

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

10 JUNE 2019

DISTRICT WIDE HOUSING ASSESSMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks approval to commission a new district wide housing assessment, being a remit of this Committee, in order to provide an up to date evaluation of housing need, the wider housing market and affordability across all tenures.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 As a strategic housing authority the Council has a statutory requirement to undertake regular assessments of future housing requirements within the district in accordance with Part 11 (Section 8) of the 1985 Housing Act (*periodical review of housing needs*). These assessments commonly include establishing the need for all housing tenures, house types and location, with particular attention paid to the requirement for additional affordable housing.

2.2 In addition, more recently, the Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which reiterates the Government's central objective of 'significantly boosting the supply of homes' (NPPF, Para 59). The key points from the revised NPPF are:

- In place of the requirement to objectively assess need, the introduction of a standardised methodology for calculating housing need; to inform the number of new homes required;
- The introduction of the Housing delivery test which seeks to ensure that authorities achieve the intended level of housing delivery;
- Greater support for Neighbourhood Plans.

2.3 NPPF requires Councils' strategic policies to be informed by a local housing need assessment (NPPF, Para 60), conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach, which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

2.4 Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to), those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

2.5 Robust and up to date, evidence of housing need is an essential requirement for the Council to underpin its key strategic and policy framework for its housing, planning and economic activities, which in turn inform and support the objectives of the Council's Community Plan.

3.0 Housing Assessment - 2014

- 3.1 In 2014 the Council commissioned David Couttie Associates (DCA) to undertake a district wide 'Housing Market and Needs Assessment' (HMNA), following the previous assessments completed in 2003 and 2009.
- 3.2 The key objective of the study was to provide high quality data to enable the Council to understand the nature and level of housing demand and need within the district and to provide a robust and credible assessment of the local housing market.
- 3.3 The assessment consisted of a postal questionnaire (primary research), secondary data analysis, focus groups with key stakeholders and Member consultation. These, together with an analysis of the district housing market data, a housing market survey, dwelling balance analysis, census information and household and population projections, informed the overall Assessment.
- 3.4 There were a number of important findings from the 2014 Assessment, demonstrating a significant housing need across the district, which can be found in the following link:
- <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/housing/housingneedssurvey2014/>
- 3.5 The findings informed the strategic housing priorities for the Council at the time, including the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (HRA BP), and the relevant housing policies within the Local Development Framework.
- 3.6 The Committee should also reflect on the report at Agenda Item No. 11 detailing the strong delivery of affordable housing delivery across district, which can only be achieved where a robust housing needs evidence base is available.

4.0 New Housing Assessment

- 4.1 It is good practice for a local housing assessment to be reviewed every 5 years in order to support the Council's role as a strategic housing commissioner and local planning authority. In this respect, and as the last assessment was completed over five years, it is now considered appropriate to commission a new assessment.
- 4.2 Taking into consideration the requirements set out in section 2, the new assessment would follow the output framework identified below:
- a) Deliver the housing needs requirements for the Council in its role as a strategic housing commissioner and local planning authority, for all tenure types and the need for affordable housing, indicating appropriate tenure and dwelling type mixes at a district, ward and settlement level.
 - b) Demonstrate the overall housing need for both market and affordable housing for a period of up to 5 years (2024) and an indicative need forecast for the period 2024 to 2029, within both an urban and rural context.
 - c) Include the breakdown of the overall housing figure by tenure, including household types and size and dwelling size by tenure.

- d) Identify how the age profile and household mix relate to each other and how this may change in the future.
- e) Evidence the need for certain types of housing and the needs of different groups, including, but not exclusively, self-build and custom housebuilding, family housing, older people, housing for people with disabilities, service families, students, key workers, first time buyers, minority ethnic households, younger people, low-income households and homeless households
- f) Analyse and explain the housing aspirations for each household type and how future provision could be provided.
- g) Explore the range of intermediate housing products (*the wider affordable housing offer*) available and whether there is a role in the local housing market for them.
- h) Identify the levels of adapted housing.
- i) Review relevant national and local policies, population and demographic changes including migration patterns.
- j) Examine the function and dynamics of the district's housing market and its relationship with neighbouring authorities (*understanding the duty to co-operate*).
- k) Outline the local relationship between housing and the economy.
- l) Examine the impact of welfare reform and recent changes to homelessness legislation on housing need and the local market.
- m) Examine the configuration and turnover of the Council's housing stock to assess its fitness to meet local housing need now and in the future, set against maintaining a viable HRA BP. In addition to informing the type of new build Council housing units required over the period of the assessment.

Methodology

- 4.3 There are two principle approaches to undertake a housing assessment, one being where secondary research is only used and the other where both primary and secondary research is used.
- 4.4 Secondary research provides a review of readily accessible data sources including, but not limited to:
 - Income
 - Land Registry House Price data
 - CORE lettings data from Registered Providers
 - Statutory housing data returns
 - Population, household and migration projections
 - Census Data
 - Local intelligence and data, e.g. a Resident Survey, housing register data.
- 4.5 Primary research provides qualitative information, which gives the ability to review and triangulate the secondary data so strengthening the soundness of the evidence base. Examples of primary research include:
 - A postal questionnaire (*which would normally have to be to over 20% of households in the district to be statistically valid*)
 - Housing market surveys with estate, letting agents and Registered Providers.
 - Focus groups with key stakeholders, e.g. developer and local authority partners.

Timescale

- 4.6 Once a consultant has been commissioned to undertake the work, procured in line with the Council's 'Contract and Procedure Rules', it would take in the region of 6 months to complete and report on the findings of the housing assessment.

5.0 Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Council commissions a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a new district wide housing assessment, on the basis of utilising both primary (qualitative) research and secondary (quantitative) data, to meet the outputs detailed at paragraph 4.2 and any additions the Committee may feel relevant.

6.0 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 This report reflects the requirement for the housing assessment to take into account the specific needs of persons with protected characteristics to ensure the Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 will be fully considered and met.

7.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

- 7.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Council to undertake and periodically review a housing assessment to ensure the Council has a robust and up to date evidence base to inform key planning, housing and economic policy and strategy development.
- 7.2 Based on the assessment completed by DCA in 2014 and a review of recently completed surveys, an indicative cost for this type work is in the region of £30,000.

8.0 Financial Implications – FIN19-20/4957

- 8.1 The budget for the Housing Needs survey will be met from Housing Strategy and Development (£22k) and Planning Policy (£10k).

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee consider and approve the commissioning of a new district wide housing assessment based on the collection of primary research and secondary data, with the budget provision for this detailed at 8.1.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory duty and periodically reviews the housing needs of the district to provide a robust evidence base to inform the sound development of housing, planning and economic policies and strategies.

Background Papers - Nil

For further information please contact Rob Main (Ext: 5930) or Jill Sanderson (Ext: 5624) in the Housing Strategy & Development Business Unit.

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