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Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Housing Strategy 2014- 2029
Date:	6 th December 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	1 – Housing Strategy 2 – Action plan
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	1. Approval of Housing Strategy
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. Approve Housing Strategy
Period for post policy/project review:	Annual review against action plan

1 Introduction/Background:

A Housing Strategy is a legislative requirement, however as a service we want to make it a more meaningful document which outlines:

- The level of housing need in Dacorum and how we will drive up housing standards
- How we will drive forward the provision of genuinely affordable housing
- Explain how we will provide help for people in Dacorum who are facing the cost of living crisis, homelessness, poor housing conditions or who have other additional needs
- Tell people how we will champion diversity and resettle refugees
- Outline how we will make the best use of available land
- Explain how we will work with other landlords such as housing associations, and private landlords to ensure that all homes in Dacorum are safe, warm and dry

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

To develop this strategy we considered a number of key changes in the housing sector, on both a national and local scale, as well as the needs of the service users and our communities. Based on this this we have developed five, outcome-based commitments:

- **Commitment one:** To become an excellent social landlord, delivering tailored services that meet the needs of our residents.
- **Commitment two:** Demonstrate dedication to tackling the climate emergency in Dacorum. Reducing the carbon footprint of our existing housing stock, and take steps to ensure that all new homes meet excellent thermal efficiency standards.
- **Commitment three:** Challenge ourselves and partners to work collaboratively to maximise the delivery of genuinely affordable new homes.
- **Commitment four:** Champion the provision of safe, warm and dry homes across the borough.
- **Commitment five:** Meet the diverse housing needs of everyone living in Dacorum.

The Strategy is supported by a shared action plan, which will be a live document to capture how we will work with partners to deliver the commitments in the strategy. We will also develop supporting success measures to record outcomes and hold ourselves to account throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

To support the Strategy and make it a live document, we will host an annual stakeholder conference. This annual event will enable us to work with partners and stakeholders to review and drive progress on the actions detailed in the action plan. The networking opportunity at this event will create opportunities for further partnership working and allow us as a group to align the strategy with the most up to date legislation and best practice.

Once approved the Housing Strategy will be launched at an event, including stakeholders and partners. The event will take place in Spring 2024.

3 Options and alternatives considered

Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 A Housing Strategy puts local housing strategies on a statutory basis to reflect the Government's belief that a robust strategy is essential to the delivery of local authorities' housing functions

4 Consultation

The Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with Officers across Dacorum and with stakeholders, the activity to date has included:

September 2022 – HQN commissioned - To lead on the stakeholder consultation and produce the draft strategy.

November 2022 – Stakeholder consultation event - Over 100 attendees from local authority partners, registered providers, Homes England, Charity sector and more, helped shape the Commitments and action plan.

December 2022 – 2 staff consultation sessions - Including teams across the Council, feeding back on operational

deliverables.

May 2023 - The Housing Strategy has been substantially rewritten to take on board the priorities of our engaged residents, the new Administration and the changing regulatory framework.

The Housing Strategy and its priorities have been aligned with the HRA Business plan, Local Plan, and new Corporate Plan.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The Housing Strategy has been developed to align with the HRA Business plan. The Strategy explores opportunities for us to make the best use of our housing stock, but also take a wider strategic view by linking with the strategic asset review and local plan.

The Strategy has been developed closely working with residents and partners, and the shared action plan will include actions for both Dacorum and our partners, by working collaboratively we can seek out value for money and maximise outcomes.

6 Legal Implications

The Housing Strategy has been aligned with current and emerging legislation, in particular the Social Housing Regulatory Act which will introduce inspections from the Social Housing Regulator. This document will underpin our approach to delivering a housing service which will deliver the best service for our residents, and also how we will demonstrate our compliance with the Consumer Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

7 Risk implications:

We are keen for the Housing Strategy to be a dynamic and live document, which is owned by us and also our partners and stakeholders. The ongoing engagement and annual stakeholder conferences will be key in the success of the supporting action plan.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

Community Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out and annexed at appendix 3

Human Rights – There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

Central to this document is the consideration and actions to tackle the climate emergency. The Strategy also outlines the promotion of health, wellbeing and safety for our Tenants and Leaseholders, but also the wider community in Dacorum, no matter what tenure they are.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

11 Conclusions:

The recommendation is that Cabinet approve the Housing Strategy.