

**HOUSING BIRMINGHAM – PROGRESS IN DELIVERING BIRMINGHAM'S
HOUSING STRATEGY**

To deliver against the key Housing priorities for Birmingham, a new Housing Strategy was developed and approved by Cabinet in July 2017. This strategy was jointly developed and signed off by partners at Housing Birmingham partnership board. The terms of reference and work streams of Housing Birmingham were realigned in January 2018 to the priorities contained within the strategy, creating joint ownership between partners of its delivery.

The partnership continues to flourish with members actively contributing to delivering on the key priorities and housing issues in the city.

Prior to the Housing Strategy, the Housing Birmingham priorities were:

- Social Housing provision, Current and Future
- Specialist need and vulnerable – housing provision, homelessness and developing individual pathways
- Increasing Provision
- Locality and Place

Following adoption of the strategy the Housing Birmingham priorities were realigned to mirror the City Strategy and priorities for Housing:

- A strong supply of new high-quality homes
- Citizens are able to find access and sustain housing that meet their needs
- Neighbourhoods are enhanced, and the quality of existing housing improved

An action plan to deliver against these has been developed; some key areas of progress are as follows:

1. Strong supply of new high quality homes

The work stream for supply is now jointly led between the Council and Birmingham Social Housing Partnership (BSHP) to identify further how collectively we can deliver the stretching targets for building new homes.

In delivering a strong supply of new quality homes with our partners we are continuing to ensure citizens have access to quality new homes through a range of solutions. Some examples of this are:

Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT)

- BMHT has built over 2,500 new homes (including social/affordable and for sale) since 2009, including 1470 in the last three years and has built 21% of all new homes in Birmingham since 2011 BMHT. To date this year has also delivered 322 rent and 94 sales completions to code 4 standards.

CPO action to bring forward Land

- Following a cabinet decision to approve CPO action on private landbanked sites to bring forward land, action is in progress against one site owner which has now prompted that developer to commence work. Several other sites are being pursued. And it is anticipated that further sites will be appropriated in early 2018.

Community Led Housing

- In looking at a range of delivery solutions as per the commitment in the Housing strategy - we committed to look at promoting and supporting community led housing. The Cabinet Member for Housing & Homes, hosted a conference at the Council House in the Autumn with a range of partners and organisations which resulted in a task and finish group being established to identify mechanisms to bring forward site opportunities and proposals for Community Led Housing schemes. This work is ongoing and will be a key item at March's Housing Birmingham meeting

Self Build

- The Council has secured approval for a small number of self-build sites. All of these sites have been allocated for offer to people/organisations registered on the Council's self-build register. The selection of these sites has been approved by Cabinet and open for self-build groups/co-operatives and possibly CLH schemes.

Developing a regional approach

- The WMCA is leading with the NHF on developing a joint venture model for a regional approach which we are feeding into as a Housing Birmingham partnership.

2. Citizens are able to find, access and sustain housing that meets their needs

To help people find Housing that meets their needs

- The City Council delivered a new Housing Allocation scheme in 2017 and have since successfully registered over 8600 applicants and housed over 2600 applicants under the new scheme. This included a recently jointly agreed nominations protocol with RSL partners.
- The City Council's allocation policy gives greatest priority to those under occupying valuable stock in order to ensure best use of stock is achieved; the Council is undertaking ongoing work to look at mapping and developing mobility as well as reviewing the Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Cabinet approved the Homelessness Prevention strategy and the Council have put in place strong governance arrangements to corporately deliver on responding to the Homelessness Reduction Act which comes into force April 3rd 2018.
- An action plan and joint working group within Housing Birmingham is in place to develop a young person's housing pathway offer.

To help people sustain their housing

- Within Birmingham and regionally through the West Midlands best Use of Stock board we have developed and put into place a pre tenancy protocol focused on achieving greater sustainability of social housing tenants accessing with LA or RP stock through the waiting list.
- A Review of sheltered accommodation was approved by Cabinet in 2017 and implemented in November of 2017. This included the introduction of handyperson scheme to help older residents continue to live independently.
- The Housing Birmingham partnership provided a joint response to the recent consultation on short term Supported housing and sheltered housing. The proposals presented by government were very much aligned to the original proposal Housing Birmingham presented to DCLG for a funding model that was around locally commissioned provision.
- BSHP have also developed a network of providers of specialist accommodation for older people to develop a policy offer.
- Through housing Birmingham a task and finish group is established to look at the range of issues over regulated and unregulated providers of supported private rented accommodation. We have secured support for

this piece of work from Birmingham University and sign up from West Midlands Police and Fire service.

