

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 30 June 2026
Subject:	Approval to Undertake Public Consultation on a Draft Housing Strategy for Bury	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In November 2025, the Council commissioned arc4 consultancy to undertake a statutory periodical review of housing needs under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, to inform the development of a new housing strategy, which will replace the existing 2021 – 2025 Housing Strategy.
- 1.2 The new housing strategy will provide a long-term, boroughwide framework for housing delivery whilst also addressing related activities such as affordability, homelessness, regeneration and housing standards, in alignment with wider Council priorities and corporate objectives.
- 1.3 This report seeks Cabinet approval to commence a 12-week programme of public consultation on the draft housing strategy. The proposed consultation will engage residents of the borough and key stakeholders to secure inclusive and meaningful feedback.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the work to date on developing the draft Housing Strategy which is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Approve that formal public consultation for a period of twelve weeks should be undertaken to gather views and opinions on the draft Housing Strategy, ensuring that these are duly considered before a final version is prepared for Cabinet approval.
- 2.3 Delegate authority to the Director of Housing to make any non-material amendments to the draft strategy, prior to consultation if required.
- 2.4 Note that following consultation, a final proposed Housing Strategy and delivery plan will be submitted to Cabinet for approval and adoption. The accompanying report will summarise the outcome of the public consultation.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Public consultation on a housing strategy constitutes a formal decision under the Council's governance arrangements and must therefore be authorised by

the Cabinet. This ensures compliance with the principles of good governance, openness, and accountability.

- 3.2 To ensure that the draft Housing Strategy is subject to meaningful engagement while proposals remain at a formative stage, in accordance with the Gunning Principles.
- 3.3 Consulting residents and stakeholders, including those with protected characteristics, enables the Council to gather valuable feedback, local intelligence, practical expertise, potential equality impacts/mitigation, and fosters shared commitment to implementation.

4.0 Alternative options considered and rejected

- 4.1 Retain the existing Housing Strategy to deliver Bury's housing priorities and guide inclusive growth and investment in the borough.

- 4.1.1 This option has been rejected because the existing Housing Strategy is now outdated due to changes in national policy, service delivery arrangements and the findings of a statutory review of housing needs undertaken in November 2025.

- 4.1.2 The development of a new housing strategy is essentially informed by a statutory needs review. It ensures that the Council's strategic framework properly reflects up to date evidence of housing need and demand in the borough. The new draft Housing Strategy has been developed using updated evidence collated by arc4 which effectively fulfils and updates the Council's Section 8 duty. The public consultation will further validate the evidence base and ensure the strategy responds appropriately to current and emerging challenges.

- 4.1.3 An up to date, well supported evidence driven housing strategy strengthens the Council's position when seeking external funding, including through Homes England and other investment programmes. It also demonstrates that priorities have been shaped through public and stakeholder consultation, which increases credibility and fundability.

- 4.1.4 In the absence of a housing strategy, the Council would find it difficult to demonstrate clear strategic direction for housing, it would weaken compliance with expectations set by the Regulator of Social Housing and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and reduce credibility in securing external investment or partnership support. The lack of a coherent and up to date strategy could also result in poorer alignment with statutory plans and diminished accountability, transparency, and stakeholder confidence, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the Council's wider strategic housing role.

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5.0 Housing strategy overview/purpose

- 5.1 The draft Bury Housing Strategy 2026 - 2036 is a high-level strategic document that sets out the Council's long-term vision, priorities, and approach to housing across the borough, providing an overarching framework to guide delivery. Whilst it is not itself a legal or statutory document, and does not discharge or replace individual duties, it plays a critical role in bringing together and responding to statutory requirements.
- 5.2 The strategy ensures that the findings of the statutory review of housing needs are translated into clear objectives. It reflects the Council's corporate priorities and is designed to work alongside statutory and policy documents such as the Bury Local Plan and wider national and local strategies, ensuring that housing delivery and service provision are coordinated and evidence led.
- 5.3 The Strategy encompasses wider interrelated housing functions and responsibilities such as housing supply and growth, affordable housing, specialist, supported and accessible housing, regeneration, homelessness, council housing services and standards and the private rented sector.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 The Council's existing Housing Strategy has been overtaken by significant changes within the housing landscape, making the development of a new strategy both timely and necessary. Major legislative reforms, combined with ongoing financial pressures, have fundamentally and permanently altered the environment in which housing services are delivered. In this context, it is essential that the Council adopts a comprehensive and up-to-date housing strategy, to ensure that it can effectively deliver its priorities and respond to emerging challenges.
- 6.2 To support this work, the Council has commissioned arc4 to develop a new, comprehensive housing strategy for the borough. This strategy is informed by the latest housing needs assessment and will set a clear long-term vision and provide a strategic framework for meeting identified needs over the next decade. It will be closely aligned with, and actively support, the Council's wider ambitions for place-based regeneration, climate action, reducing inequalities, and delivering sustainable and inclusive growth across the borough.

