

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY Review 2016-2020 – ACTION PLAN UPDATE June 2019**

	Timescale	Priority	Performance Measures (Qualitative/ Quantitative)	Progress (Blue = Complete, Green = On track, Amber = Off track will recover, Red = Off track, will not recover)	Looking ahead
<b>THEME 1 - HOUSING NEEDS AND THE HOUSING MARKET</b>					
1.1.Revise the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as a tool to understand housing needs, demand and affordability. Extend the period covered by the SHMA to 2035 to align with extension of Local Plan period.	2016/17	High	SHMA updated to cover period to 2035 issued	The SHMA has been updated and extended to 2035. The update was published in December 2016. In 2018 an Addendum to reflect revision of the Local Plan period to 2030 was produced and published.	Further work may be required to reflect changes to the methodology for calculating Objectively Assessed Need. Reviewing needs assessments to support Neighbourhood Plans may also be required.
1.2. Update JSNA Housing Chapter	Ongoing	Medium	Chapter updated	The JSNA housing chapter was updated and modified to be more succinct and to reference other policy documents rather than duplicate them.	The Housing chapter in the JSNA will be updated as required.
1.3 Draft housing policies for Local Plan 2035	2016/17	High	Housing policies for local Plan 2035 are drafted in line with the LP delivery timetable	Draft policies completed for Local Plan which undergoing for public examination in summer 2019. Draft Policies have been amended as appropriate in response to Regulation 19 consultation submissions.	Implement policies once Local Plan 2030 is adopted.
1.4. Carry out review of Allocation Scheme annually	Ongoing - Annually	High	Allocations Scheme Revised Annually	The review of the allocations policy has commenced. A revised policy should be approved and implemented by the end of the financial year 2019/2020.	Housing Services are working closely with the commissioned company 'Ark' to review the Allocations Policy
1.5. Carry out review of Tenancy Strategy annually	Ongoing - Annually	High	Tenancy Strategy reviewed annually	A new Tenancy Strategy 2019 -2024 was adopted in March 2019 following public consultation in autumn 2018. The extent to which the Council's Tenancy Strategy has influenced the strategies of Registered Providers will be assessed on an annual basis once the 5 year initial terms of Assured Shorthold Tenancies have expired.	Assess impact of Council's Tenancy Strategy on Registered Providers once the first of the fixed term tenancies come to an end in 2019.
1.6 Maintain focussed liaison with RPs and prioritise partnerships that increase investment capacity	Ongoing	High	Relationships maintained. Investment capacity increased	Relationships have been maintained with the Registered Providers who have operated in Bedford over a long period, particularly bpha, and new entrants who bring additional investment capacity. In the period of the strategy to date three new Registered Providers (Cross Keys, One Housing Group and L & Q) have developed their first schemes in the Borough.	Work with existing and new Registered Provider partners, continuing to emphasise the capacity to deliver investment.
1.7. Develop web based guidance on affordable housing provision	2016/17 - Dependent upon detailed analysis of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the issuing of relevant directives by the Secretary of State.	High	Web based guidance on mix and tenure requirements published	Work was carried out on developing FAQs prior to the Bedford 2020 process and the move to a digital operation model.	Opportunities for generating web-based guidance for customer facing staff and the public on a wide range of issues will be investigated during the development of the Council's new operating model.