- Housing Birmingham has agreed to undertake a piece of work to develop a 'Student Housing Policy' to look at the increase and issues surrounding this in the city.
- Housing Management has seven specialist family workers who work alongside anti-social behaviour officers to provide early help support to help sustain tenancies. By the end of January 2018, Housing Management worked with 296 families. Most of these families were involved in causing anti-social behaviour.
- The City Council has recently contributed to the recent review undertaken by the Care Quality Commission into how we are contributing to the wider health and well being agenda. Examples of this are - through its development vehicle Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust has developed its own unique specification for older person's housing model through research and consultation with older people in the city. Based on this we have built two-bedroom dormer style bungalows, each with a ground floor bedroom and shower room all designed to.
- The Council's hospital discharge service continues to support those requiring move on support and In the last 12 months we have provided advice and support to 207 individuals. In addition we have also commissioned Trident Reach to provide a hospital discharge service for individuals who are admitted to hospital with no fixed abode.
- BSHP employment and skills group meets bi monthly with BCC representation to ensure housing and employment initiatives are aligned and information is shared.

3. Neighbourhoods are enhanced and quality of existing housing improved.

- The Council's capital Investment programme continues to deliver required improvements to the Councils Housing stock.
- Fire Safety – The Housing Birmingham partnerships developing a joined up approach to issues around fire safety in Tower blocks including working with WMFS in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The Council and RSLs have led on the Fire Safety working group, undertook reassurance visits to every BCC tenant living in a tower blocks, undertook risks assessments on all blocks etc. and continue to review and develop our approach to safety in blocks generally. Partners on Housing Birmingham who has tower blocks in the city have carried out similar processes.

- Undertaken a review into Housing management and new service model in place from November 2017 focused on early prevention, education and enforcement to reduce demand and deliver to those at risk of tenancy failure.
- Front line Housing teams worked to mitigate against neighbourhood street scene issues resulting from the recent waste dispute and bad weather that caused disruptions to the service. We continue to provide a street scene service on Housing estates through our street scene co-ordinators.
- Housing Birmingham Partnership Board we will continue to work to develop models for Co – regulation in neighbourhoods in response to the outcomes of the review into ‘Place’.
- Birmingham City Council has recently had their applications for Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) approved on 5 empty properties to enable them to be brought back into use, removing blight and making best use of stock.
- As a Housing Birmingham partnership we created strong links with BSHP Social Housing providers to monitor and quickly respond to issues resulting from rubbish and fly-tipping in neighbourhoods.
- BSHP place working group has been established to identify opportunities for areas of collaboration and joint working between RSL partners and the city.

The Private Rented Sector

Promote Self Regulation

- The Council is working with HOMESTAMP and Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme to promote responsible renting. The Council reviewed licensing fees in December 2017 and continues to provide discounts to MLAS members. The Council is part of the delivery board for MLAS and is working with other Midland authorities and the National landlords association on improving the awareness and scope of the scheme.

Use enforcement powers (inc licensing) to target worst neighbourhoods/landlords

- The Council has started a programme on consultation on the use of Additional and Selective licensing powers in Selly Oak, Stockland Green and Soho Wards and decisions on these will be made in March 2018. The Council will then decide whether to continue to target certain priority areas.

- The Council has bid to the Government for additional funding to tackle rogue landlords under the Controlling Migration Fund. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have welcomed the bid and are so far positive about working with Birmingham. A decision is likely in early February 2018
- The Government has announced plans to extend HMO licensing for any property with 5 or more people who are not a single household, who share facilities, in 2018 which will require approximately 3-4,000 extra HMOs to obtain a licence.
- The Council has a Private Rented Sector Landlord Forum Steering Group through which policy and strategy for improving standards in the PRS are discussed. There is an annual Forum meeting attended by 100-150 delegates and is useful in getting feedback from landlords and agents. The LFSG are represented on Housing Birmingham and contributed to the Housing Statement. Representatives have also attended Scrutiny Committee and are involved in the Homelessness Partnership Programme Board work stream on sustainable housing.