

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY Review 2016-2020 – ACTION PLAN UPDATE March 2018

	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
THEME 1 - HOUSING NEEDS AND THE HOUSING MARKET					
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	Further revision may be required if the method or basis for calculating Objectively Assessed Need changes. 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 process of editing the JSNA chapter to reduce its size will continue as other housing policy documents are approved. 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 consultation that began January 2018.	Work with Planning Policy to monitor the outcome of the Local Plan consultation. Provide suggested amendments to policies if required. Support the local plan examination process.
1.4. Carry out review of Allocation Scheme annually	Ongoing - Annually	High	Allocations Scheme Revised Annually	The Allocations Scheme was last reviewed in 2015. It will be reviewed again following the Housing Register being brought in-house from April 2018.	Allocations Scheme reviewed post April 2018.
1.5. Carry out review of Tenancy Strategy annually	Ongoing - Annually	High	Tenancy Strategy reviewed annually	This action is about monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's Tenancy Strategy. A new Tenancy Strategy has been drafted during January 2018 with consultation planned for spring 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.	New Tenancy Strategy 2018-2023 to be published mid 2018.
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 both the RPs 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 2 new RPs (Cross Keys and One Housing Group) have developed their first schemes in the Borough.	Work with existing and new RP 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 RPs using the flexibility created by the NPPF to deliver two rural exception schemes relying on the provision of some market housing within the site.	Continue to strengthen the capacity to advise on viability issues. Review Viability approach to private housing on rural exceptions schemes as part of delivering new Local Plan 2035 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 a significant number of 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 Housing Strategy Team has worked with Garden City Developments to investigate approaches to delivering major new development that improves the ability of Councils to address land value capture, delivery of infrastructure, overall scheme delivery and viability issues.	Continue to develop approaches that improve the ability of the Council to deliver community benefits including affordable housing through land value capture.
1.9. Custom Build					
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. Consultation on splitting the register and the introduction of a charge has been agreed in principle. Housing Strategy have worked with Policy colleagues to draft policies for Local Plan 2035 which provide for a percentage of self build plots on qualifying sites	There is an administrative task in maintaining the register. Consultation on splitting the register and introduction of a charge will take place during 2018/19.
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.	Continue to work with Property services on opportunities created by the disposal of small sites.
THEME 2 - THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DELIVERY OF GROWTH.					
2.1. Deliver 256 affordable homes per year	Ongoing	High	Target reached	The new iteration of the SHMA increased the requirement for Affordable Housing from 256 to 275 homes pa. A predicted 222 affordable homes will be delivered 2017/18.	The trajectory forecasts 478 completions in 2018/19 and 296 completions in 2019/20. These forecasts are subject to slippage.
2.2. Aim for 195 homes to be provided for Affordable Rent.	Ongoing	Medium	Aim reached	134 Affordable Rented homes were delivered in 2016/17 which equates to 57.5% of the total affordable homes delivered. A commuted sum has been used to support the delivery of a rural exception scheme in Sharnbrook.	The trajectory shows forecast growth to 159 in 2017/18, 261 in 2018/19 and 208 in 2019/20. These forecasts are subject to slippage.
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	Good progress is being made on bringing forward Stewartby, Wixams Villages 2 and 4, Land N of Bromham Road, Land S of Fields Road, Wootton and Shortstow Phase 3. Land West of Bedford and Land N of Fields Road, Wootton are well established development sites.	Continue to work with developers and RPs on bringing forward Stewartby, Wixams Villages 2 and 4, Land N of Bromham Road, Land S of Fields Road, Wootton and Shortstow Phase 3. Work with Planning Policy on emerging schemes in Local Plan 2035.
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.	Reports were procured and written and a decision to establish a Housing Company, Benedict Bedford, was taken. The Company was formed and has taken steps to establish its operations. This is a corporate project with strong input from Property, Finance and Legal Services.	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. Progress has been made in considering projects.	Continue to support the Company in bringing 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. A public consultation exercise on draft proposals is complete. The results of the consultation have informed the Draft Local Plan 2035. A Ford End Road Master Plan is in development following the sale of the brewery to Martsons. Melbourne House has planning permission for 119 flats and a start has been made on-site. Other urban sites are progressing including 'Station to Town' Quarter, Warwick Avenue, Britannia Road and Derwent Place. Pilgrims House, the former offices of bpha, has been converted to 23 affordable homes. No progress to date on Dallas Road.	Work will continue with developers to bring forward sites, particularly those in the One Public Estate area. Publish the Town Centre South Masterplan in summer 2018. Develop delivery strategy for individual Areas.
