

To Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Cllr. Geoff Welsh (Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)
Cllr. Lee Breckon (Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner) and Cllr. Sam Maxwell (Vice-Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)

Cllr. Shane Blackwell
Cllr. Nick Brown
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore
Cllr. Nick Chapman

Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. David Findlay
Cllr. Deanne Freer
Cllr. Nigel Grundy
Cllr. Mark Jackson

Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Michael O'Hare
Cllr. Louise Richardson
Cllr. Kirsteen Thomson
Cllr. Jane Wolfe

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** will be held in the via Zoom on **WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020** at **5.30 p.m.**. Please find attached a supplemental item that is required for the meeting and is in addition to the agenda and report pack that has already been circulated.

Yours faithfully



Colin Jones
Corporate Services Group Manager

SUPPLEMENTAL ITEM

4. Draft Housing Strategy 2020 (Pages 3 - 6)

To consider the report of the Housing Strategy Team Leader (enclosed)

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaby District Council Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 Executive Summary

A good home is fundamental to feeling safe, secure and well. A good home also provides a settled base to maximise learning and employment opportunities for all generations. Since our last Housing Strategy we have delivered a significant amount of new homes that match the requirements of the District both in the market and affordable sector.

Through 3 strategic priorities this new strategy offers exciting opportunities to continue to build upon strong partnerships. It links together several local housing related policies including our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Housing Allocations Policy and feeds into the ambitions of the overarching Blaby Plan and the commitment to “design and deliver housing to meet the needs of our residents”.

Key Blaby Housing Characteristics:

- The District predominately consists of 3 and 4+ bedroomed homes which make up 74% of our total (Higher than the national average of 69%)
- Owner occupiers make up 82% of all homes (higher than both the Leicestershire and national average)
- At 8% we have a significantly small provision of affordable housing compared to the national average of 16%
- The Private Rented Sector accounts for 10% of the housing stock compared to a national average of 17%

National Policy Context 2015 - 2020:

Homes England Re-Brand and Re-Focus

Introduction of Strategic Partnerships and a renewed focus on unlocking development with the following key objectives:

- Supporting the affordable housing market
- Supporting modern methods of construction
- Delivering home ownership products
- Addressing barriers facing small builders
- Expert support to priority locations

Housing White Paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market 2017

Four key aims:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places
- Building homes faster
- Diversify the housing market
- Helping people now

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA)

The HRA introduced a large number of new duties emphasising a proactive and vastly more preventative approach. Key changes include:

- A more extensive administration burden
- Meaningful help for all irrespective of priority need status
- Prevention duty extended from 28 to 56 days
- Duty to carry out a full assessment and produce personalised housing plans with eligible applicants
- Specific bodies now have a “Duty to Refer” people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- A more expanded and complexed review mechanism

Planning for the Future White Paper: Consultation

This current consultation has the potential to bring significant changes to the planning system and also to affordable housing policy, these include:

- Simplifying local plan production
- A National Infrastructure Levy in place of S106 agreements
- Introduction of a new affordable housing tenure “First Homes”
- First Homes will account for 25% of any affordable housing contribution on major schemes

Our Strategic Priorities:

Priority 1 - Increasing the Supply of Affordable Homes

The Blaby Housing Needs Assessment (2020) reassessed the annual affordable housing need figure to 399 dwellings. On average 130 affordable housing units are delivered per year. Working with our Registered Provider partners we will build upon our existing pipeline of affordable homes and in doing so continue to prioritise:

- More social rented homes
- Affordable home ownership units
- Small market homes
- Single level access accommodation

What are we going to do?

Continue to work in partnership with our major stakeholders including Registered Providers, Homes England, Multi Agency groups and developers

Remain proactive and alert to any affordable housing opportunities

Work closely with specialist housing providers to bring forward supported housing provision

Continue to work with the Affordable Housing Group to overcome barriers at an early stage for potential affordable housing development

Explore and maximise funds made available by Homes England through the affordable housing programme

Be creative and opportunistic in utilising internal ring-fenced affordable housing funds

Ensure through parish needs assessments that new developments meet the needs of our residents

Priority 2 - Provide Specialist Housing for Vulnerable Groups

By utilising the most recent population growth figures our Housing Needs Assessment 2020 has estimated a significant increase in the need for more supported provision in the District. Leicestershire County Council have also recorded a breakdown of what they consider is a County wide shortfall in accommodation types which includes:

- 1100 Extra Care units
- 24 Transforming care units
- 10 Transitions bed spaces
- 60 Working age adult units

What are we going to do?

Continue to work collaboratively with housing providers to bring forward more homes for vulnerable groups with a range of options

Work closely with Leicestershire Child and Adult Social Services to develop a joint approach to need and supply

Ensure that there is a road spectrum of housing options for our ageing population which minimised the need for costly residential and nursing care

Assess the impact of specialist housing on surrounding communities

Ensure that specialist housing schemes are well located in terms of connectivity to services, facilities and transport

Continue to research better ways of assessing and understanding the needs of vulnerable groups

Involve stakeholders in potential schemes at the earliest possible opportunity

Identify opportunities on large scale developments for specialist housing schemes (e.g. Extra care)

Priority 3 - Prevent Homelessness and end Rough Sleeping in the Blaby District

Since the introduction of the HRA in April 2018 we have prevented 672 households from becoming homeless and have relieved homelessness in 472 cases. Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer post has proved to be very successful and this has certainly made a difference to the prevention cases over the last couple of years.

The following is a summary of the actions outlined in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 that we will take to fulfil our vision of preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping in our District.

What are we going to do?

Continue to make effective use of Discretionary Housing Payments
Remain creative and innovative in finding solutions to prevent homelessness
Maximise funding opportunities such as the Rapid Rehousing Pathways, Rough Sleepers initiative and the Next Steps Accommodation Programme
Work towards reducing the use of B&B's
Maximise the number of new affordable homes
Develop a robust, competitive and suitable offer to Private Sector Landlords
Work with partners to address the gap in support provision and minimise the impact of welfare reform
Provide access to the Councils tenancy sustainment service to vulnerable households
Build on relationships with adult and children services to increase support and appropriate accommodation options

**Housing Strategy Team
Blaby District Council
Council Offices
Desford Road
Narborough
LE19 2EP**

Tel: 0116 272 7586

Email: housing.strategies@blaby.gov.uk