

Classification	Item No.
Open	

<b>Meeting:</b>	The Cabinet
<b>Meeting date:</b>	14 October 2020
<b>Title of report:</b>	Public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy
<b>Report by:</b>	Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Key Decision
<b>Ward(s) to which report relates</b>	All

## Executive Summary:

Cabinet is asked to approve a proposal to consult residents and other stakeholders on a draft Housing Strategy for Bury. The draft strategy sets out the scale of the challenge facing the Borough on housing issues such as driving up quality, improving health and wellbeing, affordability, attracting and retaining skills, and climate change.

The last full assessment of housing need and demand in the Borough was undertaken in 2011. The changes within the housing market since then, together with the expected growth in population and household formation required an update to the housing profile; therefore in January 2020, Campbell Tickell in partnership with arc4, were appointed to support the Council to deliver a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, which informs the new draft Housing Strategy.

The final version of the Housing Strategy will include an implementation plan, which will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is up to date in terms of available and committed resources.

### Cabinet is asked to:

1. Acknowledge the work to date on developing the draft Housing Strategy.
2. Approve the draft Housing Strategy at Appendix 1 for public consultation for a period of six weeks.
3. Note that a further report will be produced with the final draft Housing Strategy, that has taken into account the results and feedback from the consultation.

## **Background**

The new draft Housing Strategy will cover the key aspects of affordability, supply and quality of housing in the Borough. The strategy will help ensure that an adequate supply of new housing will be provided to support inclusive economic growth for the Borough that will underpin improvements in people's health and wellbeing, including reducing gaps in healthy life expectancy. The draft Housing Strategy specifically references the next five years; however, it also considers the period to 2030 with regard to the new Bury Strategy 2030 consultation.

In January 2020, Campbell Tickell in partnership with arc4, were appointed to support the Council to deliver a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment. The assessment reported on all tenures and client groups on a ward and township basis, as well as for the Borough as a whole, and has informed the draft Housing Strategy.

## **The proposal**

The Council, partners and residents are working together to develop a 10-year vision and strategy for Bury. The draft Housing Strategy sets out how the Council intends to work, and what we intend to do to create the right conditions so that Bury's housing, across all tenures, supports our emerging Bury 2030 vision.

The draft Housing Strategy contributes to meeting the Council's priorities across a range of policy areas including economic growth and climate change strategy. It also reflects the Council's role in discharging a range of statutory duties such as those relating to homelessness, private sector housing and the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults.

In addition, the draft Housing Strategy is closely aligned to strategies at the Greater Manchester level. This includes the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy, which sets out a number of key housing priorities for a transient population within the wider Greater Manchester housing market – which are broadly reflected within the Bury Strategy. Likewise, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will seek to identify sufficient land across the conurbation to meet the needs of a growing population. Importantly, the GMSF will seek to ensure that new housing is accompanied with the required social and physical infrastructure that is essential to creating successful and vibrant neighbourhoods. Once approved, the Housing Strategy will be an important document that will help shape the types of housing that will be delivered on new developments.

The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to provide a local framework and clear direction of travel influencing all housing related activities undertaken by the Council and its delivery partners across Bury, and help focus our collective resources on achieving sustainable solutions that ensure the delivery of sufficient high-quality housing and housing support of the right types, in the right places, and at the right times, to best meet the current and future needs of our communities.

This is a wide-ranging draft strategy that impacts on the lives of all Bury residents in one way or another, be that directly through the provision of accommodation and services or indirectly through improvements in the public realm, environment and health. To this end, the Housing Strategy contributes to many of the priorities in the draft Bury 2030 strategy.

The outcomes sought from the draft Housing Strategy include:-

- More homes in the Borough to meet the needs of a growing population.
- Increased affordable housing supply – through new build, leasing and acquisition.
- A more dynamic housing market – a broader range of housing tenures and more tailored support for people to access a suitable home they want in any tenure.
- Good quality, healthy homes and places.
- Support that enables people to live well in the community.
- Intelligent, evidence-driven, targeted investment to improve health through housing.

- To focus on the future of each town centre and neighbourhoods.
- To eliminate rough sleeping by 2025 – through an evidenced approach to preventing homelessness, increasing supply of affordable new homes, supporting accessibility and ‘enabling support’ towards independence.
- Rapid movement towards low carbon housing.

