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## **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-22 YEAR 2 PROGRESS**

**Report by Service Director Regulatory Services**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**20 August 2019**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview on the Annual Progress Report which sets out what has been achieved in the delivery of year two of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-22 (Appendix 1) and seeks Council endorsement to submit to Scottish Government.**
- 1.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy, supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. This strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing investment and service delivery in the Scottish Borders for 2017-22 and is informed and developed through extensive research and consultation with partners and the wider community. The LHS was approved by Scottish Borders Council and submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2017.
- 1.3 The Council and its partners have made good progress since the LHS was formally approved by Council. Work in 2018/19 includes the delivery of 192 new affordable homes, the submission of a very ambitious Strategic Housing Investment Plan underpinned by up to £162m of investment, development of a new Rapid Re-Housing Transition Plan, the establishment of a new Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership and a Borders Home Energy Forum, the development of a new Housing Needs Action Plan for Young People, a draft Affordable Warmth Strategy and 94 major adaptations being completed, are just some of the main achievements over the last year.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Committee:-**
- (a) Note the progress made in delivering on the Strategic actions as set out in the appended Annual Update Report and Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix.**
  - (b) Approve submission of the Annual Report and Matrix to the Scottish Government.**

### **3 LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), underpinned by an assessment of housing need and demand. The LHS sets out the strategic direction for housing investment and service delivery in the Scottish Borders for 2017-22 and was approved by Scottish Borders Council and submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2017.
- 3.2 As a statutory housing authority the main focus in the delivery of the LHS is ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties regarding access to, and the provision of, affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness. Already over the initial two year period of the LHS there have been some significant successes and achievements. A detailed monitoring and evaluation matrix has been developed to track the delivery of the strategic actions and is appended to the LHS. An annual progress report for 2018-19 illustrating key highlights and ongoing challenges for the future is also appended at Appendix 1.

### **4. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-22 – YEAR 2 ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 4.1 The Scottish Government increased its Affordable Housing Investment Programme funding allocation to Scottish Borders to £14.065m, which is a record level of investment and has supported the delivery of 192 affordable homes, exceeding our annual 128 unit target. Bridge Homes has now provided 54 homes through the National Housing Trust/Local Authority Variant Initiative, and there were also 21 assisted purchases through Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Scheme. The current SHIP 2019-24 has identified 1047 affordable homes for anticipated completion from 2019-2024, and the new SHIP 2020-25 is currently in development.
- 4.2 Over £1.2 million has been invested in energy efficiency measures for private homes across the region; the energy efficiency pilot project in Peebles has been extended to cover Tweeddale; RSL's have continued to make good progress towards the Energy efficiency Standard for Social housing (EESH); and a new Home Energy Forum was established, all supporting a reduction in fuel poverty across the area.
- 4.3 During 2018/2019 843 households approached the Council's Homelessness Team for advice and/ or assistance. 100% of clients are now provided with housing options advice and the level of repeat homelessness remains low. A new Borders Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership was established and the Council and its partners developed a Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which was submitted to Scottish Government in March 2019.
- 4.4 Almost 6,000 Private Landlords are now registered within the Scottish Borders, with almost 9000 rental properties. The Private Sector Liaison and Enforcement Officer continues to work with landlords to help improve management and property standards, and to support landlords and tenants through recent legislative changes. A fully booked and well attended Landlord forum was held in June 2018, as well as several training events throughout the year.

4.5 In 2018/19, under Scheme of Assistance, £405,651 was spent on 94 completed major adaptations and £81,946 on 421 small adaptations and repairs.

4.6 The Indigo House Group were commissioned to undertake an assessment on the housing needs and aspirations of young people in the Scottish Borders. The work involved a multi-method approach and a wide range of engagement with young people and professional stakeholders. A steering group including a range of Community Planning partners have overseen the research and development of the new five year Action Plan.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

- (a) There is no direct financial implication contained in the report. However delivery of the LHS is dependent on SBC's continuous provision of core services, financial resource allocations from Scottish Government, the continuing support from the affordable housing budget (2nd homes council tax) and resources arising from the affordable housing policy, partner agencies and private individuals.
- (b) However, where there are specific actions considered as having a resource implication for the Council, Officers it has been agreed that Officers would bring back proposals for consideration by the Executive Committee as they arise over the period of the strategy.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) Delivery of the LHS aims and objectives is largely dependent upon a number of variables, not least of which relate to resource and other political and organisational decision making processes beyond the control of the Local Authority.
- (b) A Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) Screening Report was undertaken when the LHS was developed. This concluded that a full SEA would not be required for the LHS as it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. Any potential environmental effects from any specific proposals or plans which may relate to the LHS will be individually considered and addressed through the planning process and full SEAs in due course.

### **5.3 Equalities**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This shows that there are positive impacts across all equality groups. The strategy is based on a wide range of evidence, including the SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2015).

### **5.4 Acting Sustainably**

- (a) The LHS promotes sustainable development. Priorities include making better use of existing stock, promoting energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty.

- (b) By seeking more new affordable houses, improving the quality and sustainability of existing houses, setting targets for homelessness, fuel poverty and climate change, the LHS will promote sustainable communities and help to overcome many of the challenges we face locally.

**5.5 Carbon Management**

It is considered that there are no direct effects on the Council’s carbon emissions arising from the report recommendations. There are likely to be positive effects through fuel poverty and energy efficiency outcomes, as well as promoting sustainability through better use of existing stock.

**5.6 Rural Proofing**

The LHS 2017-22 has been rural proofed and it is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from implementation. There is likely to be a wide range of positive outcomes for rural communities, including improvements in health, fuel poverty levels and availability of affordable housing in a variety of tenures.

**5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to the Council’ Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation arising from this report.

**6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**

**Brian Frater**

**Service Director Regulatory Services Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

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**Previous Minute Reference: 5 September 2017  
2 October 2018**

**Background Papers: The Local Housing Strategy 2017-22**

**APPENDICES** APPENDIX 1: LHS Progress Update Report 2018/19  
APPENDIX 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix 2017-22

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Bogdanovic can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies. Contact us at Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01896661392, email: [donna.bogdanovic@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:donna.bogdanovic@scotborders.gov.uk).