly agree or agree with our strategic aims and objectives. Individual comments have been taken on board.
- 4.6 The most important issues for respondents are summarised below:
- Addressing low demand

- Building new council housing
- Creating sustainable tenancies
- Increasing affordable housing supply, including in rural areas
- Supporting vulnerable customers
- Ensuring homes are of a decent quality

4.7 We believe these issues will be addressed through the Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

4.8 Respondents were asked if there was any additional information that should be included in the Housing Strategy, these responses are summarised below:

- Importance of community infrastructure on health and wellbeing
- More emphasis on council housing building, sites, types etc.
- Appearance of our estates need attention

4.9 From the Housing Conference workshops the three key issues raised and for consideration in the Council's Housing Strategy were as follows:

4.9.1 Workshop 1: Increasing housing supply:

- Finance and the availability of funds to facilitate supply (both within the Council and the effect of HCA funding cuts)
- Supporting small/medium builders to manage cashflow of developments (deferred payments etc.), promoting self-build projects and housing co-operatives.
- Consider the role of the public sector enabling the private sector to create more affordable homes (land release, less onerous planning system etc.).

4.9.2 Workshop 2: Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes:

- Education (of residents) on how to use new equipment, technology in the home
- Affordability and supporting residents to get the right energy deals, tackling fuel poverty
- Community – listening to residents and asking 'what do they need'? Providing the right mix of housing on new estates

4.9.3 Workshop 3: Helping Vulnerable People:

- Lack of provision and funding for people with support needs
- Prevention activities needed – enabling people to stay in their own homes for longer
- Communication between service providers. Suggestion of a forum to promote multi-agency working on housing issues

4.10 These are all issues that we will address through the new Housing Strategy approach, our projects and our action plan.

4.11 The majority of the written responses to the Housing Strategy mailbox were from residents in the Brambleside Ward who have used this as an opportunity to express what they wish to see happen with the Scott Road former garage site. We have received 17 letters from local residents asking to see new housing developed on this land. Within the draft Housing Strategy we have outlined how we will undertake work on a council new build feasibility study which will include this site. Work will continue on this over the coming months and we will be in a position in the Summer to present the initial findings of the feasibility work to Members.

4.12 The majority of those consulted feel the Housing Strategy and Action Plan will deliver what it needs to.

5. THE WAY AHEAD

5.1 The Housing Strategy 2015-20 will be taken to Full Council for formal adoption on the 25th February 2015.

5.2 The Housing Strategy will be finalised and graphics added before publishing the finished document

5.3 Upon adoption of the Housing Strategy 2015-20, we aim to continuously monitor and update the action plan. The action plan will act as a working document for Officers and will be updated on an annual basis.

5.4 Various working groups will be established to take forward identified projects and actions resulting from the Housing Strategy.

6. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

6.1 Full consultation has been carried out on the draft Housing Strategy as detailed above and in earlier reports

7. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None at this stage.

8. HR IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None at this stage.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1.1 None at this stage.

10. RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee is asked to endorse the Housing Strategy and recommend that Full Council adopt the Housing Strategy for 2015-20.

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Background Papers:

Date: N/A

Contact Officer: Katie Prati

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Housing Strategy 15/16 -19/20

Date: 15th October 2014

Ref: Fwd Plan A12/057

Housing Strategy 2015-20

Strategic Aims.

Dates: 15th October 2014 Ref:

Fwd Plan A14/006, 12th

November 2014 Ref: Fwd Plan

A14/015, and 10th December

2014 Ref: Fwd Plan A14/028