Contribute to the delivery of the TCAAP.				Consultants are in the process of completing the draft masterplan covering those areas close to the town centre that have development potential. Policies included in the draft Local Plan 2035.	Continue to support delivery of master plan, the projects within it and policies in the Local Plan 2035
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 RPs established in Bedford, particularly bpha but also Grand Union, Aldwyck, Orbit and Guinness. It has also worked with new investors in Bedford including Paradigm, Crosskeys and One Housing Group. The Council has worked with the newly formed Stonewater (formed from a merger of Jephson and Raglan) and with Homes England to secure funding for individual schemes. 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 RP provided the RP 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.	A rural exception scheme is on site in Sharnbrook. The scheme delivers 4 affordable rented homes, 5 shared ownership homes and 4 market homes. A second scheme is also on site in Wyboston. The scheme delivers 5 affordable rented homes, 3 shared ownership homes and 3 market homes.	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. Progress potential rural exception schemes in Carlton and Ravensden. Progress Lovell Road, Oakley where 5 properties are required under a S106 agreement.
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 has become more restrictive.	Continue to seek opportunities to support activity to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.
3.2. Provide (subject to budget limitations) grant assistance to enable adaptation of existing properties.	Ongoing	High	Disabled Facilities Grants provided to qualifying persons subject to resources.	Disabled Facilities Grants have continued to be provided to qualifying persons.	Continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grants to qualifying persons subject to the availability of resources.
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 39 compulsory purchase orders to be instigated. 26 of these properties are now occupied though in most cases this has been achieved without the need for the CPO to be used. The number of very long term empty homes has reduced significantly with the number of homes vacant for > 12 months falling by 25.5%. The percentage reduction by length of time properties have been empty is as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – 2 years – 24.5% • 2 – 5 years – 22.5% • 5 – 10 years – 34.5% • > 10 years – 27.5% One long term empty property was purchased voluntarily in 2017 / 2018; this is being re-sold. All properties purchased and re-sold have been renovated and returned to use.	Actions remain ongoing to continue to reduce the number of long term empty homes. Contact is being maintained with the owners of empty residential properties to provide encouragement and advice to bring them back in to occupation. Where this approach does not succeed, use is being made of the additional capital funding to compulsory purchase empty properties. Eight properties have potentially been identified for such action in 2018/2019. Where circumstances demand, consideration will be given to the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders.
3.4. Review Empty Homes Strategy	2017/18	Medium	Empty Homes Strategy reviewed	It has been agreed that in the short term, the Empty Homes Strategy be extended to March 2019.	The full review of the Empty Homes Strategy will be progressed during 2019/20.
3.6. Review the Private Sector Housing Strategy	2017/18	Medium	Private Sector Housing Strategy Reviewed	Investigations are being completed in to the feasibility of commissioning a desktop study looking at the condition of the Borough's Housing Stock. This would then inform the Private Sector Housing Strategy.	It is proposed to reschedule the delivery of this strategy to 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 additional licensing of HMOs commenced on 6th May 2013, covering all HMOs where a mandatory licence is not required. The overarching aim of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme is to drive up the standards of broad compliance of homes within this sector, improving living conditions for local tenants who are often vulnerable. The 5 year scheme will focus 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 the implementation the scheme, there has been an improvement in levels of broad compliance, from 62% to 85%, with approx 700 licences issued to end May 2017. Formal prosecution action has also been undertaken for operating HMOs without a licence. Overall standards of safety and broad compliance in the HMO sector within the Borough have improved since the scheme began. In February 2018 following a review of the Additional HMO Licensing scheme and a public consultation process, the Council decided to renew its Additional HMO Licensing Scheme for a further 5 year period until May 2023 to continue to improve standards in this sector of the private rented housing market.	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 naturally 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 ammendments 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 below	See below
4.2 Develop Older Person Accommodation Strategy	2017/18	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Drafting in progress	Aim to deliver strategy for consultation summer 2018.
4.3 Develop Mental Health Accommodation Strategy	2016/17	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Draft strategy has been completed and consulted on. Further internal consultation completed early Feb 2018 following a change in personnel.	Approval of final strategy and strategy published mid 2018.

4.4 Develop Learning Disabilities Accommodation Strategy	2016/17	High	Strategy delivered and issued	Strategy completed and published.	Implementation and monitoring - action plan review to commence April 2018
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	Options considered when appropriate.	Options kept under review
4.6 Finalise GTAA and identify site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation as required	2016/17	High	GTAA Finalised and issued	GTAA has been published February 2017	Implementation 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	Deliver additional pitches to meet known needs.