## **Consultation methodology**

Bury’s draft Housing Strategy will benefit all our residents; our focus is not only addressing housing need, but on the role that housing can play in meeting the economic, social and environmental aspirations of the Borough, which is why it is important to widely consult on our priorities and how we intend to deliver them. It is increasingly becoming apparent that social and economic composition of areas varies greatly and fluctuates over time. Therefore this draft Housing Strategy will strive to have a sound understanding of the views of communities, which meet current needs and is flexible to respond to changing dynamics.

Mirroring the rich diversity of Bury, the Council is clear that understanding housing needs requires the input of the whole community. It is important to ensure that the draft strategy fully reflects the views of all residents in the Borough. The Council therefore plans to undertake a programme of public consultation over the next 6 weeks, as soon as possible following Cabinet approval.

It was the intention to undertake a number of stakeholder consultation events as ‘drop-in’ sessions and face to face meetings. Clearly, with the current restrictions on social gathering this will not be possible and this means that there will be a much greater emphasis on online and digital engagement. Nevertheless, it is important that all stakeholders are able to have their say and the following consultation methods will be used.

The Council website will be used as the main point of contact for the formal consultation. The online consultation will be promoted via social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to raise awareness of the draft Housing Strategy and to issue reminders of the consultation closing date. These will direct residents and stakeholders to the formal consultation.

Feedback will be encouraged via an online questionnaire and a dedicated phone line and email address will be established, to enable people to find out more information or request hard copy documents. The consultation process will include:

- A dedicated Housing Strategy consultation page on the Council’s website which will include the Strategy, Frequently Asked Questions and a stakeholder questionnaire.
- Targeted social media adverts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) running throughout the consultation period.
- Press releases and press features.
- A public Webinar, which will be held as an alternative to face-to-face drop in sessions. The event will feature a presentation and Q & A panel session. The session will be recorded, along with the questions and answers from the event and uploaded to the Housing Strategy webpage.

The consultation will include all key stakeholders such as Elected Members, Six Town Housing, tenants and tenant organisations, residents, voluntary and faith sectors, community groups, developers, housing providers, health and care providers and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Following the consultation, a further report will be produced with the final draft Housing Strategy, that has taken into account the results and feedback from the consultation.

## Other alternative options considered

The Council's last strategy from 2014, and the lack of an up to date strategy has significant downsides. The context in which the Council operates has changed since the last review of the housing strategy so it is important to update the strategy to reflect policy and legislative changes and set out our new proposed housing priorities, for consultation. The Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy will be reviewed to ensure alignment.

---

## Equality Impact and considerations:

The draft strategy promotes equality of access to housing and demonstrates a positive impact on people with protected characteristics. It seeks to ensure that there is a balance of housing provision across the Borough to meet the needs of all residents and, recognises the specific housing needs of different client groups including the BAME community, low income households, people at risk of homelessness, older people and people with disabilities.

---

## Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
When the final strategy is approved by the Cabinet it will ensure that the Council has more influence when it enters into delivery partnerships with developers or registered providers.	This can be partly mitigated through choice of the right partners and well negotiated contractual agreements.

---

## Consultation:

The draft Housing Strategy has been informed through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including interviews with Councillors, circa 40 Bury Council officers and Six Town Housing. A number of themed workshops have taken place with private developers and Registered Providers operating in the Borough.

---

## Legal Implications:

Although there is no requirement for a Housing Strategy, it is best practice and provides for consideration of associated duties such as homelessness provision. The Council has undertaken an assessment of housing need within the borough. This report presents the new housing strategy based upon that assessment, which ties into other strategies including the Council's overarching 2030 Strategy.

Consultation on the plan must comply with the so called 'Gunning principles' and therefore must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage, give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response, allow adequate time for consideration and response and the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

In addition, as the Housing Strategy is not part of the policy framework, its final proposed version, having taken into account the results of consultation, can be approved by Cabinet.

---

## **Financial Implications:**

At this stage there are no financial implications however, as and when projects progress, there will be funding requirements and these will need to be considered at that time. Various funding options are likely to be available and all proposals will be subject to a full financial appraisal at that time. Implementing the strategy will be dependent upon the availability of funding in future years.

---

## **Report Author and Contact Details:**

Geoff Little, Chief Executive Officer and Bury CCG Accountable Officer

Email: [g.little@bury.gov.uk](mailto:g.little@bury.gov.uk)

---

## **Background papers:**

None.