7.0 Early engagement

- 7.1 In recent months, arc4 has conducted a comprehensive review of the wider strategic and operational context within which the Council is operating. This

has included an assessment of a range of national and local strategies, policies, and relevant data sources to establish a robust baseline position. This work has provided a clear understanding of existing strengths and gaps, helping to identify where change or improvement may be required to support the Council's future housing delivery ambitions.

7.2 As part of this process, early engagement has been undertaken with officers, partners, and key stakeholders to test emerging assumptions and gather insight. This has included a combination of one-to-one interviews and group engagement sessions, with Team Bury, elected members, registered housing providers, officers, and stakeholders. The feedback received has informed the direction of the strategy ahead of wider public consultation.

7.3 Five emerging strategic priorities have been identified through the evidence review and early engagement activity. These will be tested and evaluated through the public consultation process:

1. **Delivering more homes to meet Bury's needs** – ensuring the right number and mix of new homes are built in the right places to meet current and future needs while creating sustainable, well-connected communities.
2. **Improving the quality, efficiency, and use of existing homes** – raising standards across all homes, making them safer, warmer and more energy efficient, while making better use of existing housing stock.
3. **Enabling access to homes that meet needs** - helping residents find and keep homes that are affordable, suitable and support their independence, health, and wellbeing.
4. **Preventing homelessness and creating stable housing pathways** - taking a proactive and coordinated approach to prevent homelessness and ensure access to stable, appropriate housing at every stage of life.
5. **Excellent landlord, better homes, stronger places** – to be an excellent landlord by investing in high-quality council homes, improving the tenant experience, and reimagining estates as safe, sustainable, and thriving places where people are proud to live.

8.0 Formal public consultation

8.1 It is important to ensure that the draft strategy fully reflects the views of residents and stakeholders in the borough. Therefore, a programme of public consultation will be undertaken as soon as possible following Cabinet approval. The consultation will take place over a 12-week period. It will seek views from a broad range of key stakeholders including:

- Tenants and residents
- Tenant and Resident Associations
- Care leavers
- Elected members
- Team Bury
- Bury Housing Advisory Board
- Bury Voluntary, Community & Faith Alliance (VCFA)

- Local community and faith groups including those supporting people with protected characteristics
- Housing developers and registered providers
- Bury Homeless Partnership
- Health and care partners
- Homes England
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Methodology

- 8.2 The Council's website will serve as the primary platform for accessing information relating to the consultation. Engagement will be delivered through a range of accessible channels to maximise participation. This will include targeted communications, online questionnaires (with an easy-read version available), and a programme of online engagement events or focus groups.
- 8.3 Feedback will be primarily gathered through the online questionnaires, with the easy read version supporting individuals who may find standard formats difficult to engage with.
- 8.4 The consultation process will include the following elements:
- A dedicated housing strategy consultation webpage featuring the draft strategy, an executive summary, frequently asked questions, links to consultation questionnaires, and details of an online event hosted by arc4 to enable residents and stakeholders to learn more about the draft strategy and ask questions.
 - Targeted advertising across the Council's social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, and X) to maximise awareness and participation.
 - A press release to raise wider public awareness.
 - A dedicated arc4 24-hour freephone telephone line and email contact will be available, to enable participants to request further information or access hard copy materials where required.
 - A programme of virtual or hybrid focus groups or workshops tailored to individuals and specific groups including:
 - Tenants
 - VCFA
 - Bury Older Person Coproduction Network
 - Bury Disability Advisory Group
 - Young people (under 35)
- 8.5 The consultation process provides an early opportunity for residents and stakeholders to inform and influence the development of the strategy, ensuring that it is responsive to identified local needs and reflects the borough's values and priorities.
- 8.6 A copy of the draft Housing Strategy is included at Appendix 1.

