

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on Monday 29th September**

#### **Private Sector Housing Strategy – Monitoring Update**

#### **Report of the Assistant Director of Housing Management**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Joanne Wilson, Housing Strategy and Development Officer

### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To inform Members on progress against the delivery of the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2024-2027. This report forms the first annual update.

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### **REPORT DETAILS**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Housing is one of the key determinants of health. The quality of people's homes is strongly related to economic prosperity and minimising the adverse effects of poor housing remains a major challenge for the Council. Living in a home which is in good condition, that the household can afford to heat, and is in an area in which they feel safe and well supported by the local community underpins the wellbeing of individuals and families. The impact of poor housing in childhood can affect an individual for a lifetime and can affect physical, social, and psychological development. Damp, mould, cold, and overcrowded conditions can lead directly to physical illness and there is also increasing evidence that poor housing conditions can seriously affect people's mental health and sense of wellbeing.
- 1.2 The 2024-2027 Strategy is the Council's first dedicated strategy aimed solely at the private sector. Owner occupied and privately rented properties make up over 83.3% of homes in Bolsover District (Census 2021). Many homes in the private sector in Bolsover District are in poor condition. Data analysis completed as part of development of the strategy shows that 45.8% do not meet EPC C, and 16.3% of owner-occupied homes and 18.6% of private rented homes fail the Decent Homes Standard for having a Category 1 hazard, which poses a serious and immediate risk to a person's health.

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

2.1 Following approval of the Strategy in 2024, a range of activity has progressed. The Strategy is delivered in partnership across Housing Management, Housing Options, Environmental Health, and Planning Policy.

### Key achievements:

#### 2.2 *Objective 1*

- Delivery of joint Landlord Forum November 2024.
- Secured £1.2m grant funding via Warm Homes: Local Grant for delivery across the private sector. The programme targets households with an EPC D-G combined with low income.
- Work commenced on design of the new Housing Enforcement Policy (to complete end of 2025).
- New literature devised for damp and mould advice.
- Council website revised to include a wider range of links and advice for both landlords and tenants on rights and responsibilities.
- DASH Services and Call Before You Serve (CB4YS) continually promoted by Housing Options team, particularly the Triage Officers.
- Renewal of DASH contract.

#### 2.3 *Objective 2*

- Analysis of private sector provision by Supported Accommodation Review Team (SART) officers – data shows good success rates placing those presenting as homeless in the private rented sector.

#### 2.4 *Objective 3*

- Development of an in-house design and contract management service for Disabled Facilities Grant following closure of Derbyshire County Council (DCC) service.
- Background research completed for new minor adaptations policy.
- DCC consultation on potential withdrawal of the Healthy Homes Project – this may lead to the need for a district level approach.

#### 2.5 *Objective 4*

- Development and consultation on charges for empty homes via a Council Tax Premium.

### Immediate plans for future delivery:

#### 2.6 *Objective 1*

- Run Landlord Forum for 2025
- Develop a Landlord/Agent e-bulletin
- Complete year 1 of Warm Homes: Local Grant and secure further interest for years 2 and 3.

- Develop an Intervention Strategy to support landlords to meet the requirements of the Renters Rights Bill.
- Freedom of Information (FOI) contact to all Registered Providers (RPs) operating in the District to establish current stock, future plans, secure access to affordable stock via additional nomination rights, and establish options for development of new affordable stock.

#### 2.7 *Objective 2*

- Further develop working relationships with local Landlords/Agents to create additional links to private rented sector. This will be particularly important once the Bill is formally enacted and the sector requires additional support to comply with new regulations.

#### 2.8 *Objective 3*

- Raise awareness of support options for older and vulnerable tenants as part of Landlord Forum 2025.
- Develop a database of private rented sector adapted properties to enable tenant referrals by Housing Allocations and Housing Options teams.

#### 2.9 *Objective 4*

- New Council Tax charges for empty properties come in to force April 2026.

It should be noted that there are a number of actions in the Delivery Plan that now form part of ongoing day-to-day delivery.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 As part of the Strategy monitoring process, Members of Customer Services Scrutiny must receive an annual update on progress against the delivery plan.

### **4. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options. The Council's approach to Strategy delivery requires monitoring reports to be submitted to Members for review. As this Strategy is not part of the Budget and Policy Framework a report to Scrutiny is sufficient.

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That Members review the attached Delivery Plan, progress made to date, and plans for the immediate future.

Approved by Councillor P. Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing

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**IMPLICATIONS:****Finance and Risk**Yes ☐No ☒**Details:**

Overall delivery of the Strategy is contained within existing budgets. Some specific projects are being delivered via external grant and approval for such monies has taken place via separate reports e.g. Warm Homes: Local Grant.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Legal (including Data Protection)**Yes ☒No ☐**Details:**

Local Authorities have a legal duty under the Housing Act 2004 to keep the conditions of homes in their areas under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

**Staffing**Yes ☐No ☒**Details:**

There are no staffing implications arising from the report or policy.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

**Equality and Diversity, and Consultation**Yes ☒No ☐**Details:**

The Delivery Plan actively seeks to support householders that have lower income, vulnerabilities and live in properties that are less energy efficiently, to reduce the impact of housing conditions on wider wellbeing.

**Environment**Yes ☒No ☐

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

**Details:**

A core element of the Strategy is to improve the quality of housing in the private sector. This will include energy efficiency improvements in both the private rented and owner occupier sectors.

## **DECISION INFORMATION:**

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please indicate which threshold applies:</b></p> <p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>Revenue (a)</b> Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p><b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected:</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>(b)</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>All</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p><b>Consultation carried out:</b> <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p><b>Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

### **Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing**

Customers: Providing excellent and accessible services.

- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

## Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

Economy: Driving growth, promoting the district and being business and visitor friendly.

- Unlocking regeneration and development potential of long-term vacant land and buildings, and stalled sites and deliver income-generating capital projects.

Environment: Protecting the quality of life for residents and businesses, meeting environmental challenges, and enhancing biodiversity.

- Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same.
- Ensuring all areas, neighbourhoods, and streets in the district, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live, feel safe, and are proud to live.

Housing: Delivering social and private sector housing growth.

- Enabling Housing Growth by increasing the supply, quality, and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population.
- Maintaining and improving property and housing management standards and ensuring that standards and living conditions in the district contribute towards better health outcomes for all.
- Maximising our influence and opportunities within the East Midlands Combined County Authority to create affordable, good quality housing options and to retrofit existing homes to be more environmentally sustainable.

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1.	Private Sector Housing Strategy Delivery Plan
2.	Private Sector Housing Strategy

## Background Papers

***(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).***