1.8. Continue to ensure allocated schemes are deliverable in viability terms including:	Ongoing	High	Maximum levels of affordable housing are delivered on qualifying sites	Work is continuing to strengthen the capacity of the Housing Strategy team to respond on viability issues. This has included working with Registered Providers using the flexibility created by the NPPF to deliver three rural exception schemes relying on the provision of some market housing within the site. This principle has been accommodated in draft Policy70 of Local Plan 2030.	Review Viability approach to private housing on rural exceptions schemes as part of delivering new Local Plan 2030 Policies.
Processing and agreeing of viability assessments as they are submitted.	Ongoing	High	Viability appraisals dealt with in a timely manner	A range of viability appraisals have been completed. Delivering affordable housing remains challenging on some sites in Bedford particularly in lower value parts of the urban area.	Consider alternative approaches to areas where viability appraisals limit the delivery of affordable housing through S106 agreements.
Contribute to the overall viability assessment of the Local Plan 2035	In line with Local Plan 2035 timetable	High	Overall Viability appraisal for Local Plan 2035 delivered in line with LP timetable	The overall viability assessment for Local Plan 2030 has been delivered in line with Local Plan delivery timescales	Continue to develop approaches that improve the ability of the Council to deliver community benefits including affordable housing through land value capture.
<b>1.9. Custom Build</b>					
Establish and maintain Register	2016/17	High	Register established	The Register has been established. Introduction of a charge to those applying to go on and remain on the register has been considered as has the possibility of splitting the register to identify those with a local connection. Both are discretionary.	There is an ongoing administrative task in maintaining the register.
Identify opportunities to support custom build through the planning process, through supporting access to land and through facilitating partnerships	2017/18 In line with Local Plan 2035 timetable	Medium	Planning policy and/or opportunities arising through development management identified	Working with Property Services an approach has been developed to offer custom and self builders early notification of small sites being disposed of by the Council. Details of 9 Council owned sites identified for disposal and suitable for custom and self builders were made available to those on the Self Build Register in February - March 2017, ahead of the general marketing of the sites. Draft Policy 62 of Local plan 2030 requires sites of qualifying size to provide 10% Self Build Plots.	Continue to work with Property services on opportunities created by the disposal of small sites. Implement draft Policy 62 once Local Plan 2030 is adopted. Encouraging Parishes to consider allocating local sites for self build in their emerging Neighbourhood Plans.
<b>THEME 2 - THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DELIVERY OF GROWTH.</b>					
2.1. Deliver 256 affordable homes per year	Ongoing	High	Target reached	The 2016 iteration of the SHMA increased the requirement for Affordable Housing from 256 to 275 homes pa. In 2018 an Addendum to reflect revision of the Local Plan period to 2030 amended this figure to 278. 299 affordable homes were delivered in 2017/18.	The trajectory forecasts 303 completions in 2018/19 and 389 completions in 2019/20. These forecasts are subject to change. Figures are finalised by MHCLG in October.

2.2. Aim for 195 homes to be provided for Affordable Rent.	Ongoing	Medium	Aim reached	In 2017/18 164 affordable rented dwellings were delivered - 55% of the total. The trajectory shows preliminary figures of 253 affordable rented properties completed in 2018/19	Continue to support the delivery of affordable rented properties on schemes. The trajectory shows preliminary figures of 253 affordable rented properties completed in 2018/19 and a forecast 198 in 2019/20. These forecasts are subject to slippage or increase as further new schemes are identified.
2.3. Continue to work with the development industry and Registered Providers to bring forward the identified strategic development sites in a sustainable form	Ongoing	High	Development sites progressing	Stewartby, Wixams Villages 2 and 4, Land N of Bromham Road, Land S of Fields Road, Wootton and Shortstown Phase 3 are now well established development sites.. Land West of Bedford and Land N of Fields Road, Wootton are almost complete.	Work with Planning Policy, developers, landowners and Registered Providers on emerging sites in Local Plan 2030.
2.4 Report on the benefits and costs of establishing a Housing Company. If approved, set up the company.	2016/17	High	Report to Executive . If approved, establish a Housing Company.	A decision to establish a Housing Company, Benedict Bedford, was taken. The Company was formed and has taken steps to establish its operations.	Progression of sites for Benedict Bedford is now led by Property Services. Housing Strategy Team will continue to contribute by supporting on-site delivery as appropriate.
Assess options for procurement of housing stock for the Housing Company (if approved and established) including potential to acquire empty homes and use the Council's own land holdings to develop new homes.	2016/17	High	Assessment of council owned development opportunities undertaken	There was an initial assessment as part of the process of establishing the Company.	Continue to support the Company to bring forward development projects.
2.5 Maintain programme of delivery of urban sites including: Kingsway, Ford End Road and Dallas Road.	Ongoing	High	Urban Sites progressed and delivered in a timely manner	Being largely progressed through the One Public Estate programme. The Bedford Central Town Masterplan was published in 2018.The results of the consultation have informed the Draft Local Plan 2030. A Ford End Road Master Plan is in development. Melbourne House has planning permission for 119 flats. Other urban sites are complete or close to completion including Warwick Avenue, Britannia Road and Derwent Place. Pilgrims House. The former office of bpha, has been converted to 23 affordable homes. The site at Dallas Road is likely to progress in 2019/20. A bid for HIF funding for road infrastructure works to enable development of 6 key urban sites was submitted in March 2019. The outcome is awaited.	Work will continue with developers to bring forward sites, particularly those in the One Public Estate area, post the adoption of Local Plan 2030.
Contribute to the delivery of the TCAAP.				The Bedford Central Town Masterplan was published in June 2018.The results of the consultation have informed the Draft Local Plan 2030.	Continue to support delivery of master plan, the projects within it and policies in the Local Plan 2030
Manage forward the delivery of the One Public Estate project				An OPE Project Management Team is in place.	Continue to support delivery of OPE projects.