9.0 Next steps

- 9.1 Following the consultation, a further report will be presented to Cabinet seeking approval of the final strategy and accompanying delivery plan. This report will incorporate the findings and feedback from the consultation process. Subject to approval, the strategy will be formally adopted and published, providing a clear framework to guide future housing delivery across the borough.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Consultation on the draft housing strategy directly supports the Council's corporate priorities by providing residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to influence policies that promote inclusive growth, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce inequalities. Meaningful and wide-ranging engagement helps to ensure that the strategy is evidence led, reflects local needs and aspirations, and aligns with the Council's overarching '*Let's Do It!*' vision.

The new housing strategy will play a pivotal role in advancing these priorities by addressing the quality, affordability, and availability of housing across the borough to support the creation of healthier, more sustainable neighbourhoods.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

The consultation will be accessible to residents and stakeholders, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Information will be provided in inclusive and accessible formats, such as easy read materials, hard-copy documents on request, and accessible digital content to ensure that people with disabilities, lower literacy levels or other access needs are able to participate meaningfully. The consultation will help identify any differential impacts of the strategy on specific groups.

Engaging widely with residents, tenants, community groups, and representative organisations provides insight into how proposals may affect people of different ages, ethnicities, genders, and household types, as well as those with disabilities or experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. Feedback gathered through the consultation will continue to inform the Equality Impact Assessment and support the development of a final strategy that is fair and inclusive.

A full EQIA will be completed following consultation to support the development of the new strategy.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

The environmental impact of the public consultation on the draft housing strategy is expected to be minimal, as engagement will be delivered primarily through digital channels. This approach supports the Council's wider commitments to carbon reduction, sustainable service delivery, and efficient use of resources. Where engagement beyond digital methods is required, virtual or hybrid focus groups/workshops in sustainable venues will be used where possible, to reduce travel and avoid resource intensive engagement activity.

Delivery of a housing strategy can create environmental impacts through carbon intensive construction, increased energy use, loss of greenfield land, and greater transport related emissions. These can be mitigated by prioritising brownfield development, using low carbon materials, and adopting energy efficiency building standards. Careful site selection, climate resilient design such as sustainable drainage systems and flood avoidance, and strong public transport and active travel connections help reduce long-term environmental pressures. In addition, integrating biodiversity measures like tree planting and green infrastructure can help protect natural habitats.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Low participation/limited consultation responses from residents and stakeholders.	The consultation will be promoted through multiple channels (website, social media, and partner organisations) to increase awareness.
Exclusion - certain groups may not be able to engage effectively e.g. people with additional needs, those with low digital access and other access needs.	Alternative formats (easy-read, hard copies) will be available. Offline engagement routes (freephone, post) will be provided to maximise participation.
Misinterpretation/misinformation – residents may misunderstand the purpose or content of the draft strategy leading to inaccurate perceptions or expectations.	Easy-read survey and plain-English explanations, FAQs, and signposting.
Data protection – mishandling personal information could lead to GDPR breaches.	Secure data handling/anonymous responses.

Procurement Implications

The Housing Strategy aligns with the Council's procurement strategy in seeking compliance, value for money, social value, sustainability outcomes and service users focused improvements.

Any procurement requirements will be compliant with the Procurement Act.

Legal Implications:

The draft Housing Strategy has been prepared largely in response to the “Housing Needs and Demands Assessment 2024/5” (which is referenced in draft Strategy) which sets out findings arising from the statutory section 8 Housing Act 1985 “periodical review of housing needs”. The “Housing Needs and Demands Assessment 2024/5” provides the evidential basis for the Authority’s housing, homelessness, and planning functions. The draft Housing Strategy sets out the Councils strategic plan to address the districts housing needs and demands. It also refers to other associated statutory strategies namely the Homelessness Strategy, the new Local Supported Housing Strategy and the Local Plan.

This report seeks approval for officers to conduct a public consultation on the draft Housing Strategy. The plan for consultation is in accordance with guidance. Following the consultation officers will submit a further report to Cabinet summarising the outcomes of the consultation and making appropriate recommendations.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the adoption of the strategy. The financial implications of the delivery plan will be considered when that is brought to cabinet at later meeting(s).

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Bury Housing Strategy 2026 - 2036.

Background papers:

Bury Housing Strategy 2021–2025 - [Bury Housing Strategy - Bury Council](#)

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
arc4	A consultancy that specialises in housing market analysis and assessments, focussing on providing high-quality data and research to help clients make informed decisions in the housing sector.
Hybrid focus group	Enables researchers to engage both local and remote participants simultaneously.