2.6. Work to maximise investment from Registered Providers and from the Homes and Communities Agency.	Ongoing	High	Registered Providers and Homes England (formerly Homes and Communities Agency) engaged. Funding from Homes England secured for priority non S106 sites	The Council has engaged with Registered Providers established in Bedford, particularly bpha but also Grand Union, Aldwyck, Orbit, Guinness and Stonewater. It has also worked with new investors in Bedford including Paradigm, Cross Keys, One Housing Group and L & Q. The Council has put forward expressions of interest to Homes England to encourage investment in brownfield sites in Bedford. There has been no direct investment by Homes England to date but opportunities have been investigated.	The Council does not seek to restrict developers in their choice of Registered Provider provided the Registered Provider has the established capacity to deliver in both development and management terms. The environment for investment by both Homes England and RPs continues to change. RPs' investment programmes are increasingly dependent upon their own financial capacity and the Council will need to continue to adopt a flexible approach while respecting and valuing the contribution of established partners.
2.7. Work with Registered Providers and Parish Councils to deliver housing in the rural area including housing to meet local needs.	Ongoing	Medium	Parish Councils and rural housing providers engaged with.	Two rural exception schemes - the first for nearly a decade - have completed in Sharnbrook and Wyboston. A further rural exception scheme is on site in Carlton, due for completion in autumn 2019.	Continue to engage with Parish Councils to deliver rural exception schemes. Work with Parish Councils to deliver housing schemes as part of Neighbourhood Plans and where larger sites in villages are required to make an affordable housing contribution under Policy CP8 (Policy 59S of draft local Plan 2030).

### THEME 3 - MAKING BEST USE OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

3.1. Investigate measures to increase energy efficiency improve adaptability to climate change and reduce fuel poverty. Work with partners to maximise benefits to Bedford Borough of emerging energy efficiency programmes and existing programmes.	Ongoing	Medium	Carbon emissions and fuel poverty reduced	The Council has continued to support the work of Street Home Solutions using funding from energy companies. The terms and availability of this funding have become more restrictive.	Continue to seek opportunities to support activity to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.
3.2. Provide (subject to budget limitations, Legislation and grant eligibility) grant assistance to enable adaptation of existing properties to all tenures.	Ongoing	High	Disabled Facilities Grants provided to eligible applications, within grant restrictions, and subject to the waiting list.	Disabled Facilities Grants have continued to be provided to eligible applications supported by an Occupational Therapy referral.	Continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to eligible applications subject to the waiting list and grant restrictions.
3.3. Deliver the Empty Homes Action Plan	Ongoing	High	Empty Homes Action Plan delivered	Since the introduction of the Empty Homes Capital Programme in August 2014, approval has been given for the instigation of 43 compulsory purchase orders. 30 of these properties are now occupied, in most cases without the need for the CPO to be obtained. The number of empty homes unoccupied for over 5 years has reduced significantly - by 27 % for properties vacant for 5 – 10 years and 37% for those vacant more than 10 years. All properties purchased and re-sold to date have been renovated and returned to use by their new owners.	Maintain contact with the owners of empty residential properties and provide encouragement and advice to bring them back in to occupation. Where this approach does not succeed, additional capital funding may be used to pursue Compulsory Purchase Orders. Thirteen properties have been identified for such potential action in 2019/2020.

3.4. Review Empty Homes Strategy	2017/18	Medium	Empty Homes Strategy reviewed	New Empty Homes Strategy 2019 -24 consulted upon in autumn 2018 and adopted in March 2019.	Implement and monitor delivery of the Empty Homes Strategy 2019 -2024
3.6. Review the Private Sector Housing Strategy	2017/18	Medium	Private Sector Housing Strategy Reviewed	Desk top stock condition study undertaken by BRE. This will inform the Private Sector Housing Strategy due for development in 2019 / 20.	The delivery of this strategy has been reprogrammed for 2019/20 following the completion of the desktop study.
3.7. Review policy on licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) that are licensed.	2015/16	Medium	Policy reviewed.	The Council's Additional Licensing of HMOs was extended in May 2018 for a further 5 year period and covers all HMOs where a Mandatory HMO Licence is not required. The overarching aim of HMO Licensing is to drive up the standards of broad compliance of homes within this sector, improving living conditions for local tenants who are often vulnerable. Licensing focuses on overall broad compliance with legal standards, including safety, structure and management. A programme of inspection, and where necessary enforcement, is undertaken in line with formal procedures and sanctions. Since 2013 there has been an improvement in levels of broad compliance, from 62% up to 93% in 2019 with approx 700 properties falling into the licensing scheme. Formal prosecutions have also been undertaken for operating HMOs without a licence and for other HMO Management Regs offences.	Continue to undertake inspections of HMOs covered under additional and mandatory licencing regimes.  Instigate appropriate action (including enforcement), where properties do not meet minimum requirements.  Take enforcement action against landlords who have failed to obtain the necessary licence.
3.8 Support the development of the Private Rental Sector in Bedford and engage with it positively whilst continuing to use powers available to the Council to support high standards and tackle rogue landlords.	Ongoing	High	Support effective	Engagement with the Private Rental Sector takes place through the activities undertaken by officers within Environmental Services, Housing Strategy and Housing Options. Both the Strategic Housing and Regulatory Services functions actively engage through local meetings and forums (e.g. twice yearly HMO Landlords Forum), as well as specific mailings (e.g. annual Bedford Borough Landlord News). In addition formal enforcement action has taken place against landlords who have failed to licence and manage HMOs, breaches of prohibition orders imposed for safety reasons, failing to comply with improvement notices issued to improve property standards.	Continue to undertake inspections of HMOs covered under additional and mandatory licencing regimes.  Instigate appropriate action (including enforcement), where properties do not meet minimum requirements.

#### THEME 4 – HOMELESSNESS AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

4.1. Work with partners to ensure the housing needs of vulnerable people are met by an integrated approach. Support development of integration of health and social care by development of accommodation strategies for vulnerable groups	Ongoing	High	Housing Chapter of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment updated.	JSNA chapter updated and adjusted to reflect emerging housing strategy framework	Make further amendments to JSNA chapter to reflect emerging housing strategy framework when required
			Work in response to Care Act 2014 supported through co-ordinating housing group.	Regular inter-departmental liaison meetings have been held	Continue to hold inter-departmental liaison meetings

			Strategies developed as detailed below	See 4.2 - 4.6 below	See below
4.2 Develop Older Person Accommodation Strategy	2017/18	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Strategy completed and published.	Implement Strategy Action Plan
4.3 Develop Mental Health Accommodation Strategy	2016/17	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Strategy completed and published. The first specialist supported scheme for those with mental health needs was completed in March 2018	Implement Strategy Action Plan
4.4 Develop Learning Disabilities Accommodation Strategy	2016/17	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Strategy completed and published.	Implement Strategy Action Plan
4.5 Develop Physical Disabilities Accommodation Strategy	2018/19	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Drafting in progress	Planned for 2019/20
4.6 Improve provision for victims of domestic violence	2019/20	Medium	Improved provision in place	A site in the ownership of a Registered Provider partner has been identified to reprovide the borough's domestic violence refuge	Work to deliver reprovision scheme
4.6 Finalise GTAA and identify site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation as required	2016/17	High	GTAA Finalised and issued	GTAA was completed and published in February 2017	Implementation of recommendations including support to planning and housing services
			Sites to meet the needs of G & T communities identified if required by the study	Site identified for additional 2 Gypsy and Traveller Pitches as identified by the GTAA. Planning permission applied for and obtained. Site identified for Travelling Showpeople	Deliver two additional G & T pitches on site at Kempston Hardwick. Work to deliver site for Travelling